Positioning Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence in Creative Production: The Synthetic Media

Gilman Senem Gençtürk Hızal, Başkent University, Türkiye

Abstract

This study examines the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and the creative industries, with particular emphasis on the challenges AI poses to traditional notions of authorship, creativity, and labor. Drawing on the recent Writers Guild of America (WGA) strike as a case, the research highlights the tensions between human and machine-driven production in creative fields. The study aims to explore the roles of artificial and human intelligence in synthetic media, considering the social and cultural context of the media, particularly about creative production processes where the debate between human and artificial intelligence is involved. The paper addresses this debate through the 2023 WGA strike in the USA. The study analyzes news coverage of the WGA strike on internet news sites using framing analysis. By employing framing analysis—conflict, economic implications, technological disruption, and ethical considerations—this study explores the complex discourse surrounding AI's influence on creative labor. It posits that the future of the creative industries will depend on achieving a balance between utilizing AI as a collaborative tool and preserving the distinct contributions of human creativity. Furthermore, the paper advocates for the development of ethical frameworks that ensure AI's integration into creative processes fosters innovation while safeguarding cultural diversity and the irreplaceable qualities of human creativity.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Human Intelligence, Creative Industry

Introduction

In the academic discipline of communication and media studies, the history of communication and media has predominantly been evaluated through "medium". This literature predominantly associates media with technology and material constitution. It also considers the history of media as the history of medium or tools or in other words history of "objects". On the other hand, the question of what is a medium or media has always been discussed in the relevant literature (Horn, 2007; Phillips, 2017; Siegert, 2003; Shan, 2022). Moreover, new names of the media such as mass media, traditional media, new media, social media and, ott media are added to this literature every period. Today, (again) a new media has been added to this media: Synthetic Media. Any media such as images, video, or audio that are "artificially" created or manipulated using computer algorithms is defined as synthetic media. Synthetic media can also be defined as one of the outputs of generative AI, but of course, it is hard to say that not all synthetic media is created by generative AI. Generative AI models such as DALL-E, Midjourney, Stable Diffusion and, GPT-4 have played an important role in generating new images, text, sounds and, other creative content from simple prompts or inputs. This technology undoubtedly demonstrates the potential to augment and accelerate the creative process, enabling artists, writers, musicians and, designers to quickly explore countless ideas and iterate on concepts. However, concerns are also being raised about automation replacing human creativity and the need to develop ethical frameworks around AI-generated intellectual property. Media, as a term, has also been discussed through the political economy and cultural studies approaches, but discussions on production, labour, and creativity have become more frequent with digitalization. Especially since the 1990s, the field of cultural production, including media content, has been defined as creative industries.

This study aims to explore the roles of artificial and human intelligence in synthetic media, considering the social and cultural context of the media, particularly in relation to creative production processes where the debate between human and artificial intelligence is involved. The paper addresses this debate through the 2023 WGA strike in the USA. The study analyzes news coverage of the WGA strike on internet news sites using framing analysis.

Theoretical Framework: Artificial Intelligence in Media Studies

The intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and media studies represents a burgeoning area of research that addresses the transformative impact of AI technologies on the creation, distribution, and consumption of media. As AI systems become increasingly sophisticated, they are reshaping the landscape of media production and raising critical questions about authorship, authenticity, and ethical implications. A theoretical framework for understanding AI's role in media studies often incorporates concepts from media ecology and posthumanism. Media ecology, as articulated by Marshall McLuhan, emphasizes the medium as an integral component of communication, suggesting that changes in technology influence societal structures and human perception (McLuhan, 1964). Posthumanism challenges traditional notions of authorship and creativity, positing that AI technologies complicate the boundaries between human and machine contributions to media (Braidotti, 2013). This theoretical lens is crucial for examining how AI alters conventional understandings of media production and consumption. To understand the impact of AI on creative labor, it is essential to consider theoretical frameworks that address the nature of creativity and labor in a technologically mediated environment. The concept of "the creative industries" as described by Florida (2002) emphasizes the role of creativity as a driving force in economic

development. However, the advent of AI challenges traditional notions of creativity, prompting scholars to explore the implications of machine-generated content on human authorship and originality (McCormack et al., 2019). Additionally, the theory of postcapitalism suggests that the integration of AI into creative labor may lead to new economic structures and relationships between humans and machines (Cruddas & Pitts, 2020).

The historical trajectory of AI in media can be traced back to early computational experiments in the 1950s and 1960s, which laid the groundwork for modern AI applications. The development of machine learning and neural networks has accelerated advancements in synthetic media, leading to tools capable of generating text, images, and videos autonomously. As noted by Elgammal and colleagues (2017), the emergence of generative adversarial networks (GANs) has revolutionized creative practices in the arts and media, allowing for unprecedented levels of innovation and experimentation. Recent literature highlights the rapid growth of AI technologies in media, particularly in areas such as journalism, entertainment, and social media. For instance, AI-driven algorithms are increasingly used for content curation and recommendation on digital platforms and social media, shaping viewer experiences and consumption patterns (Kang & Lou, 2022). Additionally, tools like OpenAI's GPT-3 and DALL-E exemplify the potential for AI to generate creative content, raising questions about authorship and the value of human creativity in a digital landscape (Radford et al., 2019). The ethical implications of AI-generated media are a significant focus of contemporary research. Scholars have raised concerns about the potential for AI to perpetuate biases, manipulate information, and produce misleading content. For example, deepfakes—synthetic media that uses AI to create hyper-realistic forgeries—pose threats to personal privacy and public trust (Chesney & Citron, 2019). As AI technologies become more integrated into media practices, addressing issues of consent, authenticity, and accountability is paramount (Kietzmann et al., 2020). The ethical implications of AI in creative labor are a significant focus in current research. Concerns about copyright, ownership, and the potential for AI to perpetuate biases have garnered attention. For example, the use of AI to generate art raises questions about intellectual property rights: who owns the work created by an algorithm? Additionally, issues of bias in AI training datasets can lead to the reinforcement of stereotypes and exclusionary practices within creative industries (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018). Addressing these ethical dilemmas is crucial for fostering equitable practices in the integration of AI into creative labor. Several case studies illustrate the impact of AI on various media sectors. In journalism, AI-generated news articles are becoming increasingly common, with outlets like the Associated Press utilizing AI to automate financial reporting (Simon, 2024). In the entertainment industry, AI's role in scriptwriting and film production raises questions about the future of creative labor and the nature of storytelling. A notable example is the AI-generated short film "Sunspring," which highlights both the possibilities and limitations of AI in narrative construction.

The application of artificial intelligence in creative fields introduces complex challenges related to authorship, intellectual property, and the conceptualization of creativity. This complexity becomes particularly salient when AI-generated content is indistinguishable from that produced by humans. Anantrasirichai and Bull (2022) explore the transformative impact of AI technologies across various sectors of the creative industries, including music, visual arts, film, design, and gaming. They examine how AI tools, such as machine learning, deep learning, and generative adversarial networks (GANs), are enabling automation and the creation of new forms of artistic content. AI is increasingly used in tasks like music composition, image generation, video editing, and game design, offering creatives the

opportunity to enhance their work or reduce repetitive labor. The review also highlights the applications of AI in specific creative fields. In music, AI can compose original pieces or assist in sound design, while in visual arts, AI-generated artworks are pushing the boundaries of traditional creativity. In the film and gaming sectors, AI is used to generate dynamic content, improve visual effects, and create responsive gaming environments. Additionally, AI plays a significant role in advertising and marketing, helping to generate personalized content for target audiences. Rather than replacing human creativity, AI is seen as a tool for collaboration, aiding creatives by suggesting new ideas and variations that might not have been considered. Despite the exciting possibilities, the article also addresses several challenges and ethical concerns. Issues of authorship, intellectual property, and the potential displacement of human workers in creative fields are explored. There are concerns about the originality of AI-generated works and their cultural relevance, as well as the implications for job security in traditional creative roles. The authors suggest that while AI will continue to evolve, its integration into the creative industries must be carefully managed to balance innovation with ethical considerations. Ultimately, AI's role in creativity is envisioned as collaborative, where human intuition and AI technology work together to create innovative artistic experiences. Garcia (2024) explores the complex relationship between generative AI and the concept of creativity. Garcia discusses the growing influence of AI tools in the creative industries, particularly in the realm of art, where AI has been employed to generate original visual works, music, literature, and other artistic forms. The article highlights the paradox that while AI can produce works that appear highly creative, the technology itself lacks consciousness or intentionality, raising fundamental questions about the nature of creativity. Garcia (2024) examines both the opportunities and challenges posed by AI-generated art, suggesting that AI can serve as a tool that enhances human creativity, pushing boundaries and expanding artistic expression. However, the absence of human agency in the creation process leads to debates about authorship, originality, and the emotional depth typically associated with human-made art. Garcia also addresses the ethical and societal implications of AI in the creative domain. One key concern is the potential for generative AI to disrupt traditional artistic practices and employment in creative fields, as AI systems increasingly take on roles traditionally reserved for human creators. Furthermore, Garcia touches on issues of copyright, intellectual property, and the potential for AI to perpetuate biases or lack cultural sensitivity in its outputs.

The intersection of creative production and human agency raises important questions about the role of individuals in an increasingly automated world. As technology advances, particularly with the rise of artificial intelligence, the nature of creativity is being actively discussed and redefined. This transformation invites a reevaluation of what creativity means in the digital age and how it is expressed across various mediums. This evolution can lead to tensions that may prompt artists, writers, and other creative professionals to "strike" or advocate for their rights and recognition.

Strikes in the media and creative sectors are not a new phenomenon. Strikes within the media and creative industries serve as pivotal events that highlight the complexities of labor relations, economic pressures, and the evolving landscape of creative production. As industries undergo significant transformations due to technological advancements and changing audience consumption patterns, the demands of creative workers—ranging from fair compensation to job security—have prompted organized actions to address these issues. Historical events such as the 1960 Screen Actors Guild strike and the more recent Writers Guild of America (WGA) strikes have underscored the tensions between creative labor and industry management. The advent of AI technologies poses threats to traditional roles in

creative production, leading to fears of job displacement and calls for protection. Strikes not only reflect the grievances of workers but also have far-reaching implications for the creative production process. When creators halt work to strike, the entire production ecosystem is affected, leading to delays and financial repercussions for studios and networks. This disruption can highlight the essential role of creative labor in the media landscape, emphasizing that without fair compensation and appropriate working conditions, the quality and diversity of content may suffer (Fisher, 2024). Solidarity among workers is a crucial aspect of strikes in the creative industries. The collective actions taken by writers, actors, and other creatives often mobilize broader support from the public and other unions, creating a unified front against industry practices perceived as exploitative. The success of such strikes frequently hinges on the ability of workers to present a united stance and articulate their demands clearly.

The Writers Guild of America (WGA) is a labor union representing writers in the film, television, and digital media industries in the United States. Formed in 1933, the WGA aims to protect the rights and interests of its members by negotiating collective bargaining agreements, advocating for fair compensation, and addressing issues related to intellectual property, working conditions, and job security (WGA, n.d). The history of WGA strikes illustrates the evolving challenges faced by writers in the media industry, highlighting issues of compensation, job security, and adaptation to technological changes. Each strike has contributed to shaping the framework of writers' rights and industry standards, emphasizing the importance of collective bargaining in advocating for fair treatment.

WGA has a history of strikes that reflect ongoing tensions between writers and studios over compensation, working conditions, and industry changes and this history has been the subject of several academic studies, which have generally assessed the strikes as being technology-driven. The history of WGA strikes illustrates the ongoing struggle of writers to secure fair compensation, job security, and protections in an evolving media landscape. Each strike has significantly shaped the framework of writers' rights, emphasizing the importance of collectivity in the media and creative industry. The first major strike, in 1960, lasting 148 days, focused on issues such as residuals from television reruns and writers demanded a share of profits from rebroadcasts and syndication of their works and strike resulted in the establishment of a residuals system and improved benefits (Dings, 2024). The 1981 strike focused on residuals for cable and home video, with writers seeking compensation for works aired on cable networks and sold on home video. Job security, which is related to the instability of writing jobs in a changing media landscape, was also a prominent concern. The outcome of the strike was that the WGA won a deal that included cable residuals and improved job security provisions. The 1988 strike, lasting five months, addressed concerns over home video and residuals, ultimately ending with a deal that improved writers' compensation and established residuals for home video (Wilson, 1991). The 2007 and 2008 strikes, significant events that lasted 100 days, focused on digital media and fair compensation for new media content, ultimately leading to a new agreement that included provisions for digital media and set standards for compensation in an evolving landscape (Banks, 2010).

The most recent 2023 strike highlights issues such as AI in writing and regulations, working conditions, streaming residuals, and overall pay equity. From May 2 to September 27, 2023, lasting 148 days, the Writers Guild of America (WGA), representing 11,000 screenwriters, went on strike over a labor dispute with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP). Writers demanded higher pay to reflect inflation and changes in the

industry, particularly due to the rise of streaming services. They expressed concerns about long hours and the use of "mini-rooms," which limited job security. Additionally, there were fears regarding the use of AI in writing and the need for protections against potential job displacement. The strike ended with a tentative agreement that addressed many of the writers' concerns, including better compensation and protections related to AI.

The WGA strike primarily revolves around writers' concerns about job security, compensation, and the impact of AI on creative work. Writers fear that the use of AI in scriptwriting could undermine their roles, lead to decreased pay, and diminish the quality of creative content.

The strike garnered significant media attention and support from other unions and public figures in the industry. Writers participated in picketing and organized events to raise awareness about their issues and to pressure studios to negotiate. The strike lasted until late September 2023, concluding with a tentative agreement that addressed many of the writers' concerns, including improved compensation and safeguards against AI use in writing.

Framing Analysis of News Coverage: WGA Strike 2023

Framing analysis examines how information is presented and the implications of that presentation. According to Entman (1993), framing involves selecting certain aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text. This process shapes how audiences interpret events and issues. Framing analysis is a method used in communication studies and media research to explore how information is presented and understood within the media. It focuses on the ways in which specific aspects of an issue, event, or story are emphasized or downplayed through the selection of particular words, images, and narratives. This dual process shapes how audiences understand issues and can significantly influence public opinion and behavior.

In this study, an analysis is conducted on news articles published on on-line news websites that reference the keyword "WGA Strike 2023," utilizing framing analysis as the methodological framework. Focus on articles published before, during, and after the strike period, ideally from April to December 2023. A comprehensive analysis revealed a total of 292 news articles sourced from 92 distinct news outlets concerning the subject matter. Prominent among these sources were ABC Chicago, AP News, BBC, CNBC, CNN, Deadline, Los Angeles Times, NBC News, NPR, Reuters, The Guardian, The Hollywood Reporter, The New York Times, Variety, VOX, and The Washington Post. Notably, the month of September emerged as the period with the highest intensity of coverage, coinciding with the conclusion of the strike. In the study, key concepts such as creativity, creative production, and artificial intelligence were systematically defined, and the thematic frameworks that shaped the narratives were identified. In the context of the WGA strike, it was found that news items were formed under the themes of economy, technology and, working conditions. The economic theme emphasizes the financial stakes for writers and the broader industry, the labor rights theme focuses on the rights of workers, collectivity, and collective bargaining, and the technological theme discusses the impact of AI on writing jobs and the creative process.

The themes in the headlines of the news are as follows:
1. **Human-Centric Focus**: Many headlines emphasize the human element of the strike, focusing on the writers' struggles, job security, and creative rights. Phrases like

"Writers Fight for Fair Compensation" highlight the human impact and the emotional stakes involved. This framing tends to evoke sympathy and support for the writers, positioning them as victims of a larger economic system.

2. **Technological Threat**: Headlines that mention AI often frame it as a disruptive force threatening the traditional roles of writers. For example, "AI: The New Rival in Hollywood" portrays AI as a competitor, suggesting a dystopian narrative where human creativity is undervalued. This framing can amplify fears about job displacement and the erosion of creative professions.

3. **Collective Action vs. Corporate Power**: Many headlines highlight the writers' collective bargaining power against corporate entities. This framing emphasizes solidarity and the importance of human agency in the face of technological advancement. Phrases like "Writers Unite Against AI Overreach" signal a struggle for control over creative processes, underscoring the tension between human creativity and machine efficiency.

4. The framing of the WGA strike in headlines reflects a complex interplay between human and artificial intelligence. The emphasis on human narratives highlights the emotional and creative dimensions of writing, while the portrayal of AI as a threat underscores societal concerns about technology's impact on labor.

Based on the themes, it is seen that the framework of the news is determined as conflict, economy, technology and culture.

1. **Conflict Frame:** News coverage often emphasizes the conflict between writers and studios, portraying it as a struggle for creative rights against the backdrop of technological advancement. This frame highlights the fear of AI as a threat to human creativity, framing the issue in terms of a battle for survival. Many articles emphasized the irreplaceable aspects of human creativity, intuition, and emotional depth in storytelling. This framing positioned human intelligence as superior in areas like character development, thematic depth, and cultural context—elements that AI may struggle to replicate authentically. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) discusses the concept of flow and the intrinsic motivation behind creative work, highlighting the nuances of human creativity that are often lost in algorithmic processes. In this case, the focus on conflict can overshadow collaborative possibilities between AI and human creativity. Some narratives proposed a more optimistic view of AI, suggesting that the future may lie in collaboration between human writers and AI tools. It indicates a potential for enhanced creativity where AI serves as an assistant rather than a replacement. The idea of augmented intelligence emphasizes collaboration between humans and AI, suggesting that this partnership could lead to innovative creative outputs that benefit from both human insight and AI efficiency (Mandvikar & Dave, 2023).

2. **Labor Rights vs. Technological Disruption:** News articles often framed the WGA strike in the context of labor rights, emphasizing writers' demands for fair compensation, especially in light of the growing use of AI in scriptwriting and content creation. The framing here highlights the tension between human creativity and AI capabilities, where AI is often portrayed as a potential threat to job security for writers. In this case, the frame of "labor rights" emphasizes the importance of protecting human creativity against encroaching technology.

3. **AI as a Tool vs. AI as a Threat:** Different articles varied in their portrayal of AI. Some framed AI as a helpful tool that could enhance creativity, allowing writers to generate ideas more efficiently. Others framed it as a significant threat, suggesting that reliance on AI could undermine the unique value of human storytellers. Bennett

and Entman (2001) note that media framing can significantly influence public discourse by constructing specific interpretations of complex issues. The dichotomy of AI as a tool versus a threat reflects broader societal anxieties regarding technology's role in creative industries.

4. **Economic Frame:** The economic implications of AI in writing are another prevalent frame. Articles often discuss how studios might leverage AI to cut costs, thus impacting writers' livelihoods. This frame resonates with broader economic concerns about automation in various industries. The potential job displacement due to technological advancement, which resonates with writers' fears of being replaced by AI systems.

5. **Ethical Frame:** The ethical implications of AI in creative industries are also a significant theme. Reports often address questions of authorship, originality, and the moral rights of writers in the face of AI-generated content. This frame raises critical issues about the integrity of artistic expression and the potential commodification of creativity. The use of AI in creative industries raises ethical questions about authorship and authenticity. Who owns the rights to AI-generated content?

6. **Identity Frame:** The framing of writers as custodians of culture and storytelling is another critical aspect. This frame elevates the discussion to one of cultural preservation, arguing that AI lacks the human experience and emotional depth that writers bring to their work. Discussions around AI often touch on ethical concerns, including ownership of content and the potential for bias in AI-generated materials.

Conclusion

The intersection of artificial intelligence and creative industries has emerged as a significant area of inquiry within communication and media studies. This exploration reveals that AI technologies, particularly within the realm of synthetic media, pose challenges to traditional concepts of authorship, creativity, and labor. The recent Writers Guild of America (WGA) strike exemplifies the complexities surrounding these themes, highlighting the nuanced tensions between human and artificial intelligence in the realm of creative production. The framing of the WGA strike's news emphasizes the critical role of human agency in an increasingly automated environment. Various frames—conflict, economic considerations, technological disruption, and ethical implications—illuminate the multifaceted nature of the discourse surrounding AI's impact on creative labor. As writers advocate for fair compensation and protections against potential job displacement resulting from AI, they underscore the irreplaceable qualities of human creativity that algorithms find challenging to replicate.

This study posits that the future of creative industries may depend on establishing a balance between utilizing AI as a collaborative tool and preserving the unique contributions of human creators. As the media landscape evolves, it is imperative to cultivate ethical frameworks that address the implications of AI in creative processes, ensuring that innovation does not compromise creativity, diversity, and cultural richness. The ongoing dialogue surrounding these issues will significantly shape not only the future of media production but also the broader cultural narratives that define society.

Future research could further investigate how various media outlets utilize these frames and their subsequent impact on public opinion and policy concerning AI in creative industries. While AI offers promising opportunities to enhance creativity across various sectors, it

fundamentally differs from human intelligence in terms of emotional depth, cultural context, and ethical considerations.

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