CONSENT FOR THE AI GENERATION

Deepfakes are deeply fucked.

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The gifts from the gods (read: dudes) down in Silicon Valley are never-ending. To name a few: Instagram, Uber, and the short-lived #NFTs. It's true; entrepreneurial endeavors from the Zuckerberg wannabes down in America's biggest tech hub have completely changed many of our lives. In 2014, Ian Goodfellow, one such Bay Area bro, surpassed the existing algorithms of face matching and tracking after creating Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs — a set of deep learning processes to output computer-generated images undetectable from the original images it aims to mirror. Although they may not know of the frameworks used, an average person sees the work of GANs in AI voice memes, photo mashups, and Facetune. And that same average person can also watch deepfaked pornography as easily as a video of AI Biden rapping.

In late January, Twitch streamer Atrioc accidentally live-streamed himself on a site of AI-generated porn of fellow popular female Twitch streamers, including Pokimane and QTCinderella. The widely publicized incident brought the conversation of deep fakes to the mainstream in the U.S. No longer a murky concept unknown to those outside of the tech world or a plight exclusive to celebs, deepfakes are now a new form of media. Not only is AI porn unethical and damaging, but it also sets a dangerous precedent in the already unregulated porn industry to take advantage of people's image and likeness.

Within all porn lies the matter of consent; AI-created porn is no different. For those who fail to see the connection between pornography and consent, *Jerk* is happy to make that clarification. New York State defines consent as a knowing, voluntary, mutual decision to engage in sexual activity. In relation to content creation, if AI-generated porn is made without the knowledge and explicit permission of the people who are used as the original source material, it violates consent.

While GANs was not created to make AI porn, the majority of its use is for that very purpose. Sensity, a deepfake detection platform, reported in 2019 that 96% of deepfakes on the internet are pornographic, and 90% of those represent women.

The numbers, while high, reflect our society's male entitlement; the "who is going to stop me?'' attitude toward women's bodies. The unfortunate reality is, for those who watch deep fakes and purchase them, the concept of consent is not unknown to them, but rather they are willing to put aside sexual integrity in order to get off. AI porn is different than catcalling or date rape in its novelty, but the disregard for autonomy and respect is all the same. Dually wrong, Sensity has found deep fakes have been used to make child pornography as well.

All victims of non-consensual porn suffer emotional distress, and the creation of non-consensual AI porn presents a uniquely ambiguous fear in knowing deepfakes can be made of you and put out on the web, and you may not even know. While most popular deepfakes are made of female celebrities and influencers, the use of technology is not limited to women in mainstream media. Being deep-faked can happen to anyone. Knowing there are explicit videos of "you" being watched, spread, and monetized off creates extreme stress for the women who are aware of their abuse. It is unknown how many victims have no knowledge of their image being used and how many are victims of revenge porn or extortion via deepfake creation.

After the Deepfake site featuring non-consensual AI porn went viral following Atrioc's stream, QTCinderella tweeted, "I want to scream. Stop. Everybody fucking stop. Stop spreading it. Stop advertising it. Stop." While she received support, many reply tweets displayed blatant victim blaming. User @Davy97259476 wrote, "It's 2023 QT, get over it. Nobody got touched, nobody is underage. Just a few horny viewers that don't get excited with regular porn anymore. Most probably have a rough life and if this is something that prevents them from going real crazy, I'm not judging," illustrating the irony of where empathy is directed.

User @RichardWaldner wrote, "Does being deepfaked make the content real? It's just fancy photoshop that doesn't actually show what the women who obviously didn't consent to this think it shows. Might be small peanuts to me and I apologize if it comes across wrong." This minimizes the issue of non-consensual porn to 'fancy photoshop.'

Another user, @AdriianFTW wrote, "You've done more to advertise it than the sites do themselves.

Get a grip of yourself girl." The tweets speak to the men's dismissal of virtual sexual abuse. Women's pain becomes the basis for sexual gratification, and then they are faulted for their outrage.

The sheer difficulty in taking down the content and permanence of the internet also exacerbates trauma. While certain platforms, like Reddit and Pornhub, have attempted to remove and ban deepfakes, it is a band-aid fix to the issue. On the top four pornography websites, Sensity accounted for 124 million existing deepfake videos. Although AI porn is typically advanced, it still can be detected as AI-made. In time, with GANs' ability to rapidly create and improve on itself, deepfakes may be impossible to identify and prevent.

Alongside those whose non-pornographic images are used, sex workers also lose control of their image. Using non-pornographic material and existing content, the nature of deepfake porn can vary as faces can be cut and pasted on another's body or vice versa. Sex workers whose bodies are used to make AI porn go unpaid for their content, also becoming an issue of labor rights as well when their bodies are being profited off.

Many content creators put their work out willingly and are faced with disdain by the same people who may then turn around and watch deepfakes without guilt. Questions can be raised on why are these deepfakes watched when it is known they are unreal: Is it that the lack of autonomy of those who have been deepfaked is a turn-on? Or is it that they don't have to pay for it? Because AI women have perfect bodies and can essentially be fucked however you want without consequence?

There is a prevailing impression of tech in America as one of a futuristic, morally neutral force that propels us forward. While the marvels of technology are great and all, they can also be entrenched in the very -isms that have always held us back; classism, racism, sexism, etc. These systems of oppression are all intertwined with our advancements, no matter what sleek packaging they are presented to us in. Tech can be a means to sexual misconduct, abuse, and misogyny through AI porn. It is not a victimless crime. From the images, pixels, or animations that make up a fully formed deepfake, exploitation is made ready for consumption.