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An exploration into how the personification of artificially and human-created imagery might be employed to articulate themes of identity and self-discovery

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This presentation discusses formative experiments that underpin the development of an allegorical narrative that examines themes of identity loss and self-discovery in relation to encounters with Artificial Intelligence. Le Cose Che Non Esistono (The Things That Don't Exist) employs both human and machine-made (GenAI) imagery to personify natural and artificial intelligence existing in the same environment. The story focuses on the existential journey of a Husk; a fractured human who seeks to restore identity wholeness by engaging the aid of an artificial entity.

The Master of Philosophy project constitutes an artistic provocation that allegorically considers how the adoption of artificial intelligence causes us to question the relevance of our human creativity. This becomes increasingly pronounced as the 'cultural humanisation' of GenAI compares its generative capability to creative synthesis (Jiang et al., 2023). The animation considers the impact of AI on diminished artistic agency and narrates how a shift from passive observation to active creation might bring about empowerment of the self.

Methodologically the study employs autoethnographic inquiry that is activated inside a heuristic framework (Tavares & Ings, 2018). In this process, (as the artistic researcher) personal experience of the explored subject and agency over the animation become key components of the study's process and outcome.

The project offers two contributions to knowledge. First, its technological significance lies in its hybrid reconciliation of artificially generated and self-made imagery (using performance capture, 3D and 2D digital technologies).

Second, the thesis employs animation and allegory to expand and illustrate the idea of an individual's rediscovered and evolving identity. This concept seeks affinity with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, as self-actualisation (being the process of discovering oneself) is achieved through the act of creativity (Maslow, 1943).

References
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