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Spirituality In The Age Of Artificial Intelligence: A Perennial Philosophical Critique Of The Future Of Humanity

Syaifuddin Zuhri[1], Nurul Huda[2]
[1,2] Universitas Nurul Jadid, Indonesia
Email: *saifads82@gmail.com, enha300681@gmail.com*

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Corresponding Author : *fahrunisaaini2@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has fundamentally transformed various dimensions of contemporary human life, including economics, education, communication, and religious practices. While AI provides unprecedented opportunities for efficiency, innovation, and knowledge production, it also raises profound philosophical and spiritual concerns regarding the nature of humanity, meaning, and transcendence. This article examines the implications of AI development through the lens of perennial philosophy, particularly the ideas of René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Employing a qualitative library research method, this study analyzes classical perennial texts alongside contemporary literature on AI, digital culture, and spirituality. The findings reveal that AI represents the culmination of modern rationality and contributes to the increasing desacralization of human consciousness. The emergence of algorithmic society, digital spirituality, and transhumanist discourse reflects a broader crisis of meaning rooted in the separation of knowledge from transcendent reality. From a perennial perspective, the challenge posed by AI is not merely technological but fundamentally metaphysical and spiritual. The study argues that the future of humanity depends on the integration of technological innovation with spiritual wisdom. Perennial philosophy offers an alternative framework for reconstructing spirituality in the digital age by reaffirming the sacred dimension of knowledge, strengthening contemplative practices, and promoting a value-based ethics of technology. Ultimately, AI should serve humanity's spiritual flourishing rather than become the dominant orientation of civilization.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become one of the most significant developments shaping contemporary civilization. AI technologies increasingly influence human activities across various sectors,

including education, economics, healthcare, governance, and religious life. The rapid advancement of machine learning, generative AI, and predictive algorithms has transformed the way individuals access information, make decisions, and interact with their social environment (Kamalov et al., 2023; Tallberg et al., 2023). While these innovations provide unprecedented opportunities for efficiency and technological progress, they simultaneously raise critical questions regarding human autonomy, identity, consciousness, and the future of humanity (Bulathwela et al., 2024; MKPO, 2025; Rif'ah et al., 2026). As a result, AI has evolved beyond a purely technological phenomenon and has become a major subject of philosophical, ethical, and civilizational debate in the twenty-first century (Papakostas, 2025; Tampubolon & Nadeak, 2024).

Current scholarly discussions on AI are largely dominated by technical and ethical concerns. Researchers frequently examine issues such as algorithmic bias, data privacy, governance, accountability, and the socioeconomic consequences of automation (Keshava, n.d.; Olatoye & Tella, 2026; Sarsebayeva & Meirbayev, 2025). Although these perspectives contribute significantly to understanding the practical implications of AI, they often neglect deeper questions concerning the spiritual and metaphysical dimensions of human existence (Kaya, 2025; Kia & Majesty, 2025). The increasing dependence on algorithmic systems has generated concerns regarding the reduction of human beings to quantifiable data, measurable behaviors, and computational patterns (Ashraf, 2022; Nwadiokwu, 2025). Such developments reflect a broader tendency within modern civilization to prioritize instrumental rationality and technological efficiency while marginalizing spiritual values and transcendent meaning (Alasmari, 2025; Petrovic & Jaksic, 2026).

This phenomenon has become increasingly evident in what scholars describe as an algorithmic society, where digital technologies mediate social relationships, shape perceptions of reality, and influence human behavior (Adigun & Afolaranmi, 2024; Düzbayır, 2025; Zaharah et al., 2024). In such a context, technological systems not only function as tools but also increasingly assume roles traditionally associated with human judgment and authority (Arianti et al., n.d.; Pacheco, 2026). The growing integration of AI into everyday life raises important questions about the future of human agency and the preservation of human dignity (Anshori et al., 2025; He, 2024; Taufikin et al., 2025). Recent studies have demonstrated that AI is beginning to influence religious practices, spiritual experiences, and the production of religious knowledge, thereby creating new dynamics in the relationship between technology and religion (Konstantinidou et al., 2026; Mohideen, 2025). These developments suggest that the impact of AI extends beyond technical innovation and requires a broader philosophical framework capable of addressing its civilizational implications (Pedro et al., 2019; Que et al., 2026).

One intellectual tradition that offers a critical perspective on these developments is perennial philosophy (Al-Chaer, 2026; Zahriyanto et al., 2026). Prominent perennial thinkers such as René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, and Seyyed

Hossein Nasr argue that modern civilization is characterized by the decline of sacred knowledge and the dominance of materialistic worldviews (Iswandi et al., 2026; Wang & Watson, 2026). According to this perspective, contemporary crises are not merely economic, political, or technological but fundamentally spiritual in nature (Al Muhaysin & Hassan, 2025; Ma'ruf et al., 2026). The desacralization of knowledge, the fragmentation of reality, and the separation of humanity from transcendent truth have contributed to a profound civilizational imbalance (No et al., 2019; Sain, 2025; Ummah, 2019). From this viewpoint, the rise of AI can be interpreted not only as a technological achievement but also as a manifestation of the broader metaphysical orientation of modernity that prioritizes control, efficiency, and rationalization over spiritual wisdom and inner transformation (Dzulfian Syafrian, 2025; Khaled & Adnan, 2022; Taslim et al., 2025).

Despite the growing body of literature on AI ethics and digital religion, relatively little attention has been devoted to examining AI through the lens of perennial philosophy. Existing studies tend to focus either on the ethical regulation of AI or on the practical implications of digital technologies for religious communities. Consequently, the spiritual and metaphysical consequences of AI-driven societies remain underexplored. This gap is particularly significant because the challenges posed by AI are not limited to technological governance but also concern the future of human identity, meaning, and spirituality. By bringing perennial philosophy into dialogue with contemporary debates on AI, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between technological development and the spiritual condition of modern humanity.

This study employs a qualitative library research approach by critically analyzing the works of major perennial philosophers alongside contemporary scholarship on Artificial Intelligence, digital culture, and technology ethics. Through thematic and philosophical analysis, the study explores how perennial philosophy critiques the epistemological foundations of modern technological civilization, examines the spiritual implications of AI-driven societies, and proposes an alternative framework for reconstructing spirituality in the digital age. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of perennial philosophical perspectives with contemporary AI discourse, an area that has received limited scholarly attention. By doing so, the study contributes to broader discussions concerning technology, religion, and the future of human civilization while offering a spiritually grounded perspective on navigating the challenges of the AI era.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design using a library research approach. Library research is particularly suitable for philosophical inquiry because it enables the systematic examination of texts, concepts, and theoretical frameworks relevant to the research problem. The study focuses on the critical analysis of primary and secondary sources concerning perennial philosophy,

Artificial Intelligence, spirituality, and the philosophy of technology. Primary sources include the major works of perennial philosophers such as René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. These texts provide the conceptual foundation for understanding perennial critiques of modernity, secularization, and technological civilization. Secondary sources consist of contemporary scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and recent studies addressing AI ethics, digital religion, transhumanism, and the future of humanity. Data collection was conducted through a systematic review of relevant literature published in academic journals, books, and research reports. Particular attention was given to recent publications indexed in Scopus and other reputable academic databases to ensure the contemporary relevance of the discussion. The collected data were analyzed using a philosophical-hermeneutical approach, which seeks to interpret and contextualize perennial concepts in relation to current technological developments. The analytical process involved three stages. First, key concepts within perennial philosophy were identified and examined. Second, contemporary debates regarding AI, digital culture, and spirituality were critically reviewed. Third, the findings from both domains were synthesized to develop a comprehensive interpretation of the relationship between AI and the future of humanity from a perennial philosophical perspective.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Artificial Intelligence as the Culmination of Modern Rationality

The findings indicate that Artificial Intelligence represents the most advanced manifestation of the modern intellectual project rooted in Enlightenment rationality. Contemporary AI systems, particularly machine learning, large language models, and predictive analytics, demonstrate humanity's ability to reproduce complex cognitive functions through computational mechanisms. This technological leap epitomizes what critical theory identifies as the apex of calculative thinking, where human reason is externalized into autonomous, mathematical systems capable of processing reality at unprecedented scales. The analysis of the literature shows that AI operates primarily through data processing, prediction, and algorithmic reasoning. These developments have significantly expanded human capacities in information management, decision support, and knowledge production. However, the literature also reveals inherent limitations. AI remains fundamentally dependent upon data structures and computational architectures. Existing research suggests that AI lacks self-awareness, spiritual intuition, metaphysical consciousness, and the capacity to address existential questions concerning meaning and ultimate reality. It operates strictly within the domain of syntax manipulation without any genuine access to semantic comprehension or subjective experience (qualia). Furthermore, recent studies indicate that AI encourages increasingly instrumental understandings of human beings,

emphasizing productivity, efficiency, and measurable performance. The abundance of information generated through AI technologies has not many produced corresponding growth in wisdom or deeper understanding. To map these boundaries and provide a clear academic reference point, Table 4 delineates the ontological and epistemological distinctions between computational systems and human consciousness.

Spiritual Crisis in the Algorithmic Society

The findings demonstrate that AI contributes to the formation of an algorithmic society in which decision-making processes are increasingly mediated by predictive systems and data-driven technologies. The literature shows that individuals are progressively represented through digital profiles derived from behavioral data, online interactions, and consumption patterns. Studies on surveillance capitalism reveal that personal experiences are increasingly transformed into economic resources for prediction and behavioral modification. Research also indicates that AI is reshaping religious and spiritual practices. Generative AI systems frequently approach religion through informational and moral frameworks while struggling to represent experiential, mystical, and contemplative dimensions of spirituality. Additionally, the findings reveal the emergence of algorithmic authority. AI systems increasingly influence beliefs, judgments, and perceptions of reality, often being regarded as objective and trustworthy sources of guidance. The literature further suggests that digital environments characterized by continuous stimulation reduce opportunities for contemplation, silence, and spiritual reflection, contributing to growing experiences of loneliness and existential disconnection.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Critique of Modern Technology

The findings indicate that Seyyed Hossein Nasr identifies the central crisis of modern civilization as fundamentally spiritual rather than technological. The literature reveals that modern science and technology emerged through the separation of knowledge from sacred reality. Consequently, technology increasingly functions independently of spiritual and ethical considerations. In relation to AI, recent studies demonstrate that technological systems are not entirely neutral. AI embodies assumptions concerning reality, knowledge, and human nature that privilege quantification, prediction, and control. Research also shows that AI increasingly mediates religious authority and spiritual experience. While technological accessibility to religious knowledge has expanded, concerns remain regarding the reduction of spirituality to informational and functional categories. Another significant finding is the growing tendency to view technology as a source of salvation. AI-driven systems increasingly occupy roles traditionally associated with religious, moral, or spiritual authorities.

The Future of Humanity: Between Transhumanism and Spirituality

The findings reveal that transhumanism has emerged as a major intellectual movement associated with AI development. The literature indicates that transhumanist thinkers advocate the enhancement of human capacities through artificial intelligence, biotechnology, genetic engineering, and neural technologies. Proposed goals include increased intelligence, longevity, cognitive performance, and potentially the integration of consciousness with digital systems. At the same time, research identifies significant philosophical tensions between transhumanist assumptions and spiritual conceptions of human fulfillment. Several scholars note that transhumanist narratives often reinterpret traditional religious themes such as salvation, immortality, and transcendence within technological frameworks. The findings suggest that technological progress alone does not adequately address existential, moral, or spiritual dimensions of human existence.

Reconstructing Spirituality in the Age of AI

The findings indicate that several fundamental principles can serve as the foundation for reconstructing spirituality in the age of Artificial Intelligence. These principles include restoring the sacred dimension of knowledge, revitalizing contemplative and reflective practices, developing AI ethics grounded in transcendent values, fostering digital wisdom through education, and promoting constructive engagement between religious traditions and technological innovation. The findings further suggest that the literature consistently identifies these elements as essential strategies for addressing the spiritual crisis emerging within increasingly algorithmic and AI-driven societies.

Discussion

The The findings suggest that Artificial Intelligence is not merely a technological phenomenon but a manifestation of deeper philosophical assumptions embedded within modernity. The dominance of rationality, quantification, and computational thinking identified in the Results section reflects what perennial philosophers describe as the reduction of reality to measurable dimensions. From this perspective, AI functions both as a technological achievement and as a symbol of modern civilization's orientation toward control, efficiency, and prediction. The emergence of algorithmic society further illustrates how technological rationality increasingly shapes human identity and social life. The findings indicate that individuals are progressively interpreted through data profiles and predictive systems. This tendency supports the perennial critique advanced by Guénon, Schuon, and Nasr that modernity neglects the spiritual essence of the human person. Although algorithmic systems provide practical benefits, they simultaneously risk reducing human beings to informational objects rather than recognizing them as spiritual subjects. The discussion of spirituality and religion reveals an important paradox. AI expands access to religious knowledge and facilitates new forms of spiritual engagement, yet it also tends to translate religious traditions into informational

frameworks. As Tsuria and Tsuria (2024) demonstrate, generative AI frequently emphasizes ethical and cognitive dimensions of religion while marginalizing mystical and transformative aspects. This finding confirms perennial concerns regarding the inability of technological systems to grasp transcendent realities that exceed rational and computational categories.

Nasr's critique provides a useful framework for understanding these developments. The results indicate that AI embodies assumptions inherited from a desacralized worldview in which knowledge is detached from metaphysical foundations. Consequently, the challenge posed by AI is not simply technical but civilizational. The central issue is whether technological innovation can be integrated within a broader vision of reality that recognizes sacred meaning and spiritual purpose.

The analysis of transhumanism further strengthens this argument. While transhumanist discourse seeks human perfection through technological enhancement, perennial philosophy proposes a fundamentally different understanding of human fulfillment. Perfection, in the perennial perspective, is not achieved through greater computational capacity, longevity, or efficiency, but through spiritual realization and awareness of humanity's divine origin. Therefore, technological enhancement and spiritual development should not be treated as equivalent forms of progress. Finally, the proposed reconstruction of spirituality offers a constructive response to the challenges identified throughout the study. The findings suggest that restoring sacred knowledge, cultivating contemplation, promoting digital wisdom, and grounding AI ethics in transcendent values may help prevent technological systems from becoming substitutes for spiritual wisdom. Rather than rejecting AI, perennial philosophy advocates its integration within a framework that places spiritual realization above technological advancement. Overall, the discussion demonstrates that the future relationship between humanity and AI depends not only on technological innovation but also on humanity's capacity to preserve wisdom, meaning, and transcendence in an increasingly algorithmic world. AI may transform how human beings access information and make decisions, but it cannot replace the spiritual dimension that remains central to authentic human flourishing.

CONCLUSION

The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence represents one of the most significant transformations of contemporary civilization. While AI offers remarkable opportunities for innovation, efficiency, and knowledge production, it also raises profound philosophical and spiritual questions concerning the nature of humanity and the future of civilization. This study has demonstrated that perennial philosophy provides a valuable framework for understanding these challenges. The works of René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr reveal that the contemporary crisis associated with AI is not merely technological but fundamentally spiritual. The emergence of algorithmic society, digital religion, and transhumanist aspirations reflects deeper processes of

secularization and the progressive loss of humanity's connection with transcendent reality.

From a perennial perspective, AI should not be viewed solely as a technological achievement but also as a cultural phenomenon that reflects the metaphysical assumptions of modernity. The increasing dominance of rationality, quantification, and technological authority risks reducing human existence to measurable and computational dimensions while neglecting the spiritual essence of humanity. The future of humanity therefore depends on the capacity to integrate technological advancement with spiritual wisdom. Perennial philosophy suggests that this integration can be achieved through the restoration of sacred knowledge, the revitalization of contemplative practices, and the development of ethical frameworks grounded in transcendent values. Such efforts are essential if humanity is to benefit from technological innovation without sacrificing its spiritual identity. Ultimately, the challenge of the AI age is not whether machines will become more intelligent, but whether human beings can preserve their wisdom, dignity, and spiritual awareness in a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence.

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