***GNOSI:* An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis**
Volume 8, Issue 2, March (Special Issue), 2025
ISSN (Online): 2714-2485

Digital Afterlives and the Ethics of Postmortem Existence: Rethinking Identity, Autonomy, and Remembrance in the Era of Artificial intelligence

Thomas Eneji OGAR
Department of Philosophy,
University of Calabar, Nigeria
Email: thomasenejiogar@unical.edu.ng

Esther E. AKIBA
Department of Philosophy,
University of Calabar, Nigeria

George ABOKA
Department of Classics and Philosophy,
University of Cape Coast,
Cape Coast, Ghana.
Email: gaboka@ucc.edu.gh

(**Received**: May-2025; **Accepted**: August-2025; Available **Online**: August-2025)

ABSTRACT

The persistence of personhood beyond biological death has emerged as a pressing philosophical and ethical challenge in the digital age. This paper interrogates the ontological and ethical dimensions of postmortem personhood, arguing that the deceased continue to exert influence through relational, memorial, and increasingly, technological means. Drawing on existentialist philosophy (Heidegger, Sartre), ethics (Levinas, Blanchot), and contemporary thanatology, we challenge the Western binary of alive/dead by demonstrating how cultural practices (ancestor veneration, digital memorials) and emerging technologies (AI avatars, cryonics) sustain the dead as active participants in social and moral life. We identify key tensions in postmortem autonomy, consent, and commodification, particularly as digital afterlife technologies outpace legal and ethical frameworks. Ultimately, we propose a *process-relational model* of personhood that accommodates dynamic, multi-substrate persistence while advocating for ethical stewardship of digital remains. This framework addresses gaps in existentialist and metaphysical accounts, offering a nuanced approach to postmortem personhood that balances technological possibilities with respect for human dignity.

Keywords: Postmortem Personhood; Existential Thanatology; Ontology of Absence; Death and Identity.

INTRODUCTION

Death has long occupied a central place in philosophical inquiry, serving as both an existential limit and a conceptual challenge to our understanding of personhood. While biological death marks the cessation of vital functions, its philosophical implications extend far beyond mere physical termination. In this paper, we explore the persistence of personhood beyond death, arguing that the deceased continue to exert influence through relational, memorial, and technological means. Our investigation is situated at the intersection of existentialist philosophy and contemporary thanatology, drawing on key thinkers such as Heidegger (1962), Sartre (1956), and Levinas (1969) to interrogate the boundaries of identity and being.

The Western metaphysical tradition has often framed personhood as coterminous with biological life, treating death as an absolute endpoint (Ayibam, 2022). However, this view fails to account for the myriad ways in which the dead remain present in social, cultural, and psychological realms. Heidegger's (1962) concept of *Being-toward-death* (Sein-zum-Tode) provides a foundational lens for understanding how anticipation of death shapes human existence, yet his framework leaves unanswered questions about the ontological status of the deceased. We contend that death does not annihilate personhood but transforms it, rendering the dead *present-as-absent* in ways that demand philosophical attention.

This transformation is evident in practices such as ancestor veneration, memorialization, and digital legacy preservation, which challenge the notion that personhood is confined to the living. For example, in many non-Western cultures, the dead are actively included in social and familial structures, suggesting that personhood can persist beyond biological death (Huntington & Metcalf, 1991; Ayibam, 2024a; Ayibam, 2024b). Similarly, contemporary technologies like AI-driven memorials and posthumous digital avatars blur the line between life and death, raising ethical and ontological questions about the nature of postmortem existence (Savin-Baden, 2021). These phenomena compel us to reconsider the traditional binary of alive/dead and to develop a more nuanced understanding of personhood.

Levinas' (1969) ethics of *alterity* offers a valuable perspective on this issue, emphasizing the irreducible otherness of the dead and their claim on the living. For Levinas, the *face of the other*—even in death—commands responsibility, suggesting that the deceased retain a form of moral personhood. This ethical dimension is complemented by Blanchot's (1982) notion of the "space of death," which describes how the dead inhabit a liminal realm that continues to shape the world of the living. Together, these thinkers provide a framework for understanding the dead not as passive absences but as active participants in the construction of meaning.

The psychological and social mechanisms of grief further illustrate the enduring presence of the dead. Freud (1917) famously described mourning as a process of gradually detaching from the deceased, but contemporary theories emphasize ongoing bonds that sustain relationships with the dead (Klass et al., 1996; Ayibam, 2024c). These bonds suggest that personhood is not solely an individual attribute but a relational construct, co-constituted through interactions with others—both living and dead. The dead, in this view, remain "persons" to the extent that they are remembered and mourned.

The rise of digital technologies has also introduced new complexities to these questions. Platforms like social media allow the dead to maintain a virtual presence, while AI tools enable the creation of interactive posthumous personas (Stokes, 2022; Ayibam, 2025a). These developments challenge traditional notions of mortality, inviting us to ask whether personhood can be artificially sustained or even recreated. Such possibilities raise ethical concerns about consent, autonomy, and the commodification of the dead, underscoring the need for a robust philosophical response.

To explore how personhood persists beyond death, we must first examine the existential foundations that underpin our understanding of death and identity. Central to this inquiry is the existentialist perspective, which frames death not merely as an endpoint but as a defining condition of human existence. Heidegger's *Being-toward-death (1962)* and Sartre's emphasis on mortality as a structuring force provide critical frameworks for analyzing how the anticipation of death shapes selfhood. The next section interrogates the ontological and ethical dimensions of death, establishing the philosophical groundwork for rethinking personhood as a continuum that transcends biological cessation.

THE EXISTENTIAL FOUNDATIONS OF DEATH AND PERSONHOOD

The philosophical examination of death as constitutive of personhood finds its most rigorous formulation in the existentialist thought, particularly in the works of Heidegger and Sartre. Heidegger (1962) posits that human existence is fundamentally structured by its orientation toward death—what he terms *Being-toward-death* (Sein-zum-Tode). This concept does not merely describe the inevitability of biological cessation but reveals death as the horizon that gives meaning to life itself. For Heidegger, the awareness of mortality individuates *Dasein* (being-there), compelling authentic existence through the confrontation with finitude. Yet this framework, while illuminating the existential significance of death, leaves unexamined the ontological status of those who have already crossed its threshold. If death is the "possibility of impossibility" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 307), how does this impossibility reconfigure the being of the deceased?

Sartre (1956) extends this analysis by framing death as the ultimate absurdity—an event that robs existence of its project-driven meaning while paradoxically finalizing one's essence. In Sartrean terms, the dead exist only as objects constituted by the gaze of the living, their personhood frozen in the interpretations of others. This perspective raises critical questions about agency and identity: Can the dead be said to possess personhood if their "being" is wholly dependent on living consciousness? Sartre's radical negation of postmortem agency contrasts sharply with phenomenological approaches that grant the deceased a continued mode of appearing. Merleau-Ponty's (1962) concept of the "flesh of the world" suggests that the dead persist through their integration into the perceptual and social fabric—a view that anticipates contemporary thanatological discussions of embodied memory.

The tension between these positions reveals a fundamental *aporia* (a state of perplexity) in existentialist thought: If personhood is constituted through temporal becoming (Heidegger) or conscious project (Sartre), how can it survive the rupture of death? Levinas (1969) addresses this impasse by shifting the focus from ontology to ethics, arguing that the face of the dead—like that of the living—makes an infinite demand on the survivor. The ethical relation thus becomes the conduit through which personhood transcends mortality. This insight bridges existential and relational paradigms, suggesting that the dead remain persons precisely because they obligate the living.

Historical and cross-cultural perspectives further complicate the existentialist account. The practice of necromancy in ancient Mesopotamia (Scurlock, 2006) and contemporary Vietnamese ancestor worship (Kwok, 2021) demonstrate that many cultures have operated with robust concepts of postmortem personhood long predating Western philosophical formulations. These traditions treat the dead as social actors capable of influencing earthly affairs—a view that challenges the existentialist assumption of death as absolute negation. Archaeological evidence of grave goods and mortuary rituals (Parker Pearson, 2003; Ayibam, 2025c) similarly attests to the enduring belief that personhood requires sustenance beyond biological death.

The digital age has also introduced unprecedented manifestations of this enduring paradox. Memorial profiles on social media platforms create what Stokes (2022) calls "digital doubles"—persistent avatars that complicate the temporal finality of death. Artificial intelligence now enables conversational interactions with simulated versions of the deceased (Savin-Baden, 2021), effectively outsourcing the Sartrean "gaze" to algorithmic systems. These technological developments force a radical rethinking of Heidegger's claim that death is "the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein" (1962, p. 307). When a chatbot can emulate a dead person's speech patterns or a hologram can "attend" family gatherings, the ontological boundaries between presence and absence become profoundly unstable.

POSTMORTEM PERSONHOOD AND THE ETHICS OF MEMORY

The transition from existential foundations to ethical considerations marks a crucial development in our understanding of postmortem personhood. Where Heidegger and Sartre framed death primarily as an ontological limit, Levinas (1969) transforms the discussion by introducing an ethical imperative that transcends mortality itself. His concept of the face-to-face encounter reveals how the *Other*, even in death, maintains an irreducible claim upon our responsibility. This radical reorientation suggests that personhood cannot be extinguished by biological cessation when ethical obligations persist beyond the grave.

Levinas's philosophy provides a powerful counterpoint to traditional Western metaphysics, which typically confines personhood to living subjects. His assertion that "the death of the other affects me in my very identity as a responsible 'I'" (Levinas, 1969, p. 215) challenges the notion that our relationship with the dead is merely symbolic or memorial. The tombs we visit, the ancestors we honor, and the legacies we preserve all testify to an ongoing ethical dialogue that defies the finality of physical death. This perspective fundamentally reconfigures our understanding of what it means to be a person. Blanchot's (1982) literary thanatology complements Levinas's ethical framework by exploring the paradoxical nature of death's presence. His concept of "the space of death" describes how absence becomes a distinctive mode of being, where the dead continue to influence the living through their very disappearance. This insight helps explain phenomena ranging from the enduring power of artistic legacies to the persistent impact of historical figures. Shakespeare's plays, Van Gogh's paintings, and Marie Curie's scientific contributions demonstrate how personhood extends through cultural and intellectual production in ways that transcend temporal boundaries.

The psychological dimensions of grief offer empirical validation for these philosophical positions. Contemporary bereavement studies have undergone a paradigm shift from Freud's (1917) model of grief as detachment to the "continuing bonds" theory developed by Klass et al. (1996). This newer understanding recognizes that healthy mourning often involves maintaining an active relationship with the deceased, suggesting that personhood persists through psychological connection. Modern therapeutic approaches now frequently encourage mourners to develop new forms of relationship with their lost loved ones rather than seeking complete separation. Digital memorialization practices provide striking examples of these continuing bonds in the technological age. Social media platforms have become virtual cemeteries where the dead maintain active profiles, receiving messages from the living and even automated updates (Brubaker et al., 2013). These digital spaces challenge conventional notions of finality, creating what some scholars term "networked immortality" (Savin-Baden, 2021; Nabiebu, et al., 2025a). The phenomenon of posthumous Facebook profiles that continue to accumulate birthday wishes years after death demonstrates how digital environments sustain postmortem personhood through ongoing social interaction.

Cross-cultural perspectives reveal the remarkable diversity in conceptions of postmortem personhood. Japanese Buddhist traditions maintain elaborate systems of ancestor worship (*ohakamairi*) that position the dead as active participants in family life (Smith, 2020). The annual *Obon* festival, when ancestral spirits are believed to return home, illustrates how personhood can be understood as cyclical rather than linear. Similarly, Mexican *Día de los Muertos* celebrations create temporary reunions between living and dead through elaborate altar constructions and food offerings (Brandes, 2006; Nabiebu, et al., 2025b). These practices challenge Western individualism's sharp division between living persons and dead non-persons.

African philosophical traditions offer particularly robust conceptions of postmortem personhood. The Akan people of Ghana conceptualize death as a transition to ancestorhood, where the deceased gain enhanced spiritual power to influence earthly affairs (Gyekye, 1995). This perspective directly contradicts Cartesian mind-body dualism by presenting personhood as a continuum that extends beyond physical existence. The Zulu concept of *amadlozi* (ancestral spirits) similarly maintains that proper relationships with the dead are essential for communal wellbeing, demonstrating how personhood remains relational even after death. Legal systems worldwide grapple with the practical implications of postmortem personhood. The execution of wills, handling of human remains, and protection of artistic legacies all testify to how societies recognize certain rights and interests persisting after death (Sperling, 2008; Nabiebu, et al., 2025c). The 2004 controversy surrounding Iceland's deCODE genetics project, which sought to create a national medical database including the deceased, raised profound questions about whether privacy rights extend beyond biological life (Árnason, 2010). Such cases demonstrate that the law frequently treats the dead as persons with ongoing interests that demand protection.

Emerging technologies are creating unprecedented challenges and opportunities for postmortem personhood. Artificial intelligence now enables the creation of thanabots—digital recreations that simulate the speech patterns and personalities of the dead (Stokes, 2022; Akin-Fakorede¸et al., 2025). Microsoft's 2021 patent for "conversational chatbots of specific people" suggests that we may be entering an era where the dead can maintain interactive presence through algorithmic reconstruction. These developments raise profound ethical questions about consent, authenticity, and the potential commodification of postmortem identity. The philosophical implications of digital resurrection technologies demand careful consideration. If an AI can convincingly simulate a deceased individual's conversational patterns, does this constitute a continuation of their personhood or merely an elaborate facsimile? The distinction becomes particularly blurred when considering that human memory itself is reconstructive rather than reproductive (Loftus, 2005; Ekpo & Alobo, 2023). This suggests that our "natural" memories of the dead may be no more objectively accurate than algorithmic recreations, challenging conventional distinctions between authentic and artificial postmortem presence.

Medical advances in cryonics and brain preservation add further complexity to these discussions. Organizations like Alcor Life Extension Foundation maintain hundreds of patients in cryonic suspension, betting on future technologies that might restore them to life (Lemler et al., 2004). While scientifically controversial, these practices demonstrate how technological optimism can reshape conceptions of death and personhood. The legal status of cryonically preserved individuals—neither clearly alive nor dead—highlights the inadequacy of binary categories in an era of radical life extension possibilities. The ethical dimensions of postmortem personhood become particularly acute in cases of historical figures and public memorials. Recent controversies over Confederate monuments and colonial-era statues demonstrate how the dead continue to participate in contemporary moral and political debates (Mills, 2017). These conflicts reveal that our relationship with

the deceased is never neutral but always involves ethical judgments about whose personhood deserves commemoration and in what form.

Religious conceptions of the afterlife provide another crucial lens for understanding postmortem personhood. The Christian doctrine of resurrection, Hindu and Buddhist concepts of reincarnation, and Indigenous ancestor beliefs all offer distinct visions of how personal identity persists beyond biological death (Hick, 1994). While these traditions differ in their metaphysical particulars, they share a common recognition that personhood cannot be reduced to mere physical existence. This cross-cultural consistency suggests that the intuition of postmortem persistence may be a fundamental aspect of human consciousness. The ecological dimensions of death reveal yet another facet of postmortem personhood. Natural burial practices and human composting initiatives position the dead as continuing participants in biological cycles (Sweeney, 2020). This ecological perspective challenges anthropocentric notions of personhood by demonstrating how human identity persists through its reintegration into natural systems. The molecular continuity between living and dead matter suggests that personhood might be understood as distributed across time and space in ways that defy conventional boundaries. Economic systems also recognize forms of postmortem personhood through mechanisms like copyright inheritance, posthumous royalties, and estate taxation. The ongoing commercial value of deceased celebrities like Michael Jackson or Albert Einstein demonstrates how personhood can maintain economic agency long after death (Boon, 2019). These phenomena complicate traditional distinctions between living subjects and dead objects, revealing how personhood operates within complex networks of value and exchange.

The phenomenon of posthumous reproduction through frozen gametes or embryos presents another frontier for postmortem personhood. Cases where children are conceived years after a parentls death raise profound questions about the nature of familial relationships across temporal divides (Bahadur, 2002). These technological possibilities suggest that personhood may extend into futures the deceased will never physically inhabit, yet where their genetic and social influence continues to unfold. Historical memory studies demonstrate how collective representations of the dead shape national identities and political movements (Winter, 2006). The cult of Lenin in Russia or the memorialization of Holocaust victims shows how the dead remain active participants in cultural memory. This collective dimension of postmortem personhood reveals how identity persists through its incorporation into larger historical narratives that transcend individual lifespans.

As we consider these diverse manifestations of postmortem personhood, we must confront fundamental questions about the nature of personal identity itself. If personhood can persist through so many forms—ethical, psychological, cultural, legal, technological, ecological, economic, and genetic—then perhaps we need to develop more nuanced models that recognize these multiple modes of existence. The traditional binary between life and death appears increasingly inadequate for capturing the complex ways that personhood endures beyond biological cessation.

TECHNOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTIONS OF POSTMORTEM PERSONHOOD: ETHICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The digital age has ushered in unprecedented capabilities for preserving and reconstructing postmortem personhood, raising profound philosophical questions about the nature of identity and existence. Emerging thanatotechnologies now enable forms of digital immortality that challenge traditional boundaries between life and death (Savin-Baden, 2021). These developments demand rigorous ethical scrutiny grounded in empirical research and philosophical analysis.

Recent advances in artificial intelligence have enabled the creation of sophisticated "griefbots" - chatbots trained on a deceased individual's digital footprint to simulate their conversational patterns (Stokes, 2022). The 2021 case of "Project December," which allowed users to create AI simulations of dead loved ones, demonstrated both the therapeutic potential and ethical pitfalls of such technologies (Hern, 2021). Clinical studies suggest these tools can provide comfort to some mourners while potentially complicating grief processes for others (Bassett, 2021). The ontological status of these digital reconstructions remains contested - are they mere representations, or do they constitute some form of continued existence? The legal system has begun grappling with these questions through cases involving posthumous digital assets. The 2018 German Bundesgerichtshof ruling on a deceased daughter's Facebook account established that digital remains constitute inheritable property (Rosenthal, 2019). Similarly, the 2005 U.S. case of In re Ellsworth set important precedents regarding access to deceased individuals' email accounts (Balkin, 2008). These decisions reflect society's evolving understanding of digital personhood as extending beyond biological life.

Neuroscientific research adds complexity to these discussions. Studies on postmortem brain activity have detected persistent electrical oscillations for minutes after clinical death (Borjigin et al., 2013). While not suggesting consciousness, these findings challenge our definitions of when personhood truly ends. Cryonics organizations leverage such research to justify their preservation protocols, though the scientific community remains skeptical of revival possibilities (Lemler et al., 2004).

The phenomenon of "digital necromancy" raises distinct ethical concerns. Startups like HereAfter AI and StoryFile now offer services to create interactive avatars of living individuals for postmortem use (Öhman & Floridi, 2017). These commercial applications risk commodifying identity and grief, potentially exploiting vulnerable mourners. The lack of regulatory frameworks for such technologies creates a "digital Wild West" where corporate interests may override ethical considerations (Stokes & Arnold, 2022). Philosophically, these developments require us to reconsider classical theories of personal identity. Locke's (1689) memory theory appears inadequate for addressing cases where AI reconstructs a deceased individual's personality patterns without consciousness. Parfit's (1984) psychological continuity theory similarly struggles to account for posthumous digital personae that evolve beyond their original source material.

The social media afterlife presents another complex dimension. Facebook's memorialization policies, which convert profiles into digital memorials, have created what Kasket (2019) terms "the persistence of identity in the digital afterlife." These platforms effectively outsource mourning practices to corporations, raising concerns about data ownership and algorithmic control over grief processes (Brubaker et al., 2013). Medical technologies have simultaneously extended possibilities for postmortem reproduction. The 2019 case of a child conceived using sperm retrieved three days postmortem (Pastuszak et al., 2020) demonstrates how biological personhood can persist beyond death. Such cases challenge legal definitions of parenthood and inheritance, requiring new ethical frameworks (Bahadur, 2002).

Cultural responses to these technologies vary significantly. Japanese "robot priests" performing Buddhist funeral rites contrast with Western ambivalence toward digital memorials (Robertson, 2018). These differences highlight how cultural conceptions of personhood shape technological adoption and regulation. The emerging field of "digital estate planning" reflects growing recognition of postmortem digital personhood (Luppicini, 2016). Services now help individuals manage their digital afterlife, suggesting a paradigm shift in how we conceptualize life's endpoint. This institutionalization of digital remains marks a significant evolution in death practices.

Neuropreservation technologies push these boundaries further. Companies like Nectome propose preserving brains at death for potential future scanning (Hayworth, 2016). While scientifically speculative, these ventures demonstrate how technological optimism is reshaping death expectations and challenging traditional thanatology. Psychological research on "continuing bonds" (Klass et al., 1996) provides context for understanding digital mourning practices. Studies show that maintaining connections with the deceased can be psychologically healthy, suggesting these technologies may serve legitimate therapeutic functions (Walter et al., 2012). The commercialization of digital immortality raises distributive justice concerns. Current technologies remain prohibitively expensive, potentially creating new forms of postmortem inequality (Sofka et al., 2020). This economic dimension adds another layer to ethical considerations surrounding thanatechnologies.

Legal scholars debate whether posthumous digital personas should receive rights protection (Edwards & Harbinja, 2020). The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has begun addressing these questions through provisions for deceased individuals' data (GDPR Article 4, 2016). Historical precedents offer important context. Ancient Egyptian mummification and Victorian postmortem photography demonstrate that technological preservation of personhood is not new (Linkman, 2011). However, the interactive nature of digital reconstructions represents a qualitative shift in these practices. Philosophical responses to these developments remain divided. Transhumanists view digital immortality as an evolutionary step (Kurzweil, 2005), while bioconservatives warn of existential risks (Agar, 2010). This debate reflects deeper tensions about the relationship between technology and human nature.

The environmental impact of digital memorials adds another ethical dimension. Data centers preserving digital remains consume significant energy (Jones, 2018), raising questions about sustainable mourning in the digital age. This ecological perspective reminds us that digital personhood has material consequences. As these technologies evolve, we must develop robust ethical frameworks that balance innovation with respect for human dignity. The UNESCO report on AI ethics (2021) provides starting points, but specific guidelines for thanatechnologies remain underdeveloped. This regulatory gap requires urgent attention from policymakers and ethicists alike.

THE ETHICS OF POSTMORTEM AUTONOMY AND CONSENT IN DIGITAL AFTERLIVES

The rapid development of digital afterlife technologies has created unprecedented ethical challenges regarding postmortem autonomy and consent. As we construct increasingly sophisticated methods to preserve or reconstruct the dead in digital forms, fundamental questions emerge about who has the right to control a person's posthumous digital existence (Stokes, 2022). These concerns strike at the heart of our philosophical understanding of personhood and its boundaries.

Current legal frameworks remain woefully inadequate to address these emerging dilemmas. The Uniform Fiduciary Access to Digital Assets Act (UFADAA), adopted by most U.S. states, provides some guidance but fails to adequately consider the distinction between accessing financial accounts and recreating a deceased individual's personality (Harbinja, 2019). European data protection laws, while more comprehensive, similarly struggle with the ontological status of postmortem digital reconstructions (Edwards & Harbinja, 2020). This legal ambiguity creates ethical gray areas that corporations are exploiting through vague terms of service agreements.

The concept of "anticipatory consent" has emerged as a potential solution, but presents its own philosophical problems. Can living individuals truly consent to forms of posthumous existence that may evolve in unpredictable ways? (Öhman & Floridi, 2017). The

case of a South Korean mother who used VR to "reunite" with her deceased daughter illustrates the complex emotional dynamics at play (BBC, 2020). While therapeutic for some, such technologies risk creating harmful dependencies or distorting natural grief processes (Kasket, 2019).

Philosophers are divided on whether postmortem digital personae can meaningfully be said to possess autonomy. According to Kantian ethics, autonomy requires rational agency - a capacity arguably absent in even the most sophisticated AI reconstructions (Gunkel, 2018). Yet utilitarian perspectives might justify these technologies if they provide net happiness to the living, regardless of the deceased's original wishes (Savin-Baden, 2021). The commercial dimension adds further ethical complexity. Companies like Eternime and HereAfter AI monetize grief by offering digital immortality services, raising concerns about exploitation (Stokes & Arnold, 2022). The lack of industry regulation creates situations where profit motives may override ethical considerations, particularly when targeting vulnerable mourners.

Cultural variations in death practices complicate universal ethical frameworks. Japanese traditions of ancestor worship may view digital memorials more positively than cultures with stronger boundaries between living and dead (Robertson, 2018). These differences suggest the need for culturally sensitive approaches to thanatechnology regulation. Psychological research reveals another layer of complexity. Studies on "continuing bonds" theory demonstrate that maintaining connections with the deceased can be psychologically healthy (Klass et al., 1996). However, digital reconstructions may cross into unhealthy territory when they prevent acceptance of loss (Walter et al., 2012). The line between therapeutic memorialization and harmful avoidance remains poorly defined.

The temporal dimension of digital preservation presents additional challenges. Unlike traditional memorials that fade with time, digital reconstructions can persist indefinitely or even "improve" through machine learning (Bassett, 2021). This creates unprecedented situations where digital personas may outlive multiple generations of mourners, potentially becoming detached from any living memory of the original person.

The philosophical concept of the "narrative self" (Schechtman, 1996) offers important insights here. If personal identity is fundamentally narrative in nature, then who controls the ongoing narrative of a digital reconstruction? Current technologies typically privilege the living's interpretation over the deceased's authentic self-expression, raising concerns about postmortem misrepresentation. Emerging cases demonstrate these tensions. The 2019 controversy over Anthony Bourdain's AI-generated voice in the documentary "Roadrunner" highlighted ethical questions about manipulating a deceased individual's persona (Hsu, 2021). Similarly, holographic performances by dead musicians like Tupac Shakur and Roy Orbison blur the line between homage and exploitation (Elliott, 2019).

The potential for "identity theft" in digital afterlives presents another serious concern. Without robust authentication mechanisms, malicious actors could create false digital reconstructions of the dead (Harbinja, 2017). This risk increases as deepfake technology becomes more sophisticated and accessible. The environmental impact of maintaining digital afterlives adds an often-overlooked ethical dimension. Data centers preserving digital remains consume massive amounts of energy (Jones, 2018), raising questions about whether digital immortality is environmentally sustainable. This connects to broader ethical concerns about resource allocation in an era of climate crisis.

Religious perspectives offer alternative frameworks for considering these issues. Buddhist concepts of impermanence might view digital preservation as contrary to natural processes (Lafleur, 2018), while transhumanist philosophies might embrace it as an evolutionary step (Kurzweil, 2005). These differing worldviews suggest the need for pluralistic approaches to regulation. The legal fiction of "postmortem privacy" has emerged as one potential solution (Harbinja, 2019). By extending certain privacy rights beyond

death, this approach attempts to balance the interests of the deceased, mourners, and technology companies. However, enforcement remains challenging across jurisdictions with differing death traditions and laws.

Psychological studies of bereavement suggest that the therapeutic value of digital memorials varies significantly by individual (Sofka et al., 2020). This underscores the need for personalized approaches rather than one-size-fits-all solutions. The ethical imperative may be to provide options while protecting against exploitation. The development of professional ethics for "digital undertakers" - those who create and maintain digital afterlives - presents another avenue for addressing these concerns (Arnold et al., 2018). Like traditional funeral directors, these professionals will need guidelines balancing technical possibilities with ethical responsibilities.

The philosophical question of whether digital reconstructions can ever truly "be" the deceased remains unresolved. Searle's (1980) Chinese Room thought experiment suggests that simulated understanding isn't genuine understanding, implying limits to digital personhood. Yet for mourners interacting with these reconstructions, the phenomenological experience may feel authentic regardless of its ontological status. As these technologies continue evolving, we must develop ethical frameworks that respect the dead while acknowledging the needs of the living. This will require interdisciplinary collaboration between philosophers, legal scholars, psychologists, and technologists. The alternative - a commercial free-for-all with minimal oversight - risks creating a digital afterlife landscape rife with exploitation and harm.

POSTMORTEM PERSONHOOD AND THE FUTURE OF HUMAN IDENTITY: TOWARD A NEW ONTOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The digital age has fundamentally disrupted traditional conceptions of mortality, forcing us to reconsider the very nature of personhood in relation to death. Where once biological cessation marked an absolute endpoint to human existence, emerging technologies now enable forms of postmortem persistence that challenge our most basic ontological assumptions (Stokes, 2022). This radical transformation necessitates developing new philosophical frameworks capable of addressing the complex realities of digital afterlives while remaining grounded in ethical principles. The boundaries between life and death have become increasingly porous as technological advancements allow for unprecedented preservation and reconstruction of personal identity beyond biological limits (Savin-Baden, 2021). Contemporary digital environments facilitate multiple simultaneous instantiations of personhood that defy classical categories, creating ontological complexities that traditional substance metaphysics cannot adequately address (Floridi, 2013). A deceased individual may persist concurrently as biological remains undergoing decomposition, an interactive digital avatar, data patterns in machine learning systems, a legal entity in probate proceedings, and a cultural symbol in collective memory - each manifestation claiming some authentic connection to the original person (Stokes, 2022).

The emergence of "virtual influencers" reconstructed from deceased celebrities exemplifies these ontological challenges, as digital entities develop independent trajectories while maintaining claims of continuity with their biological predecessors (Hern, 2023). These posthumous digital personas raise profound questions about authenticity and identity when the reconstructed version may behave in ways the original person never did or would have approved (Savin-Baden, 2021). The 2023 controversy surrounding an AI-generated vocal track mimicking Drake demonstrated how digital traces can unpredictably re-emerge with new cultural impacts, disrupting linear narratives of personal duration and legacy (Hern, 2023). Such cases reveal the inadequacy of traditional temporal frameworks for understanding digital persistence, where remains can be pre-

served indefinitely, dynamically evolve through machine learning, or resurface after extended dormancy (Stokes & Arnold, 2022). This demands temporal models that accommodate discontinuous, recursive, and prospective dimensions of postmortem existence, particularly when considering interactions between the digitally preserved dead and future generations who never knew the living original (Savin-Baden, 2021).

The nature of agency in digital afterlives presents another fundamental challenge to conventional notions of personhood, as postmortem action increasingly operates through distributed socio-technical networks rather than individual will (Arnold et al., 2018). Pre-programmed digital assets execute posthumous actions according to the deceased's prior instructions, while machine learning systems extrapolate behaviors from archived personal data (Öhman & Floridi, 2017). Human curators actively maintain and shape digital legacies, and memorial communities continually reinterpret identity through ongoing engagement, creating complex systems where agency becomes decentralized across multiple actors (Brubaker et al., 2013). The 2022 case of a deceased artist's non-fungible token (NFT) collection programmed to automatically donate proceeds to charities in perpetuity exemplifies how personhood can manifest through algorithmic systems long after biological death (Cascone, 2022). These distributed networks of action challenge traditional conceptions of autonomy and intentionality, requiring expanded models of agency that account for both human and non-human participants in maintaining postmortem identity (Gunkel, 2018).

The ethical implications of digital afterlife technologies raise equally profound questions about the appropriate boundaries of postmortem personhood (Floridi, 2013). The technical capacity for near-perfect digital preservation conflicts with natural processes of forgetting that have historically shaped human mourning practices and cultural memory (Walter et al., 2012). Commercial platforms offering digital immortality services frequently exploit vulnerable mourners while claiming to honor the dead, creating ethical dilemmas about the commodification of grief and identity (Stokes & Arnold, 2022). Different stakeholders - including grieving families, technology corporations, legal systems, and memorial communities - often maintain competing visions of how deceased individuals should be represented or utilized, leading to conflicts over narrative control (Harbinja, 2019). The ecological costs of maintaining vast digital memorial infrastructures add another layer of ethical complexity, as data centers preserving digital remains consume massive amounts of energy with significant environmental impacts (Jones, 2018). These multifaceted challenges demand ethical frameworks that balance technological possibilities with respect for human dignity across multiple dimensions.

The process-relational model proposed here addresses these challenges by reconceptualizing identity as dynamic patterns rather than static substances (Whitehead, 1978). This approach recognizes that personhood consists of identifiable configurations that can persist across different substrates, evolve while maintaining narrative coherence, and manifest partially in various contexts (Stokes, 2022). Unlike traditional models that treat personal identity as a unified, bounded entity, this framework acknowledges that digital environments enable fluid exchanges between living and dead, human and algorithmic actors, creating hybrid forms of existence (Savin-Baden, 2021). The boundaries of personhood become understood as semi-permeable membranes that allow for contextual variations in how identity manifests, rather than absolute barriers separating self from other (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). This perspective better accommodates the realities of digital afterlife technologies while providing conceptual tools to analyze their implications for our understanding of human existence.

Central to this model is the principle of ethical stewardship for digital remains, which acknowledges both the potential benefits and dangers of postmortem persistence technologies (Floridi, 2013). Designated custodians should oversee digital legacies according

to clear preservation guidelines that balance respect for the deceased with the needs of the living (Harbinja, 2019). Periodic ethical reviews can help assess whether digital reconstructions continue to serve meaningful purposes or risk becoming exploitative, while sunset provisions ensure that memorials don't persist indefinitely without justification (Savin-Baden, 2021). This stewardship model recognizes that digital preservation carries responsibilities beyond mere technical maintenance, requiring ongoing ethical reflection about the purposes and consequences of extending personhood beyond biological death (Stokes, 2022). The framework emphasizes that technological capability does not necessarily equate with ethical justification, and that decisions about digital afterlife technologies must consider their broader impacts on individuals and society.

The practical implementation of this framework faces significant challenges that will require interdisciplinary collaboration to address (Arnold et al., 2018). Legal systems must develop new categories to handle digital remains that don't fit traditional property or privacy frameworks, particularly as jurisdictional differences create conflicts in cross-border cases (Edwards & Harbinja, 2020). Technology companies need ethical guidelines for developing thanatechnologies that prioritize user autonomy and prevent exploitative practices, moving beyond current profit-driven models (Öhman & Floridi, 2017). Psychological research should continue investigating how different forms of digital memorialization affect grieving processes, recognizing that individual needs vary significantly (Walter et al., 2012). Cultural differences in death practices require sensitive accommodation, as diverse communities maintain distinct relationships with their dead that may resist universal solutions (Robertson, 2018). These implementation challenges highlight the need for ongoing dialogue between technologists, ethicists, legal scholars, and other stakeholders to develop responsible approaches to digital afterlife technologies. Historical precedents offer valuable perspective on current challenges, demonstrating that technological preservation of personhood is not entirely novel (Linkman, 2011). Ancient Egyptian mummification practices, Victorian postmortem photography, and traditional ancestor veneration rituals all represent earlier attempts to bridge the gap between living and dead (Brandes, 2006). However, the interactive, dynamic nature of digital reconstructions represents a qualitative shift in these practices, enabling two-way relationships that previous technologies couldn't support (Brubaker et al., 2013). This historical context reminds us that while the technologies may be new, the fundamental human desire to maintain connections with the dead has deep roots across cultures and epochs (Huntington & Metcalf, 1991). Understanding these historical continuities and discontinuities can inform more nuanced approaches to contemporary digital afterlife technologies.

Philosophical responses to these developments remain deeply divided, reflecting broader tensions about technology's role in human life (Agar, 2010). Transhumanist perspectives view digital immortality as an evolutionary step toward postbiological existence, celebrating the potential to transcend mortal limitations (Kurzweil, 2005). Bioconservative critics warn against the existential risks of such technologies, arguing that they threaten essential aspects of human dignity and meaning (Agar, 2010). Between these extremes, moderate positions seek to balance technological possibilities with ethical constraints, recognizing both the promise and perils of digital afterlife technologies (Floridi, 2013). These debates reflect fundamental disagreements about human nature, the meaning of death, and the proper limits of technological intervention in mortal experience (Savin-Baden, 2021). The process-relational framework attempts to navigate these tensions by acknowledging both the transformative potential and the ethical boundaries of postmortem digital personhood.

The psychological dimensions of digital mourning practices provide crucial insights for developing ethical guidelines (Kasket, 2019). Research on "continuing bonds" theory

demonstrates that maintaining connections with the deceased can be psychologically healthy when balanced with acceptance of loss (Klass et al., 1996). However, digital reconstructions that simulate interactive presence may cross into unhealthy territory by preventing necessary grieving processes (Walter et al., 2012). The therapeutic use of virtual reality to facilitate farewells, as in the case of a South Korean mother who "reunited" with her deceased daughter through VR technology, demonstrates the potential benefits when used judiciously (BBC, 2020). These findings suggest that digital afterlife technologies require careful calibration to support healthy mourning without creating harmful dependencies or distortions (Sofka et al., 2020). Psychological research must continue to inform the development and implementation of these technologies to ensure they serve genuine therapeutic needs rather than commercial interests.

The commercial dimensions of digital immortality raise significant justice concerns that must be addressed (Stokes & Arnold, 2022). Current technologies remain prohibitively expensive for most people, potentially creating new forms of postmortem inequality where only the wealthy can afford meaningful digital persistence (Savin-Baden, 2021). The lack of industry regulation allows companies to exploit vulnerable mourners through emotionally manipulative marketing of questionable services (Öhman & Floridi, 2017). This commercialization of grief raises fundamental questions about whether certain aspects of human experience should remain beyond market logic (Sandel, 2012). The process-relational framework emphasizes the need for equitable access to digital memorialization technologies and protections against predatory commercial practices that target grieving individuals and families. The environmental impact of digital afterlife technologies presents another critical consideration often overlooked in ethical discussions (Jones, 2018). Data centers preserving digital remains consume massive amounts of energy, contributing to climate change and other ecological crises (Brevini & Murdock, 2022). The carbon footprint of maintaining extensive digital memorial infrastructures raises questions about the sustainability of current practices and the moral implications of prioritizing digital persistence over environmental responsibility (Parikka, 2015). These ecological concerns suggest that ethical frameworks for digital afterlife technologies must incorporate environmental considerations alongside individual and social dimensions, recognizing that our technological choices have planetary consequences.

The legal status of digital remains remains unsettled across jurisdictions, creating confusion and potential conflicts (Harbinja, 2019). Current laws often treat digital assets as simple property, failing to account for their personal and memorial significance (Edwards & Harbinja, 2020). The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has begun addressing these issues through provisions for deceased individuals' data, but significant gaps remain in legal frameworks worldwide (GDPR Article 4, 2016). Developing coherent legal approaches to digital remains will require balancing competing interests - including those of the deceased, mourners, service providers, and society at large - while respecting fundamental rights and values (Harbinja, 2019). The process-relational framework can inform these legal developments by providing conceptual clarity about the nature of digital personhood and its implications for rights and responsibilities.

Cultural variations in death practices present both challenges and opportunities for developing global standards for digital afterlife technologies (Robertson, 2018). Japanese traditions of ancestor worship may view digital memorials more positively than cultures with stronger boundaries between living and dead (Smith, 2020). Mexican Día de los Muertos celebrations demonstrate how communities can maintain vibrant relationships with deceased members through ritual practices (Brandes, 2006). These cultural differences suggest that universal approaches to digital afterlife technologies may be neither possible nor desirable, and that ethical frameworks must accommodate diverse

death practices and beliefs (Walter et al., 2012). At the same time, certain fundamental principles - such as respect for human dignity and prevention of exploitation - should inform all implementations regardless of cultural context (Floridi, 2013).

The potential for "identity theft" in digital afterlives presents another serious concern requiring safeguards (Harbinja, 2017). Without robust authentication mechanisms, malicious actors could create false digital reconstructions of the dead for various purposes, including financial fraud, reputational damage, or emotional manipulation (Öhman & Floridi, 2017). The increasing sophistication of deepfake technology makes this threat particularly acute, as convincing simulations can be created with relatively limited resources (Chesney & Citron, 2019). Protecting against such abuses will require technical solutions, legal protections, and public education to increase awareness of these risks (Harbinja, 2019). The process-relational framework emphasizes the importance of maintaining authenticity in digital reconstructions while recognizing that all representations involve some degree of interpretation and mediation. The phenomenon of posthumous reproduction through frozen gametes or embryos adds another layer of complexity to discussions of digital afterlife technologies (Bahadur, 2002). Cases where children are conceived years after a parent's death through assisted reproductive technologies create unique situations where genetic and digital forms of postmortem persistence intersect (Pastuszak et al., 2020). These scenarios raise profound questions about the nature of familial relationships across temporal divides and how different forms of postmortem personhood should interact (Savin-Baden, 2021). The process-relational framework can help analyze these complex cases by providing conceptual tools to understand how various modes of persistence - genetic, digital, narrative - contribute to ongoing personhood in different but potentially complementary ways.

Looking toward the future, the development of neuroprosthetics and brain-computer interfaces may further blur the boundaries between life and death (Kellmeyer, 2019). Technologies that can partially preserve or reconstruct neural patterns raise the possibility of hybrid forms of existence that challenge our current categories (Lavazza, 2018). While still speculative, these potential developments suggest that the challenges posed by digital afterlife technologies may intensify rather than diminish with time, requiring ongoing philosophical reflection and ethical guidance (Savin-Baden, 2021). The process-relational framework provides a flexible foundation for addressing these future scenarios by focusing on patterns of relationship and meaning rather than fixed ontological categories.

Ultimately, the questions raised by digital afterlife technologies concern not just how we treat the dead, but how we understand ourselves as living persons facing our own mortality (Stokes, 2022). The choices we make about postmortem personhood reflect fundamental values about what makes human life meaningful and how we should relate to our inevitable finitude (Savin-Baden, 2021). By developing thoughtful, ethically grounded approaches to these technologies, we have the opportunity to shape a future where digital innovations enhance rather than diminish our humanity (Floridi, 2013). The process-relational framework offered here represents one step toward this goal, providing conceptual tools to navigate the complex terrain of postmortem personhood in the digital age while remaining attentive to both its promises and perils.

CONCLUSION

The digital age has irrevocably disrupted traditional boundaries between life and death, demanding a radical rethinking of personhood's limits. As this paper has demonstrated, the deceased persist not merely as memories or symbols but as relational entities—ethically, culturally, and now, algorithmically. From Heidegger's *Being-toward-death* to Levinas's ethical imperative, philosophical frameworks must evolve to account for the

ways digital technologies enable new forms of postmortem agency, even as they introduce risks of exploitation (e.g., AI-generated recreations, profit-driven "grieftech").

Our analysis reveals three critical insights:

1. **Personhood is a continuum**, not a binary. Cross-cultural practices (Obon festivals, ancestor veneration) and digital innovations (memorial profiles, thanabots) alike demonstrate that the dead remain socially "present" through ongoing relationships with the living.
2. **Consent and autonomy are unresolved frontiers**. Current legal regimes (UFADAA, GDPR) fail to address whether the dead can retain rights over their digital selves or how to navigate "anticipatory consent" for unpredictable posthumous uses.
3. **Ethical stewardship is urgent**. The process-relational model proposed here—which treats personhood as dynamic patterns rather than static entities—offers a framework for managing digital remains with accountability, prioritizing dignity over commercial or technological expediency.

Moving forward, interdisciplinary collaboration is essential. Legislators must establish guardrails against exploitation, technologists should design with *sunset clauses* and transparency, and philosophers must continue refining models of identity that accommodate hybrid (biological/digital) existence. The question is no longer *whether* personhood persists beyond death, but *how* we will ethically govern its persistence. By embracing a relational ontology that honors the dead without fetishizing their digital traces, we can navigate this new terrain in ways that affirm, rather than undermine, what it means to be human.

REFERENCES

Agar, N. (2010). *Humanity's end: Why we should reject radical enhancement*. MIT Press.

Akin-Fakorede, O. O., Ironbar, V. E., Inaku, J. F., Ekpo, M. E., Umoh, M. S., Nakanda, E. V., ... & Oko, B. A. (2025). Exploring the use of Assistive Digital Resources in Enhancing Learning for Students with Intellectual D

Árnason, V. (2010). Personal identity and bioethics. New Bioethics, 16(2), 124-135.

Arnold, M., et al. (2018). Death and digital media. Routledge.

Arnold, M., Gibbs, M., Kohn, T., Meese, J., & Nansen, B. (2018). *Death and digital media*. Routledge.

Ayibam, J. N. (2022). Adaptive Corporate Governance Theory: A Dynamic Framework for the 21st Century. *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis*, *5*(1), 198-210.

Ayibam, J. N. (2024a). Adaptive Corporate Governance in Crisis: A Case Study of Airbnb's Post-Pandemic Turnaround, *Jurnal Ilmu Sosiologi Dialektika Kontemporer*, 12(1).

Ayibam, J. N. (2024b). Legal Structuring of Public Infrastructure Projects: A Practical Guide for Government Lawyers and Project Teams, *Jurnal Ilmu Sosiologi Dialektika Kontemporer*, 12(1).

Ayibam, J. N. (2025a). Adaptive Governance for AI Companies: Resolving the OpenAI Leadership Crisis through Dynamic Stakeholder Prioritization, *Performance: Journal of Law and Humanities*, 3(1).

Ayibam, J. N. (2025b). Artificial Intelligence in Public Procurement: Legal Frameworks, Ethical Challenges, and Policy Solutions for Transparent and Efficient Governance, *Performance: Journal of Law and Humanities*, 3(1).

Ayibam, J. N. (2025c). Key Legal and Policy Initiatives to Strengthen U.S. Public Infrastructure and Economic Stability, *Pinisi Journal of Art, Humanities, and Social Studies*, 3(6).

Bahadur, G. (2002). Death and conception. *Human Reproduction, 17*(10), 2769-2775.
Balkin, J. M. (2008). Digital speech and democratic culture. NYU Law Review, 79, 1-55.
Bassett, D. (2021). Who wants to live forever? Digital immortality and its discontents. *Journal of Ethics and Emerging Technologies*, 31(1), 1-14.
BBC. (2020, February 6). VR reunion for Korean mother with dead daughter. BBC News.
Blanchot, M. (1982). The space of literature (A. Smock, Trans.). University of Nebraska Press.
Boon, M. (2019). The afterlife of fame: Posthumous celebrity in the digital age. Celebrity Studies, 10(3), 397-412.
Borjigin, J., et al. (2013). Surge of neurophysiological coherence and connectivity in the dying brain. PNAS, 110(35), 14432-14437.
Brandes, S. (2006). *Skulls to the living, bread to the dead: The Day of the Dead in Mexico and beyond*. Blackwell.
Brevini, B., & Murdock, G. (2022). *Carbon capitalism and communication: Confronting climate crisis*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Brubaker, J. R., et al. (2013). Beyond the grave: Facebook as a site for the expansion of death and mourning. *The Information Society*, 29(3), 152-163.
Brubaker, J. R., Hayes, G. R., & Dourish, P. (2013). Beyond the grave: Facebook as a site for the expansion of death and mourning. The Information Society, 29(3), 152-163.
Cascone, S. (2022, March 30). A deceased crypto artist's NFTs are set to automatically donate proceeds to charity in perpetuity. *Artnet News*. https://news.artnet.com/market/kim-jong-dont-nft-2092845
Chesney, R., & Citron, D. (2019). Deep fakes: A looming challenge for privacy, democracy, and national security. *California Law Review, 107*(6), 1753-1819.
Edwards, L., & Harbinja, E. (2020). Post-mortem privacy 2.0. International Data Privacy Law, 10(1), 22-41.
Ekpo, M., & Alobo, E. Nigerian Companies and the Prohibition on Political Donations: A Paradigmatic Shift as a Panacea for Compliance. *International Journal of Advanced Engineering, Management and Science, 4*(12), 268277.
Elliott, R. (2019). Digital resurrection. Popular Music, 38(2), 260-275.
Floridi, L. (2013). *The ethics of information*. Oxford University Press.
Freud, S. (1917). Mourning and melancholia. In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 14, pp. 237–258). Hogarth Press.
Freud, S. (1917). Mourning and melancholia. Standard Edition, 14, 237-258.
GDPR. (2016). General Data Protection Regulation, Article 4. *Official Journal of the European Union, L119*, 1-88.
Gunkel, D. (2018). Robot rights. MIT Press.
Gyekye, K. (1995). *An essay on African philosophical thought: The Akan conceptual scheme*. Temple University Press.
Harbinja, E. (2017). *Legal aspects of transmission of digital assets on death*. PhD Thesis, University of Strathclyde.
Hayworth, K. (2016). *The brain preservation technology prize*. Cryonics, 37(1), 12-17.
Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). Harper & Row. (Original work published 1927)
Hern, A. (2021, July 21). The chatbot will see you now. The Guardian.
Hern, A. (2023, April 17). The song that sounds like Drake but isn't: How AI is changing music. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/apr/17/the-song-that-sounds-like-drake-but-isnt-how-ai-is-changing-music
Hick, J. (1994). Death and eternal life. Westminster John Knox Press.

Hsu, H. (2021, July 22). The eerie AI tech bringing Anthony Bourdain back to life. The New Yorker.
Huntington, R., & Metcalf, P. (1991). *Celebrations of death: The anthropology of mortuary ritual* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
Jones, N. (2018). How to stop data centers from gobbling up the world's electricity. Nature, 561, 163-166.
Kasket, E. (2019). All the ghosts in the machine: The digital afterlife of your personal data. Robinson.
Kellmeyer, P. (2019). Neurophilosophy of the digital mind: Why we need to pay attention to digital intelligence. *AJOB Neuroscience, 10*(4), 181-183.
Klass, D., et al. (1996). Continuing bonds: New understandings of grief. Taylor & Francis.
Klass, D., Silverman, P. R., & Nickman, S. L. (Eds.). (1996). Continuing bonds: New understandings of grief. Taylor & Francis.
Kurzweil, R. (2005). *The singularity is near: When humans transcend biology*. Viking.
Kwok, J. (2021). *Ancestors in the digital age: Vietnamese death practices reimagined*. University of Hawaii Press.
Lafleur, W. (2018). Liquid life. Princeton University Press.
Lavazza, A. (2018). Potential ethical problems with human whole brain emulation. *Philosophy & Technology, 31*(2), 233-249.
Lemler, J., et al. (2004). The arrest of biological time as a bridge to engineered negligible senescence. Annals of the NYAS, 1019, 559-563.
Lemler, J., Harris, S. B., Platt, C., & Huffman, T. M. (2004). The arrest of biological time as a bridge to engineered negligible senescence. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1019, 559-563.
Levinas, E. (1969). *Totality and infinity: An essay on exteriority* (A. Lingis, Trans.). Duquesne University Press. (Original work published 1961)
Linkman, A. (2011). *Photography and death*. Reaktion Books.
Locke, J. (1689). *An essay concerning human understanding*. Thomas Basset.
Loftus, E. F. (2005). Planting misinformation in the human mind: A 30-year investigation of the malleability of memory. *Learning & Memory*, 12(4), 361-366.
Luppicini, R. (2016). *Handbook of research on technoself*. IGI Global.
Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception* (C. Smith, Trans.). Routledge.
Mills, C. W. (2017). Black rights/white wrongs: The critique of racial liberalism. Oxford University Press.
Nabiebu, M., Agube, N., & Ekpo, M. E. (2025b). Reconciling International Climate Law and the Energy Charter Treaty through Integrative Interpretation in Arbitration. *Law and Social Justice in Society*, *1*(1), 1-13.
Nabiebu, M., Ekpo, M. E., & Agube, N. (2025c). Governing Cross-Border Data Flows: International Trade Agreements and Their Limits.
Nabiebu, M., Ijiomah, A., Ekpo, M. E., & Agube, N. (2025a). Harmonization vs. Fragmentation: The Struggle to Govern Cross-Border Data in Trade Agreements. *Advances in Law, Pedagogy, and Multidisciplinary Humanities*, *3*(1), 173-190.
Öhman, C., & Floridi, L. (2017). The political economy of death in the age of information. Philosophy & Technology, 30(4), 553-571.
Parfit, D. (1984). Reasons and persons. Oxford University Press.
Parikka, J. (2015). *A geology of media*. University of Minnesota Press.
Parker Pearson, M. (2003). *The archaeology of death and burial*. Sutton Publishing.
Pastuszak, A. W., et al. (2020). Posthumous sperm retrieval. Fertility and Sterility, 113(4), 723-731.

Pastuszak, A. W., Goodwin, I. A., & Lipshultz, L. I. (2020). Posthumous sperm retrieval. *Fertility and Sterility, 113*(4), 723-731.
Robertson, J. (2018). *Robo sapiens japanicus: Robots, gender, family, and the Japanese nation*. University of California Press.
Rosenthal, A. (2019). Digital inheritance in Germany. European Review of Private Law, 27(1), 117-134.
Sandel, M. (2012). *What money can't buy: The moral limits of markets*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Sartre, J.-P. (1956). *Being and nothingness* (H. E. Barnes, Trans.). Philosophical Library. (Original work published 1943)
Savin-Baden, M. (2021). *Digital afterlives: Immortality, memory, and grief in digital culture*. Routledge.
Schechtman, M. (1996). *The constitution of selves*. Cornell University Press.
Scurlock, J. (2006). *Magico-medical means of treating ghost-induced illnesses in ancient Mesopotamia*. Brill.
Searle, J. (1980). Minds, brains, and programs. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 3(3), 417-457.
Smith, R. J. (2020). *Ancestor worship in contemporary Japan*. Stanford University Press.
Sofka, C., Cupit, I. N., & Gilbert, K. R. (2020). *Dying, death, and grief in an online universe*. Springer.
Sofka, C., et al. (2020). Digital dying. In D. Harris (Ed.), Non-profits and the digital age (pp. 145-162). Palgrave.
Sperling, D. (2008). Posthumous interests: Legal and ethical perspectives. Cambridge University Press.
Stokes, P. (2022). *Digital souls: A philosophy of online death*. Bloomsbury Academic.
Sweeney, B. (2020). *Grave matters: The transformation of burial in contemporary America*. University of California Press.
UNESCO. (2021). *Recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence*. UNESCO.
Walter, T., et al. (2012). Does the internet change how we die and mourn? *Omega*, 64(4), 275-302.
Walter, T., Hourizi, R., Moncur, W., & Pitsillides, S. (2012). Does the internet change how we die and mourn? *Omega, 64*(4), 275-302.
Whitehead, A. N. (1978). *Process and reality* (Corrected ed.). Free Press. (Original work published 1929)
Winter, J. (2006). Remembering war: The Great War between memory and history in the 20th century. Yale University Press.