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## AI And The Death Of Originality: A Literary Perspective

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### Abstract

In an era dominated by artificial intelligence (AI), questions of originality, authorship, and creativity have become central to literary discourse. This paper explores the tension between AI-generated content and traditional notions of literary originality. It investigates how machine-generated texts challenge the humanistic ideals of authorship, creativity, and the unique voice, and whether this shift signals the "death" of originality or a transformation of its meaning. Drawing on literary theory, contemporary examples, and philosophical debates, this paper critically assesses AI's role in reshaping literary production and reception. By the mixing of poststructuralist idea with the concept of contemporary digital practice, this study provides insights on the decline of the meaning of authorship and the cultural value of art in an age where anyone can create anything under their fingertips. The study concentrates on how AI distracts the traditional ideas of creativity, ownership and the originality using the poststructuralist theory proposed by Roland Barthes particularly the concept of "death of the author."

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, collaboration, consciousness, creativity, hybridity, ethical concerns

### Introduction

AI-generated art is a category of artwork created with artificial intelligence, or AI for short. John McCarthy first used the word in 1956. Alan Turing first brought up the concept of artificial intelligence in his book *Computer Machinery and Intelligence*, which came out in 1950. Experts soon adopted it as the Turing test to gauge computer intelligence, and the term artificial intelligence was later created and widely accepted. The Lisp programming language, which is currently utilized in AI research, was also created by John McCarthy.

The advent of generative AI technologies—ranging from language models like ChatGPT to text-to-image systems like DALL·E—has sparked widespread debate across disciplines. In literature, a discipline long tied to the Romantic ideal of the solitary genius and the sanctity of the authorial voice, AI-generated texts pose complex questions. This paper takes a literary-critical approach to examine how AI affects the production, evaluation, and understanding of "original" literary works.

AI is an important field in the twenty-first century. Put another way, we can say that it has a significant impact on everyone's life. It even evolved into a necessary component of daily living. People frequently use it for research, academic purposes, to create graphics, to get advice, and even to start sharing their personal issues in an effort to find solutions. As a result of being caught in a vicious cycle within digital media, this may have an indirect impact on their capacity to solve problems and raise social anxiety. An output of artificial intelligence that is produced in response to user requests is called AI-generated art. To put it another way, we could characterize it as a medium that conceals and fabricates reality in front of people. Artificial Intelligence is a mere technology that is created from the human brain and completely relying on this specific technology will not bring any good to the human lives. It will only result in the overpowering of technology over people. Imagine about the situation when the creation of humans overpowering them. As we navigate this technology-driven landscape, it is crucial to prioritize human values and recognize the hard work behind artistic expression to preserve our capacity for empathy and understanding.

## Originality in Literature

Originality in literature has historically been linked with authenticity, innovation, and authorship. Romanticism, for instance, emphasized the unique vision and emotional truth of the individual artist. Postmodernism complicated these notions by challenging the very idea of the "original," instead foregrounding intertextuality, pastiche, and simulacra (Barthes, Foucault, Baudrillard). Yet even within postmodern frameworks, there remained a tacit assumption that human intention and creative agency were at the core of literary production. AI disrupts this model by creating texts without consciousness, intent, or experience traits traditionally seen as essential to creativity. AI-generated literature is not speculative fiction, it is current reality. From poems written by GPT-4 to entire novels outlined or co-written by machines, AI is now actively producing literature. The theoretical concepts of Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes are incorporated into this part. Barthes presents a kind of poststructuralist or deconstructive perspective on the author in his essay "Death of the Author." He announces the author's metaphorical death by taking a different stance. It also proclaims structuralism dead. Barthes' theory contends that readers, not authors, determine a text's meaning, but Foucault develops this idea with his concept of the "author function," which sees the author as a product of institutions and culture. The way that the concept of authorship has changed in the era of artificial intelligence can be examined using these theories. In the essay "Death of the Author" (1967) Barthes argues that the reader is born at the cost of the death of the author he considers the text as a mere "tissue of quotations" where the author becomes irrelevant in the process of interpretation. In the context of AI art this notion transforms to a literal form the creator fades to the background and the only focus is centered within the output. Here the author is "dead" not in a symbolic sense but his presence is overshadowed by the technology itself. In his groundbreaking book "What is an Author?" (1969), Michel Foucault presents the idea of "author function." It primarily addresses a collection of functions that are culturally ascribed to the person who is recognized for creating a piece of art. According to Foucault, authorship is a construct that organizes and governs meaning. In the age of artificial intelligence, the "author function" is diminished. It cannot be fulfilled by the user or the programmer. In this case, the question is, "What is the motivation behind copying someone else's years of hard work for just a trend if no one can fulfill the author's function?" Derrida's notion of difference meaning as perpetually deferred resonates with AI texts that lack stable or singular meaning. The machine's recombinatory writing style aligns with poststructuralist ideas, but without intentional play or subversion.

## The Illusion of Originality in AI Texts

AI-generated content often appears original, but is fundamentally derivative. Trained on vast corpora of human writing, AI models reproduce patterns, styles, and genres without genuine innovation. This raises ethical and philosophical concerns. The idea of author decentering is consistent with fragmented authorship in AI-generated works, which are not predicated on a single input but rather use data from a wide range of sources related to the body of current art. It gets all of its information from previously created artwork that connects to Roland Barthes' concept of "tissue of quotations." Although the source is unclear and is regarded as neither wholly human nor wholly machine-made, the result will serve as a significant and emotional restraint. This uncertainty calls into question several facets of authorship and poses issues in the fields of law and aesthetics. The animated images have the feel of the original artist, yet there is no authorship. Without authorship, one piece of AI-generated art cannot be regarded as authentic art. This illustrates Barthes' contention that "the author is a historical figure, a cultural construct, and a product of our society." Artificial intelligence (AI) generated art has advanced from simple computer functions to pictures that appear to have been created by actual artists. Although we can easily replicate authentic art using a variety of technologies. This will make things hard to determine where is the real ownership lies and who deserves the credit in a world where technology grows along with human. It is evident from the ideas of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault that the overuse of AI in today's environment obscures creativity and calls into question authorship. With their concepts, they offer a clear comprehension of why this artificial intelligence (AI)-generated work is visually engaging but internally hollow as the creator's spirit is absent. An artwork's beauty is found in its inner battles, pains, and experiences as well as its outward appearance. The significance diminishes as the author does. One should reconsider the definition of art creation and ownership in an AI-dominated age.

## Conclusion

The phrase "death of originality" may be more metaphorical than terminal. AI compels us to revisit and revise our definitions of creativity, authorship, and originality. Literature, a field historically responsive to technological change, from the printing press to hypertext, now faces its next metamorphosis. As we navigate this transition, literary scholars and writers must ask not only what AI can write, but what it means for us to read. AI-generated art raises issues of authorship, ownership, and originality in an age of rapid technological innovation. Artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT and DALL.E create art that is a copy of the original work. However, no one is able to tell them apart; the only difference is that in authentic art, the creator's soul is involved, while in imitation, the soul is absent and the work is hollow on the inside. The trend of the digital world displacing artistic creativity is reflected in the global adoption of Ghibli-style AI pictures without Miyazaki's permission. The problem lies not just in the existence of AI but also in its application. AI is devoid of lived experience, emotions, feelings, and the ability to reason, in contrast to humans. Even while AI-generated art may look similar to actual art, it lacks the aesthetic presence and values that are inherent in the original work. The authorship and ownership of an artwork are explicitly stated by Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes in their ideas. These concepts are more important in this AI-dominated age to comprehend how the worth of a creative art is reduced or even eliminated when machines create art without the creators' permission. The complexity of this issue is increased by the crucial position that digital media plays in everyone's life. Many of them are merely following the trend without understanding its origins or the repercussions they may encounter. Debord's concept of the "consumer of illusion," in which technological spectacle overshadows interpersonal relationships, is reflected in this mindless consumption. Last but not least, the debate around AI illustrates the significant societal shift that occurs when the convenience and popularity of digital instruments surpass human genuity. One should consider not just what they can make, but also what they should create as AI continues to rule the globe. Technology is the result of human

potential, and rather than erasing it, it should enhance it. In order to maintain the true spirit of art, we need appreciate the creator in addition to their creations and make sure that creativity doesn't come at the expense of compassion, uniqueness, or deference. From a literary perspective, originality is not merely the production of new textual forms but the inscription of human consciousness, cultural context, and emotional depth within language. In this sense, AI challenges but does not obliterate originality; rather, it destabilizes traditional definitions of authorship and authenticity. As literature has always evolved through imitation, adaptation, and intertextuality, the emergence of AI-generated texts may be seen less as the death of originality and more as a transformation of its meaning in the digital age. Originality may now reside not in the uniqueness of creation alone, but in the human capacity to interpret, contextualize, and ethically engage with machine-produced texts. Thus, the literary future will not be marked by the extinction of originality but by its reconfiguration, where human imagination and AI's generative power coexist in a dialogue that continues to reshape the boundaries of creativity.

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