

Evil Cannot Create: J.R.R. Tolkien's Philosophy and the Misuse of AI-Generated Content.

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Abstract:

This study examines the relationship between J. R. R. Tolkien's philosophical idea that "evil cannot create, only corrupt" and the contemporary phenomenon of AI-generated content abuse. Drawing on textual analysis of *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*, alongside insights from ethics, media studies, and philosophy of technology, the research highlights that true creativity is inseparable from ethical responsibility, intentionality, and human experience. The findings suggest that, like Tolkien's depiction of Melkor and Sauron-who cannot originate life but only distort existing creations-generative AI can produce outputs without genuine creative insight. When humans misuse AI to replace or replicate creative work without understanding its intrinsic value, they risk a form of "digital corruption" analogous to Tolkien's corrupted beings. This raises serious ethical and humanistic concerns across art, literature, and knowledge production. The study concludes that AI should be treated as a tool to augment, not replace, human creativity. Safeguarding the essence of creative work requires cultivating ethical awareness, humanistic education, and policies that protect the integrity of authorship. Tolkien's insight remains relevant today: meaningful creation is inseparable from virtue, care, and responsibility-qualities that no algorithm can inherently possess.

Keywords: *Tolkien, AI-generated, The Lord of the Rings, digital corruption*

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Introduction

In the era of generative artificial intelligence (generative AI), the line between creativity and simulation is becoming increasingly blurred. Tools such as ChatGPT, Midjourney, or Sora have opened up the possibility of producing text, images, and audio at a speed and scale far beyond human capacity. Along with these revolutionary potentials, society is also witnessing a worrying phenomenon: the misuse of AI-generated content to copy, distort, or replace human creativity. This phenomenon not only challenges copyright and professional ethics but also shakes the very concept of "creativity"-long regarded as an intrinsic privilege of human beings.

From a philosophical perspective, the misuse of AI content can be interpreted as a form of creative alienation-a state in which technology simulates the good and the beautiful but distorts their essence. This interpretation resonates with the thought of J. R. R. Tolkien, author of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*, who affirmed that "evil cannot create anything new; it can only distort what good has created." Though frequently paraphrased, Tolkien's core idea remains consistent: in his mythological world, dark forces such as Melkor or Sauron cannot create life or beauty but can only bend and corrupt what is inherently good.

Placed in the context of contemporary technology, this thought opens a profound connection: artificial intelligence - if not guided by the spirit of humanity - risks becoming a tool of simulation without genuine creativity, reproduction without rebirth. The human misuse of AI to generate fake content, deceive audiences, or exploit artistic works without respecting copyright exemplifies a trend of algorithm-driven creativity, where artistic value yields to computational efficiency.

The misuse of AI-generated content has become a growing global concern, reflecting Tolkien's insight that "evil distorts but does not create." According to the Graphite Report (2025), over 50% of new content on the Internet is AI-generated, recombining human data without originality-a figure expected to reach 90% by 2026 (Europol, 2025). The Microsoft Global Online Safety Survey (2025) indicates that 88% of users express concern about generative AI, while 71% of social media images are estimated to be AI-generated. In the first quarter of 2025 alone, 179 deepfake incidents were recorded-a 19% increase from 2024-causing losses exceeding \$200 million in North America (World Economic Forum, 2025). In academia, 93% of UK students report using AI for assignments, and 33% of essays show signs of potential plagiarism (HEPI/Kortext, 2025).

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the parallels between Tolkien's idea of uncreated evil and the phenomenon of AI content abuse, exploring how technological misuse can corrupt the value of humanistic creativity. The research addresses three central questions:

(1) How did Tolkien conceptualize creation and corruption within the moral and mythological framework of Middle-earth?

(2) Can the abuse of AI-generated content be interpreted as a simulation of the good - a modern philosophical manifestation of evil?

(3) What ethical and philosophical boundaries should be established to preserve authentic human creativity in the age of generative AI?

Through an interdisciplinary approach that bridges philosophy, literature, and the ethics of technology, the paper argues that the problem does not lie within artificial intelligence itself but in the way, humans define and employ it. Only when guided by ethical reflection and a conscious sense of responsibility can AI serve as a means to expand humanistic creativity, rather than mirror the shadow of the "simulated evil" Tolkien once warned against.

Methods

This research was conducted on the basis of hermeneutic analysis combined with interdisciplinary comparisons, in order to establish a philosophical dialogue between J.R.R. Tolkien's thought on the nature of creativity and the phenomenon of AI content abuse of content generated by artificial intelligence in the contemporary context. The choice of this method comes from the characteristics of the research problem: on the one hand, a system of theological and literary thought with symbolic depth, and on the other hand, technological practice of technocracy and applied ethics.

First of all, textual interpretive analysis is used to trace the idea of "uncreated evil" in Tolkien's key works, including *The Silmarillion*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Morgoth's Ring*. These texts are approached not only from a literary perspective, but also as philosophical models of creation and alienation, expressed in the way Tolkien constructs the world of Middle-earth mythology and describes the relationship between creativity, power, and morality. The analysis is based on the conceptual framework of creation-corruption, which is the central pair of categories in his mythology.

Next, the study applies the comparative-interdisciplinary method, contrasting Tolkien's thought with three modern theoretical sources:

(1) Christian philosophy of evil (*privatio boni*)-which considers evil as the absence of good, rather than the absence of an independent creative entity (Augustine, Aquinas);

(2) Philosophy of technological ethics - especially the views of Luciano Floridi on "information ethics" and Sherry Turkle's views on the "illusion of humanity" in human-machine interaction;

(3) Jean Baudrillard's simulation theory, which describes the replacement of the real with infinite copies in a technocratic society.

By placing these sources of thought in relation to Tolkien's, the study proceeds to deconstruct the phenomenon of the abuse of AI content as a manifestation of "simulated evil": it does not produce new meanings, but rather recombinates and distorts existing values, similar to the corruption mechanism that Tolkien attributes to the forces of darkness in Middle-earth.

At the same time, the study uses phenomenological and humanistic analysis to investigate some typical cases in practice, such as AI copying artists' styles without permission, creating fake images (deepfake), or spreading false information products. These examples are seen as "contemporary expressions" of the Tolkien model: when creative power is separated from morality, it transforms into an instrument of destruction.

Finally, the research method also includes critical hermeneutics, which aim not only to describe the phenomenon, but also to re-examine the nature of creativity in the age of AI: whether the product of a machine can be called innovative, in the absence of a moral motive, emotion and human purpose—what factors Tolkien considers to be at the core of "sub-creation" behavior?

Thanks to its approach that combines philosophy, humanities, and technological ethics, this research does not aim to critique technology as an evil, but rather to reaffirm the human responsibility to maintain the boundaries between creation and simulation, between constructed good and replicated evil.

Theoretical Framework and Comparative Analysis

Tolkien's Thought on Creation and Alienation

In J. R. R. Tolkien's system of thought, good and evil are not only two opposing forces in the world of Middle-earth mythology, but also two distinct modes of exercising creative powers. Tolkien argued that creativity is a divine attribute bestowed upon humans - a reflection of God's creative action. In his famous essay *On Fairy-Stories* (Tolkien, 1983; original work published 1947) and personal correspondence, he called it "sub-creation," meaning that humans cannot create *ex nihilo* but can only work within the confines of what has been created by the Creator (Bergen, 2017; Willcox, n.d.).

Tolkien's mythology is fundamentally structured around the creation-corruption duality, the central pair of categories in his cosmological and ethical framework. Creation (sub-creation) reflects divine harmony and moral intentionality, whereas corruption represents the perversion of that order through pride, domination, or detachment from

the good (Tolkien, 1983; Bergen, 2017). This binary not only drives the narrative of The Silmarillion but also serves as a philosophical lens for analyzing modern technological phenomena (The nature of evil in The Silmarillion, 2020).

From this foundation, Tolkien asserts that evil is inherently incapable of true creation. Evil can only emulate, distort, or destroy what is already good. The images of Melkor and Sauron in The Silmarillion and The Lord of the Rings exemplify this: both begin with the power of creativity but are gradually corrupted by pride and the desire to “create” outside the order of the good (Bergen, 2017; Willcox, n.d.). Melkor cannot create life; he can only distort Eru Ilúvatar’s creatures into monsters, illustrating the corruption of creation when divorced from morality and purpose (Tolkien, 1983).

For Tolkien, corruption is the inevitable consequence of using creativity without love and responsibility. This “distortion” constitutes anti-creation, whereby beings lose the reflective nature of the Creator and become instruments of destruction. Evil in Tolkien’s world is thus not creative in the sense of producing something genuinely new but only reconstructs what is already available in a deviant, artificial form (Bergen, 2017; Willcox, n.d.).

This thought establishes a profound moral foundation for understanding creativity as an act inseparable from ethical intentionality. It provides a conceptual framework for approaching contemporary technological phenomena-especially artificial intelligence- not merely as tools for producing content but as a test of our capacity to maintain humanity, goodness, and responsibility in the creation of knowledge and culture (Alkaissi & McFarlane, 2023; Floridi, 2014; Turkle, 2011; Ihde, 1990; Latour, 1993; Verbeek, 2011).

Generative AI and the Simulation of Creativity

The development of generative AI-models capable of producing text, images, and music-is fundamentally reshaping the notion of creativity in the digital age. While AI offers the potential to expand human expression, it also raises a profound ethical question: is AI genuinely “creative,” or does it merely simulate what humans have already created? This tension resonates with Tolkien’s philosophical distinction between creation and corruption, highlighting a paradox similar to that between “creation” and “alienation” in Middle-earth (Tolkien, 1983; Bergen, 2017).

Generative AI does not create *ex nihilo*. Instead, it recombines, permutes, and transforms human-generated data-analogous to Tolkien’s assertion that evil “cannot create, but only corrupt the good” (Tolkien, 1983; Willcox, n.d.). When AI produces an image, poem, or piece of music, the output lacks the lived experience, emotional depth, and intuitive insight that constitute authentic human creation. What is often called “AI creation” is therefore a reflection of prior human creativity, but devoid of spiritual, moral, and emotional grounding (Alkaissi & McFarlane, 2023; Floridi, 2014; Turkle, 2011).

The misuse of AI in art and media exemplifies this process of alienation. When humans rely on AI to copy, simulate, or replace their own creative effort, rather than augment it, the resulting products embody a form of corruption akin to Tolkien's concept of distortion. These outputs may be rapid, polished, and technically impressive, yet they lack the vitality, moral intentionality, and humanistic meaning intrinsic to authentic creativity. Examples include award-winning "AI art" pieces, acclaimed "AI-authored" poems, or advertising campaigns deploying unverified synthetic images, all of which signal the erosion of genuine creative standards in contemporary culture (Bown, 2024; The ethics of AI art, 2022).

From the perspective of creative ethics, AI is not inherently "evil," but its deployment without ethical orientation can result in anti-creation. When the goals of creativity are subordinated to utility, performance, or profit, human creation loses its sacred and reflective quality. Consequently, the greatest danger of the AI era does not lie in machines surpassing human creativity, but in humans abdicating their own creative responsibility-becoming "copiers of copies," a phenomenon that may be described as a form of "double alienation" in the digital realm (Floridi, 2014; Ihde, 1990; Latour, 1993; Verbeek, 2011).

Ideological parallel

When J. R. R. Tolkien's thought is juxtaposed with the contemporary phenomenon of generative AI misuse, a striking parallel emerges between what may be termed "creative alienation" in Middle-earth mythology and the modern crisis of creativity in the technological age. Despite the temporal and contextual distance of over half a century, both frameworks converge on a central principle: the ethical grounding of creative power determines whether creation remains authentic or degenerates into anti-creative distortion (Tolkien, 1983; Bergen, 2017).

In Tolkien's cosmology, creation is a divine act, a reflection of the Creator's (Eru Ilúvatar) power within the mortal realm. Beings such as Melkor and Sauron, who were originally endowed with creative abilities, fell into corruption when they attempted to appropriate that creative authority for self-serving ends. They could not generate genuinely new forms; instead, they distorted and manipulated pre-existing creations, turning creativity into an instrument of domination, control, and destruction. This process reflects the spiritual and moral law Tolkien intended to convey: whenever creativity is divorced from love, responsibility, and goodwill, it becomes inherently destructive (Willcox, n.d.; The nature of evil in The Silmarillion, 2020).

In the contemporary context, generative AI can be metaphorically understood as a "digital Melkor": a system capable of simulating creative outputs but devoid of authentic moral and imaginative engagement. When humans employ AI to augment understanding or explore new ideas, it functions as a tool of "sub-creation," akin to Tolkien's notion

of secondary creation, respecting the order of the good while expanding human comprehension. Conversely, when AI is misused to manipulate, appropriate, or replace human creativity-through copying artworks, falsifying images, or generating misleading content,-it manifests as a form of creative alienation. In such instances, humans themselves become “perverters” of creativity, mirroring Melkor’s corruption in Tolkien’s mythology (Alkaissi & McFarlane, 2023; Floridi, 2014; Turkle, 2011).

Both the Tolkienian framework and contemporary technological experience converge on the insight that creativity is fundamentally moral, not merely technical or skill-based. Tolkien’s work warns that when creative power is exercised without ethical awareness, it leads to self-destruction-a pattern increasingly observable in the widespread misuse of AI in culture, art, and media. This parallel underscores that technology is not a neutral instrument of intellect; it is a test of humanity. The ethical and reflective use of AI determines whether humans remain authentic creators or fall victim to their own immoral ambitions, resulting in digital corruption, alienation, and the erosion of humanistic values (Ihde, 1990; Latour, 1993; Verbeek, 2011; Baudrillard, 1981).

Discussion

Interdisciplinary and Philosophical Discussion

The Tolkienian framework of creation-corruption can be further illuminated through a comparative interdisciplinary perspective, revealing structural parallels between mythological and contemporary technological phenomena. Tolkien’s mythology is fundamentally structured around the creation-corruption duality-the central pair of categories in his cosmological and ethical framework. Creation, or “sub-creation,” reflects divine harmony and moral intentionality, while corruption represents the perversion of that order through pride, domination, or detachment from the good (Tolkien, 1983; Bergen, 2017). This binary drives the narrative of *The Silmarillion* and provides a philosophical lens for analyzing modern technological phenomena.

In Christian philosophy, Augustine (ca. 426/1984) and Aquinas (1485/1981) conceptualize evil not as a positive substance but as the privation of good (privatio boni). Similarly, in Tolkien’s mythology, Melkor does not generate evil ex nihilo; he disrupts the harmony of Eru Ilúvatar’s design, transforming existing creation into distorted forms (Willcox, n.d.; *The nature of evil in The Silmarillion*, 2020). This resonates with the misuse of AI: when humans exploit generative algorithms to replicate or alter existing content without moral awareness, they do not create new value but distort informational and creative goods that already exist (Alkaissi & McFarlane, 2023; *The ethics of AI art*, 2022).

From the standpoint of technological ethics, Luciano Floridi's framework of information ethics emphasizes the moral significance of informational entities, highlighting that the generation of AI outputs detached from human authorship and accountability constitutes a violation of informational integrity (Floridi, 2014; Hofman, 2024; Karagöz, 2024). Sherry Turkle (2011) similarly warns against the "illusion of humanity" in human-machine interaction: AI may mimic emotional depth or creative insight, but it cannot replicate the lived experience and intentionality that underpin genuine human creativity, reinforcing Tolkien's distinction between form and essence. Baudrillard's simulation theory provides another complementary lens: hyperreality describes a condition in which the real is replaced by infinite simulacra (Baudrillard, 1981). Generative AI operates within this regime, producing signs without referents, analogous to Sauron's forged rings, which dominate but do not originate authentic power. The proliferation of deepfakes and AI art exemplifies the collapse of authenticity into endless replication (Surfshark, 2025; Graphite Note, 2025).

From a technological anthropology perspective, generative AI is not a neutral instrument but a mediator of human self-understanding (Ihde, 1990; Latour, 1993; Verbeek, 2011). It reshapes creative identity: when users treat AI outputs as personal achievements, they enact a form of technological posthumanism, where agency is delegated to algorithms (Microsoft Corporation, 2025; Freeman, 2025). This mirrors Tolkien's warning that tools wielded without humility become instruments of domination, not sub-creation.

J. R. R. Tolkien's thesis that "evil cannot create" offers more than a literary metaphor when read through the lens of generative AI; it becomes a philosophical reflection on the nature of creativity, ethics, and human essence in the technological age (Tolkien, 1983; Bergen, 2017). True creativity, in Tolkien's conception, is an act of "co-creation with the Good," a moral participation in beauty and being through imagination, emotion, and free will. When creation is driven instead by ambition or the will to dominate, it collapses into distortion-what Tolkien defines as "corruption" (Bergen, 2017; Willcox, n.d.). Generative AI can simulate the form of creativity but lacks its substance: the awareness of purpose, value judgment, and existential experience. The products of AI, when abused as surrogates for human invention, thus embody what may be termed "anti-creative production"-a process severed from consciousness and moral intent (Alkaissi & McFarlane, 2023).

Floridi's information ethics complements Tolkien's view by framing corruption as a violation of informational ontology: AI does not "create" meaning but reorganizes it without consent or context, severing content from the human intentionality and moral responsibility that underpin genuine creation (Floridi, 2014). Baudrillard's hyperreality extends this insight further: when AI-generated content floods cultural spaces, it risks producing a post-creative environment in which originals are indistinguishable from

derivatives, and authorship itself becomes conceptually obsolete (Baudrillard, 1981; Surfshark, 2025). Together, these perspectives illuminate structural parallels between Tolkien's mythological corruption and the contemporary "digital corruption" that arises when human creativity is displaced by algorithmic replication.

While some argue that AI exhibits exploratory creativity-traversing conceptual spaces within defined constraints-such novelty remains algorithmic, not existential (Boden, 2016). It is computational, not moral or spiritual; it does not spring from the inner necessity that characterizes human artistic creation. Hence, the question is not whether AI can produce, but whether it can intend - whether it can act with awareness of value and responsibility (Alkaissi & McFarlane, 2023; Hofman, 2024).

Tolkien's insight thus resonates as an ethical allegory for the present: when humans abandon reflective creative consciousness and take pride in mere machinic productivity, they risk becoming what may be termed "AI orcs"-a symbolic figure for technologically alienated creators, detached from moral creativity (Bergen, 2017; Tolkien, 1983). True creativity, in its philosophical depth, demands the alignment of intellect, moral will, and lived experience. The misuse of AI in art and culture, therefore, constitutes not innovation but digital corruption-the reduction of creative spirit to mechanical process. While AI can multiply forms with unprecedented efficiency, only humanity can imbue them with authentic meaning (Floridi, 2014; Turkle, 2011; Ihde, 1990; Latour, 1993; Verbeek, 2011). The inhuman-whether in the form of Tolkien's uncreated evil or unchecked algorithmic replication-may imitate endlessly, but it cannot truly create.

Table 1. Comparative framework between Tolkien's concept of evil and the phenomenon of generative AI abuse

Criteria	Evil in Tolkien	Abuse of Generative AI	Notes / Similarities
Origin	Originates from beings such as Melkor and Sauron - once endowed with creative power but later corrupted by ambition and desire for domination.	Originates from human actors - individuals or corporations - who possess creative capacity but employ AI to replace rather than enhance genuine creativity.	Both derive from entities capable of creation but morally or instrumentally distorted.
Nature of Creativity	Incapable of creating new life or beauty; can only distort and corrupt existing forms of goodness.	AI lacks authentic creativity; its outputs depend on pre-existing human data, and misuse by humans leads to replication without originality.	In both systems, imitation supplants creation, and form replaces essence.

Criteria	Evil in Tolkien	Abuse of Generative AI	Notes / Similarities
Driving Force	Motivated by the will to dominate, possess, and exert control over creation.	Driven by profit, efficiency, convenience, and technological self-sufficiency.	Both reflect alienation of the creative will - the substitution of ethical purpose with instrumental gain.
Mechanism of Operation	Operates through manipulation, corruption, and the degradation of inherent goodness.	Functions through algorithmic recombination and large-scale simulation of existing data, often ignoring authorship and authenticity.	Both processes involve distortion of the original value of creation and a loss of integrity.
Social and Cultural Consequences	Results in moral decay, spiritual ruin, and loss of harmony in the created world.	Leads to aesthetic homogenization, undervaluation of human creativity, and erosion of artistic and ethical standards.	Both cause cultural degradation and moral disorientation in the creative sphere.
Resilience / Recovery	Redemption is possible through alignment with goodness, humility, and cooperation with the creative order.	Restoration requires ethical education, humanistic awareness, and regulatory frameworks protecting authentic creation.	In both contexts, recovery depends on moral reflection and reorientation toward responsibility.
Symbolic Dimension	Evil represents the perversion of sub-creation - the act of turning creative freedom into domination.	The abuse of generative AI symbolizes technological alienation - the transformation of creative agency into mechanical replication.	Both embody the loss of creative essence and the displacement of spirit by system.

Ethical and humanistic issues

One of the most striking manifestations of creative alienation in the age of artificial intelligence is the phenomenon in which individuals and organizations exploit AI while proudly claiming its outputs as their own “creative achievement.” Across fields such as advertising, media, design, and content production, the use of generative AI to produce images, text, or sound has become increasingly normalized, often leading to the misconception that machine-generated outputs constitute genuine human creativity. The

ethical peril lies not in the technology itself, but in the complacency and hubris of those who equate technical command with authentic authorship (Alkaissi & McFarlane, 2023; Bown, 2024).

Tolkien's thought illuminates this phenomenon through the notion of "distorted creators." In Middle-earth, orcs—once elves of radiant and noble origin—were captured, tortured, and transformed by Melkor into instruments of war. Their forms remain, but their souls are lost, rendering them incapable of true creation (Tolkien, 1983; Bergen, 2017). Analogously, contemporary humans who rely on AI to replace creative thought, and then take pride in the outputs, resemble these "users detached from moral creativity": agents whose actions are mediated entirely by algorithms, lacking the imaginative and ethical grounding that constitutes human authorship.

The moral danger lies in technological hubris: the belief that mastery of tools equates to mastery of creativity. This mindset devalues the labor of artists, writers, and researchers who invest intellectual, emotional, and ethical effort in generating original work. A notable illustration is the case of Vietnamese artist Hoàng Lập, who shared a hand-drawn sketch celebrating a national holiday. The sketch was appropriated, colorized using AI, and widely circulated as someone else's "artwork." When the artist later completed and published the authentic painting, many viewers - conditioned by algorithmic aesthetics – preferred the AI version, despite its distortions and lack of human intentionality. This episode exemplifies how aesthetic judgment can be reshaped by machine simulation, favoring imitation over authenticity.

From a cultural anthropological perspective, this trend constitutes a form of spiritual and ethical degeneration. When societies privilege efficiency, novelty, or profit over truth, beauty, and moral responsibility, the humanistic foundations of creativity erode. Like Tolkien's orcs, such individuals may produce countless outputs—images, sounds, or symbols—but they cannot create meaning, the essential quality that confers cultural and ethical value (Ihde, 1990; Latour, 1993; Verbeek, 2011). Every AI-generated "achievement," no matter how celebrated technologically, becomes a lifeless echo of pre-existing content.

Thus, the ethical challenge in the age of generative AI is not whether humans should use these technologies, but whether humanity can maintain its role as the true creative subject. When machine performance is mistaken for moral and imaginative authorship, humans risk becoming "AI orcs": beings who once exercised genuine creative agency but have surrendered their souls to the illusion of technological power. Preserving authentic creativity requires a conscious integration of moral responsibility, reflective judgment, and humanistic awareness alongside technological practice (Floridi, 2014; Turkle, 2011; Baudrillard, 1981).

Implications for education and policy

From the above analysis, it becomes evident that the contemporary innovation crisis in the age of artificial intelligence is not merely a technical or individual moral issue, but a profound challenge encompassing education, public policy, and cultural stewardship. The misuse of AI, the overestimation of machine “creativity,” and the neglect of human thinking, emotion, and moral reflection in intellectual labor all stem from deficits in humanistic education and the absence of policy frameworks that guide technology toward ethical and culturally meaningful purposes (Floridi, 2014; Turkle, 2011; Bergen, 2017).

In the educational sphere, it must be emphasized that AI cannot substitute for human creative reasoning; it can only augment and extend it. Curricula, from secondary to tertiary education, should shift from a narrow focus on technical proficiency to cultivating the ability to think critically with technology. Learners must develop the capacity not only to generate outputs with AI but also to evaluate the limitations, risks, and ethical implications of each act of AI-assisted creation. Genuine creative education therefore demands more than digital literacy: it must foster moral discernment, aesthetic sensitivity, and a sense of human responsibility-qualities that no algorithm can simulate.

From a policy perspective, a robust legal and ethical framework is essential to safeguard the integrity and value of human creativity in the AI era. Such a framework should extend beyond traditional intellectual property protection or anti-plagiarism measures to encompass the following dimensions:

- Transparency labels: All AI-generated or AI-assisted creative works should be clearly identified, ensuring public awareness and maintaining the authenticity of human authorship.
- Copyright for training data: Developers must obtain proper authorization for the use of pre-existing artworks, texts, and other creative sources, thereby protecting original creators and preventing exploitative practices.
- Recognition of human-AI co-creation: Policies should encourage collaborative production between humans and machines while preserving human primacy in authorship, accountability, and moral intention.

Beyond regulatory structures, educational institutions and governments must cultivate a philosophy of creativity suitable for the AI age-one that treats creative work as an ethical responsibility toward the world one shapes. Disciplines such as the arts, literature, philosophy, ethics, and digital citizenship should be integrated alongside STEM subjects, forming a holistic model of creative competence that unites technical skill with moral and reflective awareness.

Finally, national strategies for technological development must resist the allure of technological vanity—the tendency to glorify AI as an emblem of progress while neglecting its social and humanistic consequences. A culture-oriented approach is required, wherein every technological innovation is measured against the fundamental question: Does this technology serve the good, or does it merely amplify power, profit, and instrumental efficiency? Only through the combined efforts of education and policy, aimed at restoring the moral and humanistic essence of creativity, can society avert the “digital corruption” that Tolkien envisioned in the figure of Melkor and his distorted creations (Tolkien, 1983; Bergen, 2017).

Connection to Technological Anthropology

From the perspective of technological anthropology, the emergence and widespread adoption of generative AI is not merely a technical development, but a profound cultural event that restructures the relationships between humans, knowledge, and creativity. As Ihde (1990) argued in *Technics and Praxis*, technology is never neutral: it mediates human perception and action, shaping both what we can do and how we experience the world. Similarly, Latour (1993) in *We Have Never Been Modern* and Verbeek (2011) in *Moralizing Technology* emphasize that technological artifacts function as mediators in social and moral networks, embedding and propagating cultural values, power structures, and implicit biases.

Generative AI, trained on vast datasets composed of human language, images, music, and collective memories, operates within this same framework. Each output is the product of what may be termed a paradoxical process of “re-humanization”: the machine imitates human creativity using human-generated data, yet in doing so, it blurs the boundaries between the human creator and the technological tool (Ihde, 1990; Verbeek, 2011). From a technological anthropology perspective, generative AI is not a neutral instrument but a mediator of human self-understanding. When users treat AI outputs as personal achievements, they enact a form of technological posthumanism—where agency is delegated to algorithms. This mirrors Tolkien’s warning that tools wielded without humility become instruments of domination, not sub-creation.

The human misuse of AI—treating it as a substitute for, rather than a support of, genuine creativity—exemplifies a shift in industrial culture: from conscious, reflective creation to thoughtless, automated production. When individuals and businesses take pride in mass-producing “AI products” without creative labor, they lose sight of the intrinsic human-technological connection. In this sense, AI ceases to function merely as a tool to augment human capacity and instead emerges as a hybrid cultural entity—simultaneously shaped by humans and reshaping humans in its operation (Latour, 1993; Verbeek, 2011).

Technological anthropology thus calls for a redefinition of the human-AI relationship on a humanistic basis. Creativity cannot be abstracted from meaning, moral responsibility, or ethical reflection. Without such grounding, society risks producing a class of what might be termed “technologically alienated creators”: individuals whose perception and cognition are distorted, who treat technology as an end rather than a means, and who forget that the essence of creativity remains fundamentally human-rooted in imagination, moral awareness, and the capacity to reflect on one’s world.

Conclusion

This study examined the connection between J. R. R. Tolkien’s concept of “uncreated evil” and the contemporary phenomenon of AI-generated content abuse. The analysis highlights a shared principle: genuine creativity is not merely the production of forms, but an act inseparable from ethics, consciousness, and responsibility. In Tolkien’s mythology, dark forces such as Melkor or Sauron cannot create anything new; they can only distort and corrupt what has already been brought into being. Similarly, generative AI, when misused by humans, can produce images, text, or sound, but these products lack soul, intentionality, and the moral and emotional dimensions that define human creativity. This results in a form of “digital alienation,” where the act of creation becomes empty and disconnected from human values.

The study further identifies a troubling social pattern: individuals and organizations that take pride in their ability to command AI without understanding the intrinsic value of creativity resemble Tolkien’s orcs - outwardly capable of producing works, yet stripped of the creative soul that gives meaning to their labor. This metaphor underscores the ethical imperative of human stewardship in technological contexts. It is a reminder that the challenge of AI is not technical alone; it is a test of our capacity to preserve the human heart in the creative process.

The implications are clear: AI itself is not inherently threatening, but it amplifies the consequences of human choices. The value of creativity can only be safeguarded when creators recognize the ethical limits and responsibilities of their actions and employ AI as a tool to expand, rather than replace, human imagination. In this sense, Tolkien’s thought remains profoundly relevant: the good, however fragile, can only be protected and perpetuated when creativity is guided by moral wisdom, loyalty to beauty, and a commitment to the welfare of others - qualities that no technology, however advanced, can substitute.

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