

# Statement Regarding Large Language Model Plagiarism Tools, Commonly Referred to as “AI,” and Literary Art

In June of this year, when Anxiety Press published *Sing Lazarus*, I did not explore the idea of creating an e-book for this new work. For many years, I have thought seriously about what is *accessible* as well as what constitutes *ease of access*<sup>1</sup>. When I came to the task of publishing my second novel, my first in a decade, I saw a very different landscape regarding digital media than I did in 2015 when *Always the Wanderer* was published. Likewise, I had spent a lot of the past decade thinking about access and how that functions across communities, both physical and digital.

In 2015, I enthusiastically had *Always the Wanderer* converted into an e-book. At the time, this was an *ease of access* issue, and by creating more pathways to the literature itself, I felt good about more people having an easier experience getting into the novel. Preceding the publication of *Always the Wanderer*, I often used a Kindle myself, it was one of the first things I bought with money from my very first teaching job, and I greatly admired this *ease of access*, which I was afforded with the e-reader. Not only could I easily buy books, but I could steal them too, and find good quality copyright-free works as well. To my mind, I saw a vast landscape of possibility, where corporations could be undermined, works could be distributed and shared, and, *most importantly*, read.

As you may guess, I have very complicated feelings about copyright, as many of my peers do, and I greatly admire the work done to forward [the Creative Commons License](#), even if I have not had the courage, as of yet, to use this for my novels. While I want for artists (in this case: novelists) to be compensated for their work, I also want to live in a world where *everyone* (yes, *everyone*) has *ease of access*, and in my opinion far too many publishers make the literary art they sell difficult to access out of a desire for profits. I have been treated with great dignity by both Golden Antelope Press and Anxiety Press, but I know many writers who have had significantly negative experiences with other agents and publishers who see them as a means to an end. We live

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<sup>1</sup> In my commentary here, one major focus will be *ease of access*, which to me is distinct from *accessibility*. *Accessibility*, that is to say rendering a novel in brail or making a PDF easily understood by a screen reader, or other such important considerations of form, is a different topic which will not be addressed in this writing. Much of my thinking about *accessibility* comes from library sciences and for further reading on this one may consult the ALA’s 2022 “[A Landscape Review: Accessibility in Libraries](#).” *Accessibility* is, of course, important outside of libraries so one may also look to Dolmage, J. T. (2017). Academic ableism: Disability and higher education. University of Michigan Press and/or Oliver, M., & Barnes, C. (2012). The new politics of disablement. Palgrave Macmillan among numerous others for discussion of this important topic.

in a profit-maximization culture in our current moment, so these negative experiences make a lot of sense from this profit-maximization perspective: extract vs foster, conform vs express are just a few pairs of contradicting verbs that come to mind when thinking about these interactions. And yet, there are still presses, like Golden Antelope and Anxiety Press, who see the art for what it is: an expression of humanity, which should not necessarily be limited by a large corporation which seeks to please its board or shareholders. In 2015, I saw the e-book as a way forward in this fight against corporate interest: *I could steal books on the internet*. If I did not wish to support a publisher/corporation/business, I did not have to, one could steal the work and still easily access the literary art.

It turns out, those same corporations that I stole PDFs and EPUBs from, had the same idea in reverse. That same contempt I held for them and their greed, they held for me as a writer publishing with a small press, whose vision did not shape my literary art in order to maximize profits, but shaped it in order to put a work of literature out into this world that had something complex to say. As the last decade has passed me by, this has become more and more evident, and now we see the real-world implications that this philosophy of exploitation has: Amazon now has a feature which will “*summarize*” sections of an e-book (or perhaps the entire e-book) and “*answer*” *questions* about an e-book. What is more, no author has a choice regarding this feature, I cannot opt out, for example. In June, when *Sing Lazarus* was released, I told readers that I was worried about “AI” and that I would make a decision later on about whether or not an e-book version would eventually be released. Amazon has made my decision for me. **There will be no e-book version of *Sing Lazarus* and likewise, the e-book version of *Always the Wanderer* has been removed from all stores, even those not affiliated with Amazon.**

In 2015, I should have known better. My own naivety in stealing these e-books, and in my defense, I found primarily copyright free books to be of interest, even if I did steal “major” titles as well, was a part of a broader culture, one in which the same tech company employees, who now develop “AI,” also participated. The normalization of that culture, indeed the rebellious satisfaction that came about from that culture (many of my peers will remember the small joy that arose from finding the exact book/album/movie in some odd corner of the internet that one was searching after) is what has led us, unfortunately, to this place where *to even make an e-book available for ease of access means to submit voluntarily to corporate theft*. Those little acts opposing major corporations, now have led me to a place where as a writer, I will no longer, for

now, share e-book versions of my literary works. Stealing books and music and movies on the internet was always, to me, a two-fold statement: first, and absolutely most importantly, a bitter sign of disrespect to the corporations who exploit art for profit. Second, it was an act that gave voice to the luddite in me: digital files should not cost anything, the physical book, the physical record or VHS or DVD should. No corporation can take away the records I have in my house, no corporation can take away the books, but they can *and do* take away digital files. I have no respect for this system of digital sharing *outside of how it provides ease of access* to those who need it. But now, I fear that *ease of access* is gone behind paywalls, price gouging, and profit-maximizing practices. I will not begrudge myself and others who stole digital art in order to experience it. And I will not begrudge anyone now who does so: steal my books if you can. At least I know you are engaging the work with intentionality. I feel honor and pride in having a book of mine stolen. That means something to me. But I do not, and likely will never, feel any pride in having Amazon (or any other corporation) “train” their LLMs on my writing so that my literary works contribute to their plagiarism tools.

Clearly, there is a fine line in what sort of stealing is honorable. Who gets to steal from the rich? Who gets to steal from the poor? This situation comes down to an age-old contradiction, one which I have no good answers for: some theft is good, some theft is bad. Which is which? To appropriate an answer from Potter Stewart, *I know it when I see it*. And now, in our current moment, I know that Amazon and other major corporations are clearly engaged in the wrong kind of theft. I have not even considered the ecological implications of LLMs, nor have I considered how these plagiarism tools warp the skill of writing in young people, how the philosophy of convenience these LLMs promote creates dependency, or how these LLMs can (and are by the likes of Tech CEOs) be manipulated to spread racist/sexist/homophobic/transphobic visions of the world. Instead, I have reached the conclusion that I was merely flirting with in the first six months of 2025 as we prepared *Sing Lazarus* for publication: my novels will be physically consumed from here on out. Steal them if you must.

Ultimately, I see all art as a public good. Perhaps this is idealism, but to my mind a society that is rich with easy access to a wide range of art is a thoughtful and kind society. Art is a safe and reliable way to engage with complex, often scary, ideas, and across languages and cultures literary art offers us vast and meaningful insights into humanity and our histories. Perhaps no other art form is so readily able to provide such nuanced observations of personhood, our psychologies, and

our cultures. I hear the counterargument now: by not allowing LLMs to “summarize” or “answer” questions about my works, I make them more difficult to access for many people. And perhaps that is true. But I accept that. Art, and the appreciation of and learning from art, is not an easy task. Seeing a summary of a novel does not afford you *the experience* of having read it. Part of the experience of art is *confusion* or *frustration*, or, and I truly mean this, *the lack of understanding*. There are many novels/paintings/films/albums that are meant to confound and *it is through navigating that feeling of being confounded that we draw meaningful conclusions about our world*. No LLM “summary” can do that work for you, and perhaps that labor is not for every person in this world, but it is an act of labor that will be lost to many who normally would engage in it, now that e-books will be tightly summarized in a paragraph or two.

What we have to ask now is this: are our cultures changing and moving away from this labor? It is possible that they are. Humanity may look back in a few centuries, and our devotion to the complexities of art may seem mystical and awe-inspiring. I wonder if this mirrors our loss of connection with nature, or perhaps a better comparison is how humanity interacts with the clock. Before clocks were invented (or widespread), humanity had an undeniable connection to the sun and its movements. Can any of us now claim to have such a connection? Perhaps a very small number of us. . . If indeed humanity will lose this connection to objects of art, or if the majority of humans are to lose this connection, I would presume we will be worse off. Humanity would have to relearn many complex ideas about our *selves* and our *worlds* that no LLM can possibly unpack. And here, I can envision another counterargument: if LLMs plagiarize from the writing we already have, would they not be drawing those same conclusions? And once more, the answer is no. *It is the labor of reaching those conclusions that teaches us, not their mere existence*. There are some modes of learning that humanity will never lose: the grief of losing a loved one, the bittersweet feeling of love lost, the complex confrontation of our own mortality. Art is a teacher just like death and love, and just as nature once was for all of us too. Not every person experiences the awe of our natural world, but many still do. All I can hope is that many will still experience that wonder with art after a century of LLM slop.

Steal my books if you must, call me a luddite if you please, but don’t plagiarize me or my works with LLMs. Be kind enough to yourself to make your own art, whatever that looks like.

George Koors

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