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Lexical and Register Configurations of Reflective Meaning in AI-Generated and Romantic Poetry

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Abstract: The increasing presence of AI-generated literary texts has prompted renewed critical attention to questions of meaning, authorship and literary creativity within contemporary literary studies. This paper investigates reflective meaning, defined as meaning that arises indirectly through abstraction, associative lexical patterns and a contemplative register, in AI-generated poetry compared to human authored Romantic verse. Using William Wordsworth's *Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* as a representative romantic poem, the study conducts a comparative lexical and register-based analysis of this poem alongside an AI-generated poetic text crafted to emulate Romantic stylistic features. Employing Voyant tools, the analysis examines patterns of abstract and nature-related vocabulary, lexical recurrence and register stability to explore how reflective language is linguistically configured across the two texts. Rather than considering computational output as determinative of literary meaning, the study views lexical and register tendencies as indicators that support and inform interpretive analysis. By foregrounding how reflective discourse is shaped through linguistic choices rather than authorial intention, the paper demonstrates how digital humanities methodologies can be productively integrated with literary-critical inquiry without reducing interpretation to mere quantitative measurement. The study contributes to ongoing debates in digital humanities and posthuman literary studies by elucidating the capacities and limitations of AI-generated poetic language in relation to reflective meaning. At the same time, it underscores the methodological limits of computational tools in capturing literary depth and interpretive complexity.

Keywords: *Reflective Meaning, Lexical Analysis, Register Analysis, AI-Generated Poetry, Romantic Poetry, Digital Humanities*

1. Introduction

The rapid development of large language models has significantly altered the landscape of literary production and analysis. Systems capable of generating extended poetic texts now participate in domains historically associated with human creativity, prompting renewed scrutiny of authorship, stylistic distinction and literary value. Recent philosophical discussions emphasize that such systems operate through statistical modelling rather than experiential consciousness (Floridi et al), while posthuman theorists situate AI-generated writing within distributed networks of human and technical agency. A key posthuman theorist, N. Katherine Hayles, argues that computational media transform writing into hybrid human-technical "cognitive assemblages," where humans and technologies co-produce meaning through distributed cognition, directly aligning with situating AI-generated writing in networks of human and technical agency (Hayles). Scott Rettberg, a leading scholar in electronic literature, argues in his book, *Electronic Literature* that computational generation builds on longstanding traditions of procedural and algorithmic creativity, such as combinatory poetics, Oulipo constraints and early computer-generated texts rather than representing a radical break (Rettberg). In a later public lecture, he states that this perspective frames AI-assisted writing as an evolution within electronic literature's history, emphasizing continuity in human-machine collaborative creativity over rupture ("Cyborg Authorship").

Alongside these philosophical and historical debates, computational literary studies have increasingly integrated machine learning and natural language processing into interpretive practice. Scholars have demonstrated how algorithmic modelling can identify stylistic tendencies, thematic clusters and distributional patterns across literary corpora (Underwood; Piper). More recent work explicitly engages machine learning as a methodological framework for literary analysis, arguing that AI-driven tools reveal structural regularities not immediately perceptible through close reading alone (Hatzel et al.). Such approaches position literary texts within computational environments where pattern recognition, classification and modelling supplement traditional interpretive strategies.

However, this expansion of the computational method has not proceeded without critique. Critics have cautioned that quantitative literary analysis risks overstating interpretive claims or conflating statistical correlation with literary meaning (Da, 2019). In *The Computational Case Against Computational Literary Studies*, Da argues that quantitative methods often overstate interpretive significance and mistake statistical correlations (e.g., word frequencies) for genuine literary meaning, due to methodological mismatches with literature's complexities. Other scholars such as Bode and Bradley argue in their work that CLS must grapple with critical AI studies insights, recognising

epistemological and ethico-political entanglements from algorithmic mediation rather than treating tools as neutral representations (Bode and Bradley, 2024).

Within this evolving landscape, AI-generated poetry presents a particularly compelling case study. Comparative studies increasingly examine stylistic resemblance, reader perception and the boundaries of creative authorship in machine produced text (Porter and Machery). The paper, "AI-generated poetry is indistinguishable from human-written poetry and is rated more favourably", by Porter and Machery, presents experiments where non-expert readers failed to distinguish ChatGPT-generated poems from those by famous poets (e.g., Shakespeare, Dickinson), often rating AI poems higher on rhythm, beauty and emotional impact due to their perceived simplicity and accessibility. Yet while scholarship has explored authorship, genre modelling and computational creativity, comparatively less attention has been given to how specific literary effects, such as reflective or meditative discourse, are structurally configured across human and AI-generated texts. Reflection, especially within the romantic tradition, has historically been associated with interior continuity, temporal return and sustained contemplative articulation. Whether and how such reflective qualities emerge within machine-generated verse remains an open question.

This study enters that conversation by situating a focused comparison between a canonical Romantic poem, *Tintern Abbey* by William Wordsworth and a poem generated by a contemporary large language model (ChatGPT 5) under controlled prompting conditions. Rather than adjuncting the authenticity of machine creativity, the analysis investigates how reflective discourse manifests within each text. By placing canonical poetic meditation alongside AI-generated verse within the same analytical frame, the paper contributes to ongoing discussions at the intersection of machine learning, computational methods and literary studies.

While debates surrounding AI-generated literature frequently focus on authorship and creativity, literary reflection is ultimately encountered at the level of textual structure. Stylistic scholarship has long emphasized that literary effects emerge not from isolated vocabulary but from patterned distribution. In corpus linguistics, meaning is understood as probabilistic and cumulative, shaped by frequency, recurrence and collocation rather than by singular lexical instances (Biber, Douglas, Conrad, and Reppen; Sinclair). Similarly, corpus stylistics demonstrate that literary texture becomes visible through distributional tendencies that may escape impressionistic reading (McIntyre and Walker).

Register theory further clarifies this configurational dimension. Within systemic-functional linguistics, register is defined through patterned relations among field, tenor and mode, revealing how situational context shapes lexical selection and grammatical organisation (Halliday and Matthiessen). Reflection, from this perspective, is not simply thematic introspection but a structured alignment of

first-person anchoring, temporal reference, modality and evaluative stance across a text's linguistic architecture. Such features can be examined proportionally, allowing comparison without collapsing interpretive nuance into numerical abstraction.

This paper therefore adopts a focused corpus-stylistic approach to examine how reflective discourse is configured across two poetic texts: *Tintern Abbey* by William Wordsworth and a poem generated by a contemporary large language model (ChatGPT 5). Using Voyant Tools, the study measures the proportional distribution of first-person pronouns, temporal markers and interior cognitive vocabulary, alongside qualitative assessment of modal usage and syntactic extension. The aim is not to determine whether machine-generated poetry possesses authentic interiority, but to evaluate how reflective density is linguistically reinforced within each corpus.

By situating lexical distribution and register configuration within ongoing debates about machine learning and literary study, this article proposes a methodologically grounded framework for comparing reflective articulation across human and AI-generated verse. In doing so, it contributes to computational literary scholarship by shifting the discussion from ontological authenticity to structural configuration, demonstrating how reflective meaning becomes textually legible through patterned linguistic reinforcement.

2. Research Objectives:

This study aims to examine the structural and linguistic dimensions of reflective meaning in human and AI-generated poetry. The specific objectives are:

1. To analyse the lexical configuration of reflective discourse in William Wordsworth's *Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* and a poem generated by ChatGPT 5, focusing on markers such as first-person pronouns, temporal adverbs, modal verbs and affective vocabulary.
2. To investigate register-level structuring, including field, tenor and mode, that contributes to reflective depth in both human and machine-generated texts.
3. To compare the patterns of reflective expression between Romantic poetry and AI-generated poetry, assessing whether generative systems reproduce linguistic generative systems reproduce linguistic structures traditionally associated with introspective and contemplating writing.
4. To situate these findings within broader theoretical and computational debates concerning authorship, creativity, posthuman frameworks and the methodological contributions of computational literary studies.

By clearly articulating these objectives, the study foregrounds an empirical, corpus-stylistic approach while maintaining attention to theoretical questions about reflection, authorship and the role of AI in literary production.

3. Literature Review

This review synthesises key research on computational literary studies, corpus stylistics, post humanist theory and AI-generated poetry. It highlights empirical and theoretical debates concerning reflective meaning, authorship and creative capacity in both human and machine-generated text.

3.1 Literary Meaning and Reflection

Traditionally, literary meaning has been perceived as an interpretive process rather than as a fixed semantic attribute inherent in language. As Terry Eagleton argues, meaning in literature emerges through a dynamic interaction between textual form, historical context and readerly engagement, rather than existing transparently within linguistic structure alone (Eagleton). Consequently, literature transcends mere grammatical coherence or stylistic embellishment; it invites ambiguity, multiplicity and reflective engagement. In this context, reflection does not imply decorative emotional language but rather a depth of articulation that encourages contemplation beyond superficial expression. Reflective meaning operates through indirection, symbolic layering and temporal distance, prompting readers to revisit the text and reassess its implications. The ability of literature to sustain such reflective depth is often linked to interiority and subjective consciousness. Understanding reflective meaning as depth rather than decoration establishes a crucial distinction for the present inquiry: the difference between structurally coherent language and language that evokes experiential contemplation.

3.2 Reflective Meaning and Human Experience

If reflective meaning transforms emerges through interpretation rather than residing on the textual surface of a text, it necessarily presupposes a subject capable of reflective mediation. In literary discourse, reflection exceeds the mere articulation of emotion. It is tied to memory, to lived moments, to the awareness that time has passed and that we are not quite the same person we once were. Reflective writing revisits experience from temporal distance and situates it within broader moral or existential frameworks.

Paul Ricoeur's work is helpful here. In *Time and Narrative*, he argues that meaning emerges through acts of remembering and re-telling; we understand ourselves by narrating our past to ourselves (Ricoeur). Reflection, for him, is not a raw outpouring of emotion. It is mediated. Experience becomes intelligible only when it is shaped in language and reassembled into a story. Memory and identity are constantly in dialogue. This is why literary introspection feels powerful: not simply because of stylistic elegance, but because it gives form to embodied experience unfolding over time. The reflective depth

described by Ricoeur presupposes a subject capable of temporal return and experiential continuity. From a phenomenological perspective, reflection involves self-reflection: a consciousness aware of its own continuity and change. It entails temporality, embodiment and situatedness. Reflective meaning therefore, is not merely a feature of textual arrangement but an effect grounded in experiential orientation toward the world.

The reception of Romantic poetry illustrates how reflective meaning shifts with historical context. The text remains constant, yet interpretive frameworks evolve historically. Reflective meaning is therefore not fixed within the text but reshaped by changing interpretive contexts.

Recent empirical studies on AI-generated poetry complicates this phenomenological account. Research comparing human and machine-generated poems suggest that readers often struggle to distinguish between them and judge surface coherence or stylistic fluency. Yet the same studies indicate that poems believed to be machine-generated are frequently rated as less emotionally authentic or reflective. Such findings imply that reflective meaning is not reducible to lexical arrangement alone; it is intertwined with assumptions about authorship, subjectivity and lived experience. Even when linguistic structures resemble introspection, perceived depth appears tied to the idea of a temporally grounded consciousness behind the text.

These considerations foreground the central problem addressed in this study. If reflective depth relies on lived experience, memory and historically situated consciousness, what happens when we turn to computation systems? Can a system without embodiment or autobiographical memory do more than simulate the outward structure of reflection? Or might reflective meaning, at least at the level of textual configuration, emerge through patterned simulation? This study approaches that question not by presuming an answer, but by examining how reflective meaning is lexically and register-configured in AI-generated and Romantic poetry.

3.3 AI, Language and the Question of Creativity

Recent scholarship has increasingly examined whether artificial intelligence can be described as creative or meaning-producing. Margaret Boden distinguishes between combinational, exploratory and transformational creativity, arguing that computation systems are capable of generating novel combinations within structured conceptual spaces (Boden 143-178). From this perspective, AI does not merely copy existing texts; it produces outputs that may be statistically unprecedented, even if they remain constrained by learned patterns. Creativity, in this framework, need not presuppose consciousness but may emerge from structured generative processes. At the same time, N. Katherine Hayles situates machine-generated language within a posthuman framework in which cognition is distributed across human and computational systems, arguing that contemporary technologies

participate in hybrid meaning-making ecologies (Hayles 48-79).Within such a model, the distinction between human and machine expression becomes less ontological and more relational.

Empirical research on AI-generated poetry further complicates the question. Comparative lexicometric studies indicate that while large language models can reproduce formal and stylistic features associated with poetic discourse, their lexical diversity often remains narrower than that of human-authored poetry. At the level of surface fluency, however, readers frequently struggle to distinguish AI-generated poems from human ones. This suggests that AI-systems can successfully replicate recognizable markers of introspection and poetic register, even if questions remain regarding experiential depth.

The debate, therefore, is not simply whether AI can generate novel language, but whether novelty alone constitutes reflective meaning. If reflective meaning involves temporal self-relation, memory and experiential mediation, as outlined in the previous section, then AI creativity may operate differently from human introspection. Computational systems generate language through probabilistic modelling of prior textual corpora; they do not possess autobiographical memory or embodied continuity. They nonetheless simulate discursive forms associated with reflection, including first person narration, temporal retrospection and affective vocabulary.

This tension motivates the present study. Rather than asking whether AI is “truly creative”, the focus shifts to how reflective meaning is structurally configured in machine-generated texts. If reflection can be partially identified through lexical clustering, semantic recurrence and register patterns, then computational analysis may reveal whether AI poetry reproduces the linguistic architecture of introspection found in Romantic verse, or whether it flattens, redistributes, or reconfigures those patterns.

3.4 Lexical and Register Configuration of Reflective Meaning

If reflective meaning is neither reducible to thematic content nor identical with subjective interiority, then it must be examined at the level of linguistic configuration. Reflection in literary texts does not announce itself abstractly; it is constructed through patterned lexical selection and register organisation. To analyse reflective depth, therefore, requires attention to both micro-level lexical evidence and macro-level discursive structuring.

At the micro-level, reflective meaning becomes visible through lexical configuration. Recurrent first-person pronouns, temporal adverbs (“once”, “again”, “still”), modal verbs (“could”, “should”, “might”), and affective adjectives collectively signal retrospection and evaluation. Shifts between past and present tense often mark the movement between remembered experience and present consciousness. Semantic clustering around memory, landscape, loss or ethical uncertainty frequently

accompanies introspective passages. Such lexical distributions are not incidental; they form measurable traces of reflection. Patterns of repetition, lexical density and collocational networks provide empirical indicators of a text's orientation toward inwardness and temporal self-relation.

In Romantic poetry, such as *Tintern Abbey* by William Wordsworth, reflective depth is inseparable from lexical layering: the contrast between "then" and now", the recurrence of first-person address and the repeated binding of memory to natural imagery. The poem's contemplative quality is realised not only through subject matter but through patterned lexical configuration.

Yet lexical signals do not function in isolation. They accumulate into broader register structures, In systemic-functional terms, reflective writing typically constructs a field oriented toward memory or ethical contemplation, a tenor marked by introspective or evaluative stance and a mode that enables temporal layering through lyrical or retrospective narration. Register configuration thus represents the macro-structural realisation of reflective discourse. It emerges from, but is not reducible to, individual lexical items.

The distinction becomes particularly significant in the context of computational text generation. Large language models operate through probabilistic prediction of lexical sequences. As such systems increasingly reproduce lexical markers associated with reflection, they may also approximate the register configuration, then its recognisability may not depend solely on embodied temporality of the kind described by Paul Ricoeur. Rather, it may rest on structural patterns that are, in principle, reproducible.

This section therefore establishes the methodological premise of this study: reflective meaning is approached as a configurational phenomenon. By analysing both lexical distribution and register structuring, this research examines whether computationally generated texts merely simulate reflective surface features or participate in the same linguistic configurations through which reflection has traditionally been recognised.

3.5 AI Generated Literature and the Question of Reflective Authenticity

Recent scholarship has increasingly examined the literary capacities of large language models and the implications of AI-generated writing for creativity and authorship. Work in computational creativity by Tony Veale argues that generative systems can reproduce stylistic and figurative features traditionally associated with human poetic production, challenging the assumption that literary sophistication presupposes consciousness (Veale 50-57). Similarly, Scott Rettberg, notes that machine-generated texts participate in evolving traditions of electronic and algorithmic literature, where authorship is already distributed across human and computational agencies (Rettberg).

Rather than concentrating on reader indistinguishability experiments, recent debates have shifted toward the conceptual status of authorship and interiority in machine-generated writing. Scholars such as Luciano Floridi argue that large language models operate through statistical pattern extraction rather than intentional states, while digital literary critics including Scott Rettberg situate AI-generated texts within longer traditions of algorithmic and procedural authorship.(Floridi; Rettberg).This shift in emphasis, from empirical stylistic comparison, to ontological and authorial questions, redirects attention to criteria by which reflective meaning is attributed within texts, raising the question of whether such attribution depends on experiential consciousness or identifiable linguistic configuration.

The debate often polarises between two positions: one grounds reflective authenticity in consciousness and subjectivity, maintaining a clear ontological divide between human reflection and computational imitation; the other stresses functional equivalence, arguing that if reflection is identifiable through linguistic configuration, then systems capable of reproducing such configuration participate in reflective expression.

What remains underexamined is the linguistic basis on which reflective depth is recognised. Literary analysis typically infers reflection through textual signals, first-person continuity, temporal layering, modal qualification, evaluative stance — configurational features rather than direct evidence of interiority. If these features are reproducible by generative systems, the criteria distinguishing experiential depth from structural simulation become less secure.

As large language models increasingly approximate stylistic fluency and extended coherence, this instability intensifies. The philosophical boundary between authenticity and simulation may persist, but it is harder to sustain on textual grounds alone.

The present study intervenes at this juncture. Rather than addressing machine consciousness, it examines reflective meaning as lexical and register configuration, analysing Romantic poetry, and AI-generated texts, to determine whether reflective depth differs categorically or only in degree.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a comparative corpus-stylistic framework within digital humanities to examine how reflective discourse is linguistically configured in human-authored and AI-generated poetry. The methodology prioritises transparency, replicability and proportional comparison, focusing on lexical distribution and register rather than thematic interpretation alone.

4.1 Corpus Selection

The comparative corpus consists of two texts. Text A is *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey (1798)* by William Wordsworth. The poem is selected as a canonical instance of sustained Romantic reflection on nature, memory and consciousness. It functions not as a representative sample of Romanticism broadly, but as an extended model of meditative poetic articulation.

Text B is a single AI-generated poem produced specifically for this study under controlled prompting conditions. The AI text serves as a comparative counterpart rather than a stylistic imitation, allowing examination of how large language models (here, ChatGPT 5) configure reflective discourse when given thematic parameters.

The two texts form a focused comparative corpus designed to examine structural tendencies across human and machine-generated authorship.

4.2 AI Text Generation and Prompt Design

The AI-generated poem was produced using a single controlled prompt. The prompt was constructed to elicit reflective poetic language centered on nature, memory, time and consciousness, while explicitly prohibiting stylistic imitation or reference to specific authors. The full prompt is reproduced below for transparency and replicability: Generate an original poem in English that reflects on nature as a source of emotional and philosophical reflection. The poem should explore themes of memory, time, human consciousness and the relationship between the external natural world and the inner life of the mind. The tone should be contemplative and meditative rather than narrative. Use elevated but accessible diction, focusing on sensory images related to landscapes (such as rivers, hills, forest, light or silence). Avoid direct references, stylistic imitation or explicit allusions to any specific poet or literary work. The poem should aim to evoke calm introspection and emotional depth without relying on rhyme schemes or archaic language. Length should be approximately 30-35 lines.

Only one poem was generated and retained for analysis to prevent selective bias and to preserve methodological consistency.

The prompt is treated as an experimental variable shaping the linguistic data produced. Recognising prompt design as methodologically consequential aligns with contemporary discussions of AI mediation in literary production (Bode and Bradely).

4.3 Analytical Framework

The analytical scope is intentionally limited to lexical distribution and register configuration. This restriction ensures methodological clarity and avoids overextension of interpretive claims.

4.3.1 Lexical Analysis

Lexical analysis examines proportional frequency and recurrence patterns associated with reflective discourse. Categories analysed include:

- First-person pronouns
- Temporal markers
- Interior cognitive and affective vocabulary
- Nature-related lexemes

Each category was operationally defined prior to analysis. First-person pronouns include singular and plural forms (‘I’, ‘me’, ‘my’, ‘we’, ‘our’) as indicators of subject positioning. Temporal markers encompass lexical items denoting temporal orientation or duration (eg, ‘now’, ‘once’, ‘years’, ‘past’, ‘future’). Interior vocabulary included nouns and verbs associated with cognition, memory, perception and affect (eg, ‘mind’, ‘memory’, ‘thought’, ‘feel’, ‘consciousness’). Nature-related lexemes comprised concrete environmental referents such as ‘river’, ‘mountain’, ‘forest’, ‘light’ and related landscape terms. Ambiguous cases were reviewed contextually to ensure inclusion reflected reflective function rather than incidental usage.

Rather than treating isolated word presence as interpretively decisive, this study examines cumulative distribution and clustering patterns, consistent with corpus linguistic principles that understand meaning as probabilistic and patterned (Biber, Douglas, Conrad, and Reppen; Sinclair).

Quantitative outputs were generated using Voyant Tools, including word frequency counts and keyword distribution. These results were normalised proportionally to allow cross-text comparison despite differences in overall length.

To ensure proportional comparability, raw frequency counts were divided by the total number of tokens in each corpus and expressed as relative frequency per 1,000 words. This normalisation allows comparison across texts of unequal length without inflating recurrence in the longer poem. Words count was based on Voyant’s tokenisation protocol, with case normalisation applied. Where relevant, wildcard searches were used to group lexicon variants (e.g., ‘memory’, ‘reflect’, ‘reflection’) in order to capture conceptual clustering rather than isolated forms. Function words were retained where analytically relevant, particularly in the case of pronoun analysis.

4.3.2 Register Analysis

Register is examined as a functional configuration shaped by lexical selection, abstraction level and modal usage. Following systemic-functional approaches to register (Halliday and Matthiessen), the analysis considers how reflective discourse is sustained through patterns of:

- Temporal Orientation
- Model Positioning
- Abstraction versus sensory description
- Syntactic extension

Register is treated not as aesthetic quality but as a structured linguistic alignment that shapes reflective articulation.

Register was examined through several observable linguistic indicators: modal verb frequency (e.g., 'may', 'might', 'could') as markers of epistemic positioning; sentence length and clause extension as indicators of syntactic development; shifts between concrete sensory description and abstract nominal constructions; and density of evaluative or contemplative phrasing. Particular attention was paid to the balance between descriptive imagery and reflective abstraction, as well as to the continuity of first-person anchoring across extended syntactic units. These features were assessed qualitatively in conjunction with quantitative outputs in order to identify patterns of sustained or fragmented reflective articulation.

Quantitative findings are supplemented by close reading to contextualise distributional tendencies, ensuring that computational outputs inform but do not replace literary interpretation.

4.4 Methodological scope and Limitations

This study analyses one canonical poem and one AI-generated text. It does not claim generalisability across all Romantic poetry or machine-generated verse. The framework is exploratory, designed to test whether reflective density can be examined as a measurable linguistic configuration.

By integrating corpus linguistics with interpretive stylistics, the methodology seeks to maintain analytical rigor while avoiding reductive quantification, a concern raised in critiques of computational literary studies (Da). The approach therefore treats numerical distribution as indicative rather than determinative of literary meaning.

With these methodological parameters established, the analysis examines the distributional and register-based markers of reflective discourse across the selected human and AI-generated texts.

5. Analysis

This section models reflective density across five lexical categories: temporal markers, interior lexicon, first-person pronouns, epistemic modal verbs and nature vocabulary. Rather than relying on isolated word frequency, the analysis compares proportional distribution across the human and AI corpora. The goal is to identify whether reflection emerges through cumulative structural density rather than surface lexical recurrence. This proportional method allows reflection to be examined as a structural pattern rather than as an isolated thematic feature.

5.1 Comparative Lexical Configuration of Reflection

A proportional analysis of the two corpora reveals a measurable structural divergence in the distribution of reflective language. Percentages are calculated relative to total lexical items in each corpus to ensure proportional comparability despite differences in length. Reflective markers in this section include lexical items drawn from five predefined categories outlined in section 4. In *Tintern Abbey*, reflective markers, defined here as first-person pronouns, temporal indicators, and interior cognitive or affective vocabulary, constitute approximately 11.7% of the poem's total lexical body. In contrast, the AI-generated poem contains 6.9% reflective markers. While both texts engage reflection as thematic concern, the romantic poem demonstrates nearly double the proportional density. Reflection in the two texts is therefore not merely stylistically distinct; it is structurally configured at different intensities.

This divergence begins with subject positioning. Wordsworth's poem is strongly anchored in singular first-person articulation. The recurrence of 'I', 'me' and 'my' produces sustained subject continuity across extended syntactic units. Singular pronouns significantly outnumber collective forms, reinforcing the persistence of an individualised perceiving consciousness. When the speaker declares, "Five years have passed; five summers, with the length / Of five long winters", the temporal statement is immediately embedded with a self-situating voice. The experience of time is inseparable from the speaker who measures and recalls it. Throughout the poem, the repeated appearance of 'I' ensures that reflection unfolds as a continuous subjective process rather than as a detached observation.

By contrast, the AI poem contains no occurrences of 'I' or 'my'. Its limited first-person presence appears primarily through 'me' and occasional 'we'. This shift from subject-as-agent ('I') to subject-as-object ('me') subtly alters the grammatical centre of reflection. The romantic poem repeatedly asserts a perceiving consciousness, the AI-poem references consciousness without consistently re-centring it syntactically. The difference is not absolute absence but reduced

grammatical anchoring. Reflection in the AI text is present but less insistently tied to a singular, reiterated speaker. This numerical imbalance confirms that subject continuity is statistically reinforced in the human corpus.

Temporal configuration further intensifies the contrast. In *Tintern Abbey*, temporal markers are not isolated references but iterative anchors. Words such as 'again', 'years', 'past', and 'long', recur across the poem, creating a lexical architecture of return. The word 'again', appears seven times, signalling cyclical recollection rather than a singular retrospective gesture. Reflection unfolds through repetition. The speaker revisits earlier perceptions, re-evaluates them and marks the transformation of consciousness over time. Temporal language accumulates, producing layered introspection rather than momentary reference.

The AI poem, by comparison, contains temporal markers — 'now', 'once', and 'years', but each appears only once. There is no recurrence that builds temporal layering. Time is acknowledged but not structurally revisited. The romantic poem lexically performs return; the AI poem lexically signals temporal awareness without constructive iterative depth. The difference lies less in thematic presence than in recurrence. Wordsworth's temporality is architectonic; the AI's temporality is episodic.

A similar pattern emerges in the interior lexicon. Wordsworth's cognitive vocabulary is dense and recursive. The 'thought' cluster appears with striking frequency, accompanied by repeated references to 'mind', 'heart', 'spirit', and related affective terms. Interior reflection is distributed across multiple cognate forms, producing lexical saturation. The poem does not merely state that the speaker thinks or feels; it circles these states, rearticulating them in varied yet interconnected vocabulary. When the speaker describes "the still, sad music of humanity", the phrase resonates with prior references to thought, feeling, and moral consciousness. Interior experience is layered through repetition and variation.

In contrast, the AI poem includes explicit markers such as 'memory', 'mind', 'feel ', and 'consciousness', for example signals philosophical intent, but without repetition or clustering, it does not generate the same density of inward return. Wordsworth's interior lexicon, unfolds as a sustained field; the AI's appear as discrete points. The recurrence frequency therefore supports the claim of iterative temporal structuring.

Modal verbs introduce an additional nuance. Wordsworth's poem contains a modest but notable presence of epistemic qualifiers — 'might', 'may', 'would', perhaps', 'seem'. These markers soften assertions and introduce contemplative hesitation. Reflection is articulated as a process of possibility and reconsideration. Statements are inflected by uncertainty, allowing thought to remain open ended. The AI poem, however, contains no modal verbs within the selected category. Its reflective statements

are grammatically declarative and unqualified. The absence of epistemic hesitation produces a different rhetorical posture: interiority is presented as stable rather than exploratory.

Syntactic structure reinforces these lexical patterns. The average sentence length in *Tintern Abbey* exceeds forty words, producing extended syntactic flow. In this experiment, sentence boundaries were determined using punctuation demarcation within each corpus. Clauses accumulate, subordinate phrases unfold and reflection develops across elongated grammatical arcs. The structure itself enacts temporal and cognitive learning. In contrast, the AI poem's average sentence length is under twenty words. Reflection is segmented into shorter units. While syntactic brevity does not preclude depth, it reduces the grammatical space in which recursive meditation can unfold. The absence of epistemic modals in the AI corpus is statistically significant within the selected category.

Nature vocabulary further clarifies the distinction. Wordsworth's environmental lexicon is widely distributed and interwoven with interior terms. Words such as 'wood', 'mountain', 'wild', and 'green' recur across the poem, creating an integrated field in which environment and consciousness repeatedly intersect. Nature does not remain static scenery; it becomes the medium through which thought and memory circulate. The AI poem includes nature vocabulary — 'river', 'light', 'forest', 'earth', yet these words appear without extensive recurrences or cross-cluster layering. Nature imagery is present but less structurally embedded within interior repetition.

Taken together, these proportional and structural differences suggest that reflective meaning in *Tintern Abbey* emerges through cumulative lexical reinforcement. Subjectivity, temporality and interiority are not simply present but they are repeatedly rearticulated. Reflection develops through recurrence, syntactic extension and cross-cluster saturation. The AI poem engages similar thematic categories but distributes them more sparsely. Its reflection appears conceptually coherent yet lexically non-iterative.

The distinction, therefore, is not one of the thematic absence but of structural density. Both texts engage memory, time and consciousness in relation to nature. However, the romantic poem builds reflective depth through recursive return and sustained subject anchoring, whereas the AI poem presents reflective elements in a more segmented and declarative configuration. The measurable difference in reflective density – 11.7% compared to 6.9%, supports this structural contrast. Reflection in the former unfolds cumulatively; in the latter, it remains present but less lexically reinforced.

Table 1. Proportional Reflective Density Comparison (Human vs AI Corpus)

Category	Human (Count)	Human (%) (of 1237 words)	AI Count	AI (%) (of 188 words)
Temporal Markers	28	2.3%	3	1.6%
Interior Lexicon	44	3.6%	4	2.1%
First-person pronouns	73	5.9%	6	3.2%
Combined Reflective Markers	145	11.7%	13	6.9%
Epistemic Modals	7	0.6%	0	0%
Nature Lexicon*	47	3.8%	8	4.3%

*Nature Lexicon calculated separately and not included in combined reflective density total.

Percentages represent proportional distribution relative to total lexical items in each corpus (Wordsworth Corpus = 1,237 words, AI Corpus = 188 words). Combined reflective density is calculated by aggregating first-person pronouns, temporal markers and interior lexical items. Modal verbs and nature vocabulary are reported separately to preserve analytical distinction between epistemic hesitation and environmental imagery.

Although the AI corpus is substantially shorter, proportional comparison normalises corpus length, allowing structural density to be evaluated across texts of unequal size. The results indicate that reflective markers constitute 11.7% of the lexical body of *Tintern Abbey*, compared to 6.9% in the AI-generated poem. Wordsworth's text therefore exhibits approximately 1.7 times greater reflective density.

Notably, while nature vocabulary appears proportionally comparable across the two corpora, the divergence lies in subject-anchored and interior lexical reinforcement. The human-authored poem demonstrates higher recurrence in first-person and cognitive categories, suggesting that reflective depth is structurally cumulative rather than merely thematic.

The contrast, therefore, is not reducible to vocabulary choice alone. It concerns how reflective states are linguistically constructed. The AI poem employs a register of explicit conceptual articulation; Tintern Abbey sustains a register of experiential and recursive meditation. Both texts address similar thematic concerns, but the manner of articulation differs. In one, reflection is directly named; in the other, it is progressively enacted through figurative density, repetition and syntactic continuity.

5.2 Register and Reflective Tone

While section 4.1 examines quantitative distribution, this subsection considers qualitative rhetorical configurational. Beyond proportional lexical density, the two texts diverge in the reflective register. While both poems employ vocabulary associated with memory, consciousness and nature, the rhetorical mode through which reflection is articulated differs in degree and experiential mediation.

The AI poem tends toward explicit philosophical labelling. Terms such as 'consciousness', 'memory' and 'mind' appear as direct conceptual markers. Reflection is linguistically signalled through the naming of interior states. The register is clear, declarative and semantically transparent; inwardness is identified through abstract nouns that denote cognition. Even where natural imagery appears — rivers, light, forest, the connection between environment and interior life is often stated rather than gradually enacted. The reflective stance is therefore conceptually legible. The poem explicitly marks cognitive activity.

In *Tintern Abbey*, by contrast, reflection is more frequently rendered through embodied and affective mediation. Although cognitive terms such as 'thought' and 'mind' recur, they are embedded with sensory description and metaphorical phrasing. The speaker does not simply name consciousness; he dramatizes its development across time and perception. Phrases such as "the still, sad music of humanity" or the evocation of "a sense of sublime/ Of something far more deeply interfused" articulate interior awareness through figurative language rather than abstract designation. Reflection is not only identified; it is staged through rhythm, image and syntactic extension.

This difference produces a shift in rhetorical posture. The AI poem's register is relatively stable and declarative. Statements of reflection appear as complete assertions. In Wordsworth's poem, reflection often unfolds through qualified movement – clauses accumulate, modal verbs introduce possibility and perception is re-evaluated across extended sentences. The register leans toward meditative exploration rather than conceptual announcement.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to examine reflective discourse not as a philosophical abstraction but as a linguistically configured phenomenon. By comparing *Tintern Abbey* by William Wordsworth with a poem generated by a contemporary large language model (ChatGPT 5), the analysis shifted attention

from the question of creative authenticity to the structural articulation of reflection within textual form. Through corpus-stylistic measurement of first-person pronouns, temporal markers and interior lexical clustering, alongside qualitative consideration of modal usage and syntactic extension, the study identified differences in reflective density across the two corpora.

The findings indicate that while both texts deploy reflective vocabulary, their distributional patterns diverge. In Wordsworth's poem, reflective markers recur iteratively and accumulate across extended syntactic movements, producing layered temporal return and sustained first-person continuity. Reflection emerges through reinforcement: lexical clustering, recursive temporality and progressive deepening of interior articulation. In contrast, the AI-generated poem presents reflective language in more discrete and comparatively non-recursive configurations. The effect is not the absence of reflection but a different structural organisation, less cumulative, less proportionally dense and less syntactically extended.

These results suggest that reflective meaning may be understood as a matter of patterned reinforcement rather than thematic presence alone. Machine-generated poetry can reproduce many of the lexical signals associated with introspection; however, the proportional recurrence and recursive layering that characterise sustained meditative discourse appear less structurally consolidated in the AI corpus examined here. This distinction does not resolve broader philosophical debates regarding machine creativity or consciousness. Instead, it demonstrates that reflection becomes textually legible through measurable distributional tendencies.

Methodologically, this study contributes to computational literary scholarship by integrating corpus linguistics with interpretive stylistics. In doing so, it responds both to enthusiasm for machine learning- assisted literary analysis and to critiques cautioning against uncritical quantification (Da). By grounding comparison in proportional frequency and register configuration, the analysis avoids equating numerical presence with interpretive depth while still leveraging computational tools to reveal structural tendencies.

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The study examines a single AI-generated poem and a single canonical text and therefore does not claim generalizability across all machine-generated or Romantic poetry. Reflective configuration may vary significantly depending on prompting conditions, model architecture and corpus scale. Future research could extend this framework to larger datasets, explore genre variation, or incorporate deeper syntactic modelling to refine measures of recursive structure.

The comparison undertaken here demonstrates that computational methods can illuminate how reflective discourse is structured without reducing literary meaning to numerical abstraction. By situating lexical density and register configuration within contemporary debates on AI and literary production, this study offers a measured contribution to ongoing discussions about how technological systems participate in, and reshape, poetic articulation. Rather than asking whether machines truly reflect, it proposes that reflection can be examined as a patterned linguistic phenomenon, one whose density and recursive reinforcement remain central to its literary force.

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