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Reinventing Narrative Logic: A Thematic and Posthumanist
Analysis of Raymond Carver's *Cathedral* and its AI-Generated
Imitations

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Dedication

After a long journey shaped by perseverance, patience, and unwavering determination, I proudly dedicate this work to the people whose presence has been my greatest source of strength, comfort, and inspiration.

To my beloved parents, whose unconditional love, silent sacrifices, and constant guidance have illuminated every step of my path. This achievement is a reflection of your faith in me, and I remain deeply grateful for everything you have given and continue to give.

To my dear siblings, Imane and Ahlam, whose support, encouragement, and companionship have made every difficulty easier and every success more meaningful.

To my precious niece Taline, whose innocence and pure joy bring light and remind me of the beauty found in life's simplest moments.

To my lovely cat Rosa, a quiet yet faithful companion who stayed beside me through long hours of work and reflection.

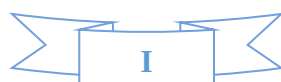
To my fiancé Mouhamed, whose constant support, patience, and understanding have been a source of reassurance and emotional strength throughout this journey.

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Khouloud



Dedication

With a heart full of gratitude, love, and pride, I dedicate this achievement to the people who have been the light of my journey.

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between human-authored and AI-generated narratives through a comparative analysis of *Cathedral* by Raymond Carver and texts produced by ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI. The primary aim is to examine whether artificial intelligence can reproduce the narrative and interpretative processes through which literary meaning is constructed.

The study adopts a qualitative analytical approach based on narrative theory and a posthumanist framework, particularly drawing on the work of N. Katherine Hayles on distributed cognition and human-AI co-creation. Chapter Three provides a close reading of the human-authored text, focusing on narrative logic, thematic construction, and character interaction. Chapter Four analyses AI-generated narratives in terms of structural coherence, thematic development, and levels of explicitness. Chapter Five offers a comparative interpretation of the findings.

The results indicate that while AI-generated narratives demonstrate a strong capacity for structural organisation and thematic consistency, they tend to rely on greater explicitness and accelerated progression. In contrast, Carver's narrative constructs meaning through ambiguity, restraint, and relational interaction, allowing for deeper interpretative engagement. The study concludes that artificial intelligence can simulate narrative form but does not fully reproduce the experiential and interpretative dimensions of literary meaning.

From a posthumanist perspective, the findings suggest that narrative production can be understood as a distributed and asymmetrical process involving both human and computational contributions. While AI systems participate in the generation of texts, the construction and interpretation of meaning remain fundamentally grounded in human perception and lived experience.

Keywords:

narrative logic; AI-generated narratives; human–AI co-creation; posthumanism;
distributed cognition; literary meaning

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the Study

Over time, literary studies have witnessed continuous evolution, moving through various critical approaches that reflect changing intellectual, cultural, and academic concerns. Early forms of literary criticism emphasized rhetoric, form, and language, while later approaches introduced more systematic and theoretical frameworks for textual analysis. Throughout these developments, literature has remained closely connected to broader transformations in thought, society, and modes of expression .

During the twentieth century, literary criticism expanded significantly with the emergence of multiple schools of thought that focused on different aspects of the literary text. Some approaches privileged close textual analysis and formal features, while others highlighted the role of the reader, historical context, or ideological structures. These shifts contributed to a more complex understanding of literary meaning, emphasizing that texts are not fixed entities but dynamic constructions open to interpretation.

In recent decades, the rapid advancement of digital technologies has introduced new dimensions to literary production and criticism. The integration of computational tools into literary studies has altered traditional methods of reading, writing, and analysis. Technologies capable of processing large volumes of textual analysis while challenging established assumptions about interpretation, creativity, and authorship.

Within this evolving landscape, contemporary literary texts provide a productive space for examining the interaction between traditional literary practices and emerging technological influences. Such texts allow researchers to investigate how narrative structure, stylistic features, and thematic concerns are shaped by broader cultural and technological contexts. As result, literary analysis increasingly requires interdisciplinary perspectives that combine textual study with theoretical reflection.

Therefore, the present study is situated within this ongoing transformation of literary studies. By engaging with both established critical approaches and recent theoretical developments, it seeks to contribute to current discussions concerning the nature of literary meaning, interpretation, and authorship in a rapidly changing intellectual environment.

2. Motivation

The motivation for this study arises from the evolving nature of literary criticism and the need to reassess traditional analytical approaches in response to contemporary intellectual developments. Literature today is increasingly shaped by changing theoretical perspectives, which require scholars to adopt new methods of interpretation while remaining grounded in close textual analysis.

This study aims to examine how modern critical frameworks deepen the understanding of narrative structure and meaning. While established literary theories continue to offer valuable insights, they may not fully address the complexities of contemporary texts.

Therefore, this study adopts a structured and theoretically informed approach to literary analysis. In addition, this research is motivated by the requirements of postgraduate academic work, aiming to develop analytical skills and contribute to scholarly discussions within literary studies. Through systematic examination and critical reflection, the study seeks to demonstrate the continued relevance of literary analysis in current academic discourse.

In this context, the emergence of artificial intelligence in literary production represents a shift in the understanding of authorship and creativity. AI systems such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI challenge traditional assumptions about the role of the human author. Accordingly, this study focuses on examining the relationship between human and AI-generated texts through a comparative and posthumanist perspective, highlighting how these technologies introduce new forms of narrative generation that blur the boundaries between human and machine authorship.

3.Problem Statement

The central problem of this study lies in examining whether artificial intelligence can effectively reproduce and interpret the emotional and narrative qualities found in human-authored literary texts, particularly in a short story such as Raymond Carver's *Cathedral*.

While recent AI systems have demonstrated increasing ability in generating coherent and grammatically accurate narratives, their capacity to convey emotional depth, symbolic meaning, and nuanced narrative logic remains questionable.

Literary interpretation has traditionally depended on human consciousness, lived experience, and subjective engagement with language.

However, AI-generated texts rely on algorithmic pattern recognition rather than intentional creativity or emotional awareness. This raises a critical issue regarding the extent to which AI-generated imitations can approximate the narrative complexity and thematic richness of human writing.

Therefore, the problem addressed in this research concerns the limitations and implications of AI-generated literary texts when compared to human-authored narratives, and how these differences challenge established notions of creativity, authorship, and narrative meaning in contemporary literary studies. This comparison is conducted through the analysis of texts generated by AI systems such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity.

4. Research Questions

1. How does *Cathedral* reflect human experience and meaning through its thematic and narrative construction?
2. To what extent can AI-generated imitations of *Cathedral* reproduce the emotional depth, symbolism, and narrative complexity found in Carver's original text?
3. What thematic and narrative differences distinguish human-authored and AI-generated versions of *Cathedral*, and what do these differences reveal about creativity and authorship in the age of artificial intelligence ?

5.Objectives of the Study

The study under investigation aims to:

1. To examine the theoretical foundations of posthumanism and its implications for literature, subjectivity, and authorship.
2. To explore the concept of human-AI co-creation and its impact on creativity and literary production.
3. To apply thematic and narrative analysis as an analytical framework for examining how meaning is constructed in both human and AI-generated texts.
4. To analyze and compare the thematic construction, narrative logic, character representation, and creativity in *Cathedral* and AI-generated narratives.
5. To evaluate the differences between human experiential meaning and AI-generated pattern-based meaning within a posthumanist perspective.

6. Significance of the Study

Focusing on Raymond Carver's *Cathedral* and its AI-generated imitations is purposefully justifiable. To start with, in the current age of digital transformation and algorithmic literature, questions about the nature of creativity, authorship, and narrative depth have become increasingly challenging.

However, Carver's short story *Cathedral* provides a model of uniquely human storytelling, rich in emotional complexity and stylistic subtlety, making it an ideal reference for comparison with AI-generated texts. Moreover, the extensive attention given to AI in technological studies has often overlooked its limitations in literary interpretation. Examining AI-generated imitations alongside Carver's original text thus offers a distinction that is both timely and novel. Indeed, scarce research has explored the comparative analysis of human-authored and AI-generated narratives in terms of emotional depth, symbolism, and narrative logic, and none has been approached from a combined posthumanist and stylistic perspective.

This study contributes to a clearer understanding of both the capacities and limitations of artificial intelligence in literary analysis, while reaffirming the continuing significance of human creativity and authorial intention. It establishes a critical connection between literary studies and contemporary digital developments, demonstrating how emerging technologies reshape the interpretation and production of narrative meaning.

By examining AI-generated narratives in relation to a human-authored text, the study highlights the extent to which computational systems can reproduce narrative structures, while also revealing their limitations in capturing symbolic depth and experiential meaning. In doing so, it provides a focused contribution to current academic discussions on authorship, creativity, and interpretation in the age of artificial intelligence.

7. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, narrative, and posthumanist approach to examine the differences between human-authored and AI-generated versions of *Cathedral*. The methodological framework draws on the posthumanist theory of N. Katherine Hayles and integrates narrative and thematic analytical models.

The analysis is based on the original short story *Cathedral* as the primary human-authored text, alongside AI-generated imitations produced by ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity. This framework enables a systematic comparison between human and machine-produced texts, highlighting both the literary and computational dimensions of the study.

By combining posthumanist perspectives with narrative analysis, the study evaluates the extent to which AI systems reproduce human literary qualities, particularly in relation to creativity, authorship, and narrative meaning.

8. Research Structure

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. The first two chapters establish the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter One examines literature in the age of artificial intelligence, focusing on digital transformation and the emergence of new narrative forms. Chapter Two explores posthumanism, drawing on the work of N. Katherine Hayles, and addresses the concept of human–AI co-creation, alongside narrative and thematic analysis as an analytical tool.

The practical part begins with Chapter Three, which presents a narrative and thematic analysis of *Cathedral*, focusing on narrative logic, thematic construction, emotional depth, and symbolic meaning. Chapter Four examines AI-generated imitations of the same text, produced by ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity, with emphasis on their structural patterns and narrative limitations.

Chapter Five provides a comparative analysis between the human-authored and AI-generated texts, focusing on differences in narrative logic, thematic construction, character representation, and creativity. It also discusses the implications of these differences for authorship in the age of artificial intelligence.

Finally, the general conclusion synthesizes the main findings of the study, highlighting the relationship between human creativity and AI-generated literature, and reflecting on the possibilities and limitations of human–AI co-creation in contemporary literary studies.

Theoretical Part

Chapetr ONE

Literature in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Chapter One

Literature in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Literature and Digital Transformation

1.2.1 The Shift from Print to Digital Narratives

1.2.2 Multimodal and Interactive Forms of Storytelling

1.2.3 Digital Technology as a Co-Author

1.3 AI-Generated Texts and New Narrative Forms

1.3.1 Machine-Produced Narratives and Simulated Creativity

1.3.2 Algorithmic Construction of Plot and Character

1.3.3 The Emergence of Post-Author Narrative Forms

1.4 Authorship in the Era of Algorithms

1.4.1 Redefining the Author in the Age of AI

1.4.2 Human-AI Collaborative Writing

1.4.3 Originality, Ownership, and Creative Responsibility

1.5 Challenges of Creativity and Originality

1.5.1 Limits of AI Creativity

1.5.2 Reproducing vs. Innovating

1.5.3 Evaluating Human vs. Machine Originality

1.6 Conclusion

1.1 Introduction

In recent decades, the rapid advancement of digital technologies has profoundly transformed various aspects of human life, including the ways in which knowledge is produced, shared, and interpreted. The rise of artificial intelligence has created new opportunities and challenges for writers and the creation of literature in general.

Literature has always been seen as the product of human creativity, personal expression, and subjective experience. The author has typically been viewed as the primary creator of literary works and responsible for giving the literary work its meaning, constructing narratives, and communicating their artistic vision.

However, with the introduction of artificial intelligence into the writing process, many of the traditional ideas about literature are now being challenged. And AI systems are now capable of producing text that is coherent, stylistically consistent, and structurally complex. The existence of this type of text raises significant questions regarding how human subjectivity view the creation of literature and the boundaries between human and machine authorship.

When machines produce writing that is indistinguishable from human writing, we must begin to rethink how we define creativity and whether it is a quality that belongs solely to humans. Literature will no longer be perceived as solely a human pursuit, but rather increasingly technology-mediated.

Additionally, the transfer from conventional print-based literature to digital, computer-generated literature has reshaped not only how to tell stories, but also how narratives are structured and formed as works of literature. Digital environments enable different types of storytelling than those provided in a traditional print environment (e.g., interactive, flexible and non-linear), resulting in an evolving relationship between the author, text and reader.

While readers previously were simply recipients of the author's creative expression through printed publication, readers now have the opportunity to actively assist in constructing the meaning of a text, while authors can now be considered as joint creators with readers as a result of these changes.

These changes also create a need to re-evaluate the basic concepts of literature, including authorship; originality; and creativity. The use of artificial intelligence in the writing process questions the assumption that the author is the only source for the text and raises questions as to whether machine-generated literature can be viewed as original.

In addition, the differentiation between imitation and innovation is becoming increasingly complicated, given that the use of existing data by AI systems to produce new combinations of text makes traditional distinctions very difficult.

This chapter aims to discuss the impact of artificial intelligence on literature (both writer and reader) as it transitions to a theoretical context. The transformation from print (traditional literature) to digital (examples include eBooks) will be included, as will the influence of algorithms to shape the elements of a story like plot and character; the emergence (and definition) of new authorship paradigms through the use of technology; AI's challenge to traditional definitions of creativity and originality.

The objective of this chapter is to develop a conceptual awareness of literature in light of technological changes through examining the changing relationship between human-created works and machine-produced works.

1.2 Literature and Digital Transformation

1.2.1 The Shift from Print to Digital Narratives:

The shift from print to digital literature signifies a major change within the overall narrative of literary production changing how the text physically appears, and also how the act of reading, interpreting, and creating meaning will occur in a new way. Print culture (for hundreds of years) has facilitated literary creation through different mediums, including books, magazines, newspapers, etc. It provides readers with a sense of stability, linearity, and permanence because the printed text exists as a closed and self-contained object, directing readers along a prescribed path of events with limited opportunity to deviate from that path (the events being governed mostly by the author's will). Reading has traditionally been treated as a continuous (or ongoing) and relatively passive experience for readers, having limited opportunities to go away from the orderly (writing) sequence of the text itself.

The introduction of digital technologies has disrupted the traditional conventions of literature, as demonstrated through new types of text that are not only no longer static or linear, but also dynamic and interactive with many options of movement throughout the text.

A major characteristic of digital literature is the use of hypertext, which permits the reader to navigate across the textual segments by selecting hypertext links embedded in the text. Hypertext alters the reading process by making it non-linear; thus, the reading experience changes from a linear process to a more participatory experience. According to George P. Landow (2006), hypertext is a challenge to the traditional hierarchical nature of writing, and provides an alternative format in which there is no fixed

path and the reader's use of hypertext links represents the way they find and interpret meaning.

Espen Aarseth (1997) coined the term ergodic literature to describe texts that demand from readers a considerable amount of time and effort to move through them. Ergodic literature differs from traditional print literature in that there is not one path to follow, and the decisions made by the reader during their journey will affect the direction of the text through the use of hyperlinks. Consequently, the role of the reader as an active co-creator of meaning is significantly changed in ergodic literature, whereas the reader was previously perceived as a passive recipient of content in traditional print literature. As digital narratives typically combine several different types of media, they are often multimodal in nature (i.e., they include text, images, sounds, and interactive features).

When combined in this way, the semiotic modes of a digital narrative create opportunities for new types of storytelling as well as providing readers with immersive experiences of the text. Gunther Kress (2010) argues that meaning today is created through the intersection of many semiotic modes, not just language. Digital literature therefore breaks away from the constraints of print by allowing readers to engage with the narrative in many ways (on both sensory as well as cognitive levels).

The dramatic change in the world of digital literature has also had a significant impact on the role of the author. In print culture, the author is viewed as the primary creator of meaning and authority for the text, and is thus in complete control over how the text is structured and interpreted.

In digital culture, however, the author's control over the structure and meaning of the text is becoming increasingly distributed. For example, reader participation, the use of algorithms, and the interactive features of the text all play a role in shaping how a final version of the text is created. As N. Katherine Hayles (2008) asserts, electronic literature is dependent upon the computational systems used to create it. Therefore, the meaning of the text arises from the interaction between human and machine processes.

The transition from print to digital narratives also indicates a larger cultural and epistemological change that accompanies the transition into the digital age. These digital forms of communication are characterized by speed, fragmentation, and constant connection. These three characteristics all play a role in shaping the structure and form of digital texts. As a result, it is clear that digital narratives are more fluid, less stable, and exhibit a greater degree of responsiveness to user input than print narratives; this is a reflection of the dynamic nature of digital culture itself.

Therefore, the transition from print to digital narrative can be seen as a significant shift in the way that literary works are created, as well as the ways in which they function. In contrast to the linearity, stability, and ability of the writer to control the creation and creation of print narratives; the acceptance of non-linearity, interactivity, and multimedia elements within the digital narrative mode changes the structure of the text itself and ultimately redefines the author's and reader's roles in the ever-changing world of literature and technological mediation.

1.2.2 Multimodal and Interactive Forms of Storytelling

Digital transformation has influenced the way which narratives are created and told, as the digital format allows for storytelling in non-linear ways. Digital storytelling is different from print storytelling because it often uses multiple forms of narrative, verbal, visual, auditory, and interactive, in an effort to create a story using all communicative channels simultaneously (semiotics). Through various mediums (images, sound, animation and code), meaning can be created from the story and told through multiple channels at once. Interactivity allows digital narratives to be different from other forms of literature. The ability of a reader to make decisions on their own, and help create the way a story is told, makes readers co-creators in the creation of the story. The creation of "narrative coherence" is no longer fixed (determined) by the writer and instead results from the interaction of humans and machines; therefore, there is a shift from a fixed notion of story to one that is based on process rather than product.

In a posthumanist framework, the use of multiple modes of communication and interactivity illustrates the relationality of literary meaning. The agency that would be ascribed to the reader and the text is now shared by both humans and technology, and as a result, the line between reader and text has been erased. Additionally, this model also suggests that literature created with the assistance of artificial intelligence will have an even greater reliance on algorithmic logic and decision-making processes for the creation of stories.

1.2.3 Digital Technology as a Co-Author:

Due to advances in digital technologies (DT) there are structures/technologies that produce written works; thus redefining the definition/meaning of authorship. Traditionally technology is a tool used by authors to produce written works; however, today's use of technology creates a challenge to this assumption because the provision of Technology creates direct involvement in the generating, structuring, and modifying of written materials.

Therefore, Technology should not just simply be seen as a tool/means to produce an end product, but also recognized as a contributor/co-author to the production of written works.

The emergence of algorithmic systems capable of autonomously creating language has significantly impacted how textuality is created. These algorithmic systems utilize massive amounts of human-written text to analyze and detect patterns hence that they can then create new texts based upon statistical modeling.

This results in not only the surface of the text being impacted, but also how the text is structured and styled. According to N. Katherine Hayles (2008), contemporary textuality is fundamentally embedded in computationalness, meaning that the creation of meaning is no longer the sole domain of human thought but is produced through the interaction of human and technological systems.

The concept of technology as a co-author of a text can also be framed within the theory of distributed agency as proposed by Bruno Latour (2005). Latour argues that agency is not an inherent quality of an individual, but rather, is distributed throughout a network of human and non-human agents. When this perspective is applied to the creation of literature, it follows that the creation of any piece of literature is determined by the interactions between the various constituent parts that contributed to its formation, including the author, technological device, and data being utilized. Thus, as technology becomes increasingly integrated within the creation of a narrative, the line between tool and creator becomes increasingly diffuse.

Writing digitally has many different aspects to it. These are things like the changes to writing due to digital media. There are many types of interactive or adaptive systems where a writer's work can change in real time as they respond to the inputs from the user. The interactivity allows for the creation of a dynamic writing process, with the text changing based on the interaction between the human author and the suggestions created by an algorithm.

In this way, the creation of a text or writing moves from being an individual act to becoming a collaborative process, moving from creativity that originates from one person to creativity that comes from a group of people. This change fits with posthumanist views and ideas which argue against the idea of placing the human subject in the center of the creative act.

Theoretical ideas from Rosi Braidotti (2013) discuss the posthuman condition as requiring a rethinking of the way that we see ourselves as subjects, and how technologies mediate our relationships with other relations. So, within this way of thinking about the

relationship of the subject and technology, what is considered creativity is not limited to what is created in the mind or from human conscious. Rather, creativity emerges from interactions between the subject and non-subject beings (both living beings and technology).

N. Katherine Hayles (2017) also discusses the idea of cognition being distributed and that cognition will extend beyond the mind to include the work of computational systems. Both of these supporting perspectives maintain that digital technologies have actively participated in the creation of literary texts.

There are some issues that arise when using technology as a co-author for writing and how to think about authorship, originality, and responsibility. When a text is created through the use of both human and machine, it is unclear how much credit is due to each party (i.e., who owns the work?). Furthermore, AI relies on vast amounts of pre-existing data, which makes this kind of writing always intertextual with many different sources - no one specific place references or supports the integrity of the source. This challenges the idea of what makes something original in terms of the uniqueness of the individual writer's expression.

The idea of using digital technology as a co-author provides useful insight into the evolution of writing as technology becomes more embedded in our daily lives; how our creative processes are influenced by technology nowadays; how to view the role of the author as being one of mediation - guiding, interpreting, and interacting with the products of technical systems. The acknowledgment of digital technologies as a co-author also signifies a change in how we view and produce literature. It questions the traditional humanist writer-author model and provides additional opportunities to collaborate more easily with digital technologies, as well as highlights the need to account for non-human beings when analyzing contemporary literature. The evolution of literature represents more than just a change within the literary world but also speaks to changes within the broader context of human-technology interactions and demonstrates how creativity and authorship will continue to evolve in the digital world.

1.3 AI-Generated Texts and New Narrative Forms

1.3.1 Machine-Produced Narratives and Simulated Creativity

Narratives produced by AI are fundamentally different than those produced by other digital media, printed books in particular, and represent a step away from the earlier digital writing forms (which relied on human authors using digital tools to assist with the writing of their work). The machine will be at the center of the writing activity itself by generating story content using sophisticated computational techniques that learn to produce narratives from an enormous database of previously, created narratives produced by human authors. These

computational models will enable the AIs to produce recognizable literary elements such as narrative organization, thematic continuity, stylistic consistency, and authorial voice in much like how human authors write and create.

In traditional digital literature, the creator is always the human, and the art form itself reflects their intent and ideas. In contrast, AI-generated narratives are generated through using a statistical probability to generate text based on what has been written before. The text is generated based on the most statistically likely sequence of words from previous language data to generate narrative coherence. This approach creates a significant shift in the narrative logic of how stories are told since it is primarily through a machine and will involve a computer generating the narrative content.

From a posthumanist point of view, this move troubles long-held beliefs regarding creativity. The idea that creativity is derived solely from human consciousness, autonomy, or self-reflectiveness is rejected by posthumanist theory. Rosi Braidotti (2013) asserts that posthumanist creativity arises from relational and material processes, rather than from a subject who is disconnected or separate from the other relations involved. Therefore, creativity becomes dispersed throughout multiple agents (human and non-human) including technologies, environments, and systems of knowledge.

Nonetheless, AI-generated narratives provide complications to this view through the demonstration of the limitations of algorithmic agency surrounding creative endeavors. Creative works produced through AI are typically described in terms of simulation rather than autonomy. AI systems are capable of producing formal coherent and stylistically appropriate narratives, but do not possess intention, self-awareness, or lived experience, and their resultant output comes from the process of recombination rather than through reflection. These limitations raise serious questions about the actual definition of creativity.

There is considerable tension surrounding the concept of creativity that allows for an important theoretical tension regarding how the concept itself may be understood. Should creativity be conceptualized in terms of intentionality and subjective experience, or based on a definition whereby creativity is assessed based on an individual's ability to create something new (novelty) and significant (meaning)? If creativity can be assessed on purely formal grounds, then AI-generated texts may be considered creative. On the other hand, if creativity can be understood in terms of embodying a human's experiences, possessing emotional depth, and being situated in a historical context, AI creativity is strictly limited.

Hayles (2008) argues that machine-generated texts must be considered an integral piece of a human-machine structure and equally important as an independent act of creation.

Therefore, from this perspective, AI-generated creative texts do not supplant human creative expression but rather reconfigure it. The locus of creative expression has shifted away from individual authorship to a network of interacting agents that influence the author. In an emergent process, creativity is now viewed as a characteristic of the system itself rather than a quality of individual thought.

The reconceptualization of literature has profound consequences for the discipline of literary studies. AI-produced narratives call into question many of the discerning qualities previously utilized to determine the literary merit of a work including originality, depth, and intentionality. Additionally, AI-generated works challenge traditional definitions of imitation and innovation as these text creation processes produce new forms that emulate styles of pre-existing literature but originate as separate manifestations.

Ambiguity presents itself strongly as an analytical approach to the application or comparison of stylistic imitation and forms of post-human expression through AI-generated narratives where AI-generated works do not coincide with any known author. Machine-generated content can serve as a basis upon which to reexamine traditional definitions of literary authorship as well as non-human creativity by allowing academics to reconsider the existing conceptualization of literature within the context of the new, post-human world.

1.3.2 Algorithmic Construction of Plot and Character

The inclusion of artificial intelligence in literature will result in a major change in the way narrative components, such as story and character, are created and arranged. For a long time, plot in traditional literary theory has been viewed as a series of events that are connected in a causal way and created through the intention of the author and influenced by thematic and ideological ideas. Characters are thought of as models of the human subject and have the characteristics of depth, purpose, and the ability to change over time. Using AI to create literary works breaks down these fundamental views by substituting algorithmic calculation for the intentional creation of plot and character. In doing so, it changes the nature of how story is created through a different logic.

In terms of plot structure, AI systems use probabilistic modelling to predict narrative sequences from patterns they have found in large quantities of text data. Rather than creating plots through causal reasoning or a teleological structure, AI creates event sequences based on statistical probability. Thus, plot becomes an emergent property of data-driven processes instead of being a deliberate organisation of meaning. The emergence of plot as data driven processes challenges David Herman's (2009) classical framework of narratology as the

coherence of a narrative depends on memory related to cognitive processing of events into meaningful and interpretable forms within a coherent framework. In contrast, AI plots often have formal continuity and they do not achieve depth of causal integration or thematic integration because the process of creating them is not intentional.

The change in character construction via the new technology is equally dramatic. Traditionally, in the literary world, we see characters as having complexity, that they are shaped by both internal factors such as motivation and emotions, as well as by the cumulative knowledge gained through their experiences. And we interpret characters and their actions based on our understanding of psychology, ethics, social context, etc., thus allowing us to relate to them as representations of the human experience. Conversely, AI-generated characters are created from recurring traits, narrative functions, and linguistic patterns that are extracted from training data; therefore they are often seen as having characteristics of known archetypes or narrative roles but do not have the ontological grounding that comes from lived experiences. This also explains why Marie-Laure Ryan (2001) distinguishes between narrative as representation and narrative as simulation and indicates that the majority of AI-generated characters operate as simulations of human-like behaviors, rather than as expressions or embodiments of subjective consciousness. In addition, the algorithmically created elements of narrative have an epistemological relationship to changing concepts of narrative as a whole. Rather than being derived from meaning, intention, or interpretation, the elements used in narrative are increasingly developed through computational logic and statistical patterns.

This transition can be seen in critical posthumanist ideas about anthropocentrism, such as those developed by N. Katherine Hayles (2008), who posits that modern textuality is created through the interactive dynamics between human cognition and machine processes. Within this model of textuality, the product of narrative is not only a product of human thought but is also the product of systems that have been mediated through technology.

The algorithmic generation of plot and character is part of a distributed agency theory as proposed by Bruno Latour (2005). Within this framework, the development of plot and character is not an outcome of the authorial voice of one individual but rather results from the interactions of multiple data sources, algorithms, and human contributions. Thus, the distributed model of authorship undermines traditional hierarchies that privilege the human creator and locates literary production within a complex mixing of human and non-human agencies.

While AI technologies are currently capable of constructing comprehensible stories that include familiar characters, the validity of their constructions is compromised due to their lack of firsthand experience (or embodied memory) and intention (or conscious decision-making). Although AI-generated narrative may appear reasonable on a superficial level (to follow a specific form), they will usually have little to no inherent complexity, ambiguity, and/or context found in human-authored fiction. This discrepancy draws attention to the gap between computational generation of literature vs. creative writing, while simultaneously illustrating the emergence of a new form of literature, which challenges our traditional understanding of literature.

The construction of a plot and characters using algorithms will require us to rethink many of the foundational concepts of literary scholarship. For example, it will be necessary to consider the possibility that narrative coherence can be made without an awareness of it, that characters can exist without having any necessary subjectivity associated with them; and that the act of telling stories can be accomplished through the use of algorithmic algorithms and processes.

Therefore, although these systems may be limited in their ability to produce meaning and coherence using human experience, this tension between the algorithmic generation of fiction and the human-centered interpretation of fiction is currently at the centre of contemporary discussions regarding artificial intelligence and literature, and represents one of the most significant shifts in how we think about narratives within the digital context.

1.3.3 The Emergence of Post-Authorial Narrative Forms

The emergence of artificial intelligence producing literary works is creating what human subjectivity calls post-authorial narrative forms where the idea of the author as the only source of meaning is challenged. Traditionally, the author has always been seen as the central creative force in classical literary theory, able to influence how a work will be structured and interpreted through their intention, experience, and intellectual vision. By bringing non-human agents into creating narratives, the introduction of artificial intelligence into the process of writing displaces this notion of the author. Therefore, must not think of authorship as something that is static or an individual quality but rather as something that is distributed across people and viewed as related to each individual or entity involved in producing the work.

The theoretical foundations for this transformation can be traced to earlier critiques of authorship in twentieth-century literary theory. In his seminal essay, *The Death of the Author*, Roland Barthes (1967) challenges the idea that meaning originates from the author's

intention, arguing instead that it is produced through the interaction between text and reader. Similarly, Michel Foucault (1969) introduces the notion of the “author function,” emphasizing that authorship is not an inherent property of the text but a discursive construct shaped by institutional and cultural forces.

AI-generated literature extends these critiques beyond the level of theory by materially removing the human author from the center of textual production, thereby transforming authorship into a dispersed and multi-layered process. In writing environments mediated by Artificial Intelligence, there is a complex network of agents participating in the production of a narrative. The dataset provides the linguistic and stylistic components, the algorithm determines how the text will be structured according to probability and logic, and the human user can guide, choose from among, or refine what gets produced as a result of their work with an AI.

Writing Programs, so there is no single author of the text created through this process. This distributes authorship equally as the idea of distributed agency (as defined by Bruno Latour in 2005) in that all actions result from networks of human and nonhuman actors, not from isolated individuals. Based on this definition, then, the literary text created through the above-mentioned processes is the byproduct of a collective action and is created by the interplay between a variety of technologies in a larger system.

The appearance of post-authorial narratives from a posthumanist lens is indicative of an increasing decentering of the human subject. Rosi Braidotti (2013) states that the posthuman condition is characterized by a challenge to the autonomy and primacy of the human and focuses on relationality, hybridization and technological mediation. This kind of analysis of literature suggests that authorship is produced through the interplay of human and machine rather than based on an individual’s subjectivity.

O. Katherine Hayles (2008) argues that computational systems are involved in the constitution of textuality and that meaning arises from the interaction between digital processes and human cognition. The emergence of forms of post-author narrative also presents critical questions around the originality and ownership of creativity. Originality in the traditional sense is increasingly hard to maintain once one recognizes that the text has been created through an algorithm that has recombined pre-existing source material.

In addition, with no identifiable author, issues of responsibility and authority with respect to the text's interpretation and evaluation become murky. These obstacles point to the inadequacy of humanist authorial models that are based on the premise of individual creativity and intentional control. The fact that post-authorial narratives do not imply that the

human author is completely removed from the creation process does not negate that the author's role has changed from being an originator of content to being a mediator, curator, or co-creator who engages with algorithmic outputs while making selections and refining those selections using combinations of algorithms, data, and human input. This evolution represents a movement away from traditional forms of creation towards hybrid-like forms of creation, where some of the meaning is produced during the process through the interaction of both humans and non-humans (e.g., computers, other technologies,).

In this aspect, authorship has evolved from being a singular event to being an ongoing, collaborative process that occurs across multiple layers of creative production. Post-author narrative forms represent a major shift in how literature defines itself. They have created a challenge to the traditional thinking about texts being 'the products of individual consciousness' and have caused a shift away from thinking of texts as products of complex, technology-oriented systems. Thus, the definition of authorship has changed, as has the way we must think about creativity, originality, and textual authority.

These changes, in addition to those changes associated with artificial intelligence, make the post-author condition a critical part of understanding how narrative production is changing in today's digital world.

1.4 Authorship in the Era of Algorithms

1.4.1 Redefining the Author in the Age of AI

Traditionally, literary theory insisted that authorship was fundamentally connected to originality, intent, and an individual's ability to create. Authors were viewed as the primary source of meaning and coherence in a narrative work, and the author's personal vision was seen as the definitive embodiment of the text they created. Humanism, with its emphasis on conscious intention and the subjective nature of human experience, provided the foundation for this author-centered model of authorship.

The advent of artificial intelligence now fundamentally changes this model of authorship by adding new, non-human agents to the process of producing text. AI text generation challenges the traditional requirement that authorship be linked to a single creative consciousness. Instead, the texts created by AI are the result of interactions between programmers, algorithms, datasets, and users of those digital products. Authors are no longer thought of as stable identities who possess authority over the literary works they create, but instead, authorship is viewed as a distributed process of technological mediation.

The idea of distributed authorship is consistent with earlier theoretical discussions of the author. Michel Foucault's (1969) concept of the author, for example, emphasizes the job

of authors as regulating meaning, organizing discourse, and assigning responsibility for creative works. Within the context of artificial intelligence generated literature, the author plays a severely fragmented role, as no one agent can claim exclusive ownership of any given text that has been created by artificial intelligence. This fragmentation of authorship can be seen from a posthumanist perspective as a means of disentangling human beings as subjects from the processes that create culture.

1.4.2 Human-AI Collaborative Writing

Instead of removing human writers completely from the picture, AI commonly takes part in collaborative writing settings with human beings. In these cases, humans write prompts, select the output from AI, edit the text, and direct the overall style and tone of the written piece; while the AI system can provide the words and the structure for the entire piece. This collaboration raises the question of who has authorship rights over the written work, as a human could be providing the initial idea and guiding the entire process, but the AI develops everything (i.e., the language and the format).

The process of creativity with the use of both AI and human interaction aligns with a posthuman view of creativity based on interaction instead of dominion. Therefore, the creative agency of the resulting piece will be shared between the creators of the initial idea and the creators of the output.

Also as noted by N. Katherine Hayles (2012), the posthuman forms of text are produced through the blending of human and machine, which is contrary to the traditional understanding of creative works being produced by humans autonomously from machines. Thus, AI does not solely replicate the way humans create, but rather changes the mode of creativity in which to create. This process also applies in the field of Literary Criticism since it complicates the traditional evaluative procedures of texts. Specifically, via human-AI interaction, the evaluation of the work becomes a negotiation between who created the work instead of coming from the initial creators. Therefore, the process of human-AI collaboration will present challenges to the re-evaluation of established concepts of creative authority.

1.4.3 Originality, Ownership, and Creative Responsibility

AI literature raises difficult questions about originality, ownership, and responsibility. Originality has generally been understood as an expression of a person's uniqueness or creative ability; however, AI-generated works create new texts using previously existing language structures (known in this field as textual data) by recombining these structures again in unique ways (i.e., generating an original text).

Thus, AI-generated narratives are often situated at the point of transition between imitation and creation. The ownership issues surrounding the authorship of AI-generated works further complicate matters. Since these works are the product of multiple sources (i.e., AI systems are made up of many different contributors), it becomes almost impossible to pinpoint who should be considered the author of a particular piece of AI-generated literature as well as who should be liable for potential damages arising from use of such works.

The many actors who play a role in creating content through AI systems create a distribution of creative responsibility among programmers, end-users, and technologies. Ethically, these issues raise questions about the validity of existing frameworks of intellectual property rights/delegated authority and of creator accountability.

When viewed from a posthumanist paradigm, one can see that originality must also be redefined from an intrinsic property to that of a relational process, in other words, instead of being a quality inherent in an individual person, originality may be defined by how humans and machines collaborate with each other to recreate or produce a piece of literary work. This redefinition is necessary for evaluating claims made about the originality of AI-generated works that bear resemblance to literary products created by humans.

1.5 Challenges of Creativity and Originality

1.5.1 Limits of AI Creativity

Artificial intelligence does have some generative capabilities; however, it can be seen to have very few creative capacities as a result of the constraints inherent in its artificial nature. While this may appear to be a significant disadvantage from an artistic perspective, the fact is that AI systems do not have the capacity for consciousness, intentionality, or a lived experience, which means they rely on identifying and reproducing statistical patterns from large data sets in order to generate creative outputs.

The implications of this limitation will have significant ramifications for the literary creative process, particularly concerning emotional depth and narrative insight. According to Boden (2004), there are two broad categories of creativity: exploratory creativity refers to creativity that operates within an existing conceptual framework, while transformational creativity involves a re-conception or re-creation of that framework. AI-generated literature is predominantly representative of exploratory creativity through its re-combination of established literary forms without any meaningful transformation in narrative convention.

In the sense that AI can generate a text that appears to be stylistically coherent, it does not have the ability to produce text that challenges established literary conventions or definitions. In relation to posthumanist views of the nature of creativity, AI-generated

literature, therefore, does not have no value, but rather demonstrates the limitation of establishing a threshold between human and machine creativity. Consequently, AI text creativity must be evaluated differently than human text creativity.

1.5.2 Reproducing vs. Innovating

A key debate with AI-generated literature is the difference between imitating someone else's style versus having true creativity (i.e., an original piece,). An AI will utilize data from many pieces of writing created by humans to learn about the different parts of language. Because of this, the AI will create a lot of writing that looks like other pieces of literature. One way that this happens is through the AI producing similar textual features found in pieces of writing. As such, imitation becomes a method of creating a piece of AI-generated literature; therefore, whether or not these AIs can go beyond replicating to have true creativity is in question. From a formal standpoint, AI generated textual compositions exhibit an enormous degree of stylistic sameness, with many forms of writing being replicated with an exceptional amount of fidelity (i.e., literary styles which are characterised by minimalism, the use of repeated phrases, or the presence of structurally regular patterns,) in that they are easily recognisable as being similar to their original sources thus facilitating definitive identification and reproduction of identified patterns of textuality.

However, the outward complexity of AI produced text, this is not representative of any creative agency on behalf of the system, and rather denotes only an AI's ability to statistically model and combine the previously identified linguistic attributes of the text produced. Such as, AI is operating in what Margaret Boden (2004) calls "exploratory creativity" where the exploration of conceptual spaces that pre-exist do not result in the creation of any new conceptual space (but rather result in the production or construction of new examples of previous conceptual spaces). The nature of the limitations of this model become clearer when reflected upon through the lens of cultural and historical embeddedness.

Walter Benjamin (1936) suggested that artistic production is inherently bound to the socio-historical context within which the art was created. Artists gain inspiration from their lived experiences; from cultural conditions; and from the historical distinctiveness of their context, thus leading to the creation or innovation of something that builds from those circumstances. Creativity in people is therefore more than merely formal; it is embedded within a temporal; social; and ideological frame through which to engage with or create something new (i.e., to be creative).

The historical or experiential bases are therefore absent for AI systems; as a consequence, the extent to which they can provide meaningful culture that may serve to be

contextually and/or culturally transformative is limited. There is a clear divide between formal and conceptual forms of innovation, which demonstrates an important limitation of literature produced by AI. While AI systems are able to generate documents that may look unique on the outside due to their appearance; they have created no new ideas or thought processes through their work. Because they are using existing information and structures to reassemble it into something new, all of their original content has been derived from prior works and none of it originated from a true 'experience'. This also contributes to the argument that AI-generated works can only be viewed as simulated creations rather than genuine ones.

In contrast, posthumanism theorists theorize about the relationship of creativity between two opposing sides: reproduction vs. invention - where both play a role in producing creative results. According to Rosi Braidotti (2013), should not restrict "creativity" to just human subjects but instead view it as an outcome of the combined efforts of various entities; human/nonhuman interaction and agency create a unique experience for each participant, which leads to the creation of new ideas or forms of expression that would have been impossible without collaborative efforts.

Likewise, N. Katherine Hayles (2017) claims that cognition is distributed between humans and machines (computers), which implies that creative processes can also be seen as distributed entities. Within this conceptualisation of creativity, AI not only reproduces our creativity but also contributes to changing the context in which it is possible to create. Innovations are likely to arise from the interaction between what an algorithm generates and how a human interprets, selects and contextually creates using that output as a basis.

Through this posthumanist lens on the author's role, the idea of one writer as an independent producer of creative works becomes obsolete. Creativity changes in a distributed-agency model from how we think of it now and becomes a network process, where possibilities are generated by algorithms, and those possibilities are refined and made meaningful through human use. In this context, the line between reproduction and innovation is becoming increasingly indistinct, as something new can come from the relationship and balance between replication and variation within these hybrid systems.

The issue of whether AI can create true innovation cannot be answered from a traditional humanist perspective that privileges intentionality and subjective experience. It requires us to reconceptualise creativity as it relates to our understanding of itself; rather than looking at creativity as something to create or to make, human subjectivity needs to see it as something that occurs through relationships, process, and time.

While AI-generated literature does not produce texts that have deep or rich contextual or experiential meaning, this AI-generated literature also shows us new ways of producing literature, which will challenge how we have defined originality and innovation.

Thus, the tension between imitation and originality will continue to be central in the debates surrounding literary works created through the use of AI and will also illustrate a widening gap in our understanding of authorship, agency, and the nature of creative practice in the postmodern world.

1.5.3 Evaluating Human vs. Machine Originality

To assess the originality of literature produced by artificial intelligence, need to develop new frameworks for critique that take into account the capacity for non-human agencies. By applying criteria based on human processes (e.g. intention and self-expression) to compare machine-generated text to human-produced text will likely mischaracterize the creative reasoning of the machine-produced text. Some Other approaches to evaluating originality in AI-generated narrative texts could involve evaluating how uniformly the AI-generated text adheres to stylistic conventions of the original work, how it employs structural experimentation in its creation of new narratives, and how well the AI-generated text can accurately simulate the literary voice of the original author and/or their work.

Hayles (2012) argues that because of the changing definitions of authorship, posthuman texts require additional modes of interpretation that extend beyond a human-centric view. This study therefore compares originality across texts, not in absolute terms. To evaluate this comparison, I explore the similarities and differences between the preservation or alteration/interruptions of narrative logic present in the original text of Carver's *Cathedral* and newly written algorithmically produced versions of the text.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter examines how AI and digital technologies are changing the ways in which literature is created through a posthumanist lens. Focusing on literature which works with computing, it considers what happens to forms of narrative traditionally associated with the book, when created with the help of algorithms. At the same time, it examines what changes there are to notions of authorship, creativity and originality within literature that utilises artificial intelligence.

The impact of digital transformation on narrative can be seen in how the text is created and readings are produced outside the boundaries of traditional authorial control. Reading AI generated multimodal and interactive works indicates how these texts are produced and give meaning through a process of reader-technology-text interaction that brings forth new forms of narrative within a field of relational meaning-making involving the production of new forms of transformative practice.

While current AI narratives generate creative outputs based on observed patterns in human storytelling, they do not have intent, emotion or understanding of the past. Future scholarship on narrative value will require measures of non-anthropocentric creativity.

Post-authorial narratives which distribute agency across humans and machines provoke a range of ethical, legal and theoretical concerns around notions of originality, ownership and authorial responsibility. Originality emerges within these narratives through the dynamic interplay between humans and machines, rather than solely through human intention.

This framework enables comparison between human-authored content and content generated by AI, while also evaluating how different types of narratives, including story plots, productive structures, and authorial agency, are negotiated and transformed in the posthuman era.

Chapter Two

Posthumanism and Human-AI Co-Creation

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Posthumanism and Human-AI Co-Creation

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2.1 Introduction:

In the era of extremely fast developing digital technologies and artificial intelligence, concepts such as creativity, authorship and literature are undergoing drastic transformations. Posthumanism, a theory addressing the ambivalence of modern civilization toward human existence, refers specifically to the ways in which the traditional humanist conception of the unique value of the human being has started to be abandoned. Thus, the human is no longer seen as an exceptional author, creator of culture and values.

Instead, posthumanist theory offers a new conception of the creative process, implying a network of human, technology, and information interactions. The aim of the present chapter is to examine selected issues of posthumanist theory, with the aim of substantiating, within a theoretical framework, the terms of human-AI co-creation in literature. The opening section presents several issues related to the relationship between humanism and posthumanism.

In particular, it addresses emerging models of subjectivity, as well as forms of human agency and cognitive processes as conceptualised within posthumanist theory. The discussion then develops toward more specific aspects of posthumanist thought, including the notion of the posthuman and its associated cognitive frameworks.

These issues are examined through the work of N. Katherine Hayles, particularly her contributions to theories of writing and cognition in the context of digital technologies. Subsequent sections focus on human-AI collaboration and outline the potential roles of human authors and artificial intelligence systems within creative processes. The analysis of human-AI co-created literature is approached through a textual and narrative analytical framework rather than a stylistic one.

The final part of the chapter explores the impact of artificial intelligence on narrative structure, and literary form, as well as on the broader question of creativity and authorship in literary production.

2.2 Introduction to Posthumanism

Posthumanism is a theoretical and philosophical framework that challenges the humanist conception of the autonomous, rational, and self-sufficient subject. It redefines the human in relation to technological, environmental, and informational systems, emphasising interdependence rather than independence (Rosi Braidotti, 2013; Francesca Ferrando, 2019).

Unlike classical humanism, which prioritises rationality, individuality, and self-governance, posthumanism proposes a relational ontology in which subjectivity emerges through interaction between human and non-human actors. In this sense, agency is no longer exclusively human but distributed across heterogeneous systems (Braidotti, 2013).

From this perspective, creativity and authorship are no longer solely attributable to human intention. Instead, they are understood as outcomes of interactions between cognitive, technological, and cultural systems. This shift problematises traditional notions of originality, authorship, and control over meaning production (Ferrando, 2019).

The work of N. Katherine Hayles is central to this theoretical shift, particularly her argument that cognition must be understood as materially embedded and technologically mediated rather than purely mental or individual (Hayles, 1999; Hayles, 2012).

2.2.1 From Humanism to Posthumanism

Humanism is grounded in the Enlightenment model of the subject as rational, autonomous, and self-transparent. This model, influenced by Cartesian and Kantian philosophy, assumes a clear separation between mind and body, subject and object, and human and machine (Hayles, 1999).

However, this conceptual framework becomes insufficient in the context of contemporary digital environments, where human cognition is increasingly mediated by computational systems. The human–technology relationship can no longer be understood as hierarchical or instrumental; instead, it operates through feedback loops and continuous interaction (Hayles, 1999).

N. Katherine Hayles critiques the “information equals disembodied mind” model by emphasising embodiment and materiality. According to her, cognition is always situated within biological and technological systems rather than existing independently of them.

Within this framework, the posthuman subject is defined not as a replacement of the human, but as a reconfiguration of it. It is an embodied, relational, and technologically embedded entity. Subjectivity is therefore distributed across biological, social, and computational dimensions, forming an integrated cognitive system (Braidotti, 2013; Hayles, 1999).

2.2.2 The Key Concepts and Principles of Posthumanism

A common criticism of posthumanism is that it rejects the human as the central entity in the universe (Braidotti, 2013; Ferrando, 2019). Within the traditional humanist worldview, the universe is understood as anthropocentric, where the human being functions as the rational subject acting upon nature, technology, and other living beings. Posthumanism challenges this hierarchical perspective by emphasizing the interrelationship between humans, technology, the environment, and non-human entities (Braidotti, 2013). Rather than considering human perception, knowledge, and creativity as the exclusive product of an isolated individual, posthumanism views them as the result of dynamic interactions between humans, technology, and the surrounding world (Hayles, 1999). In this sense, the posthuman subject is no longer perceived as autonomous and self-contained, but as relational and embedded within complex informational, ecological, and technological systems.

Within this framework, N. Katherine Hayles criticizes the cybernetic tendency to treat information as disembodied software independent from physical reality. She argues that cognition cannot be separated from embodiment, since all cognitive processes occur through embodied organisms with specific sensorimotor experiences (Hayles, 1999). At the same time, technology extends human cognitive capacities beyond the limits of the biological body through continuous feedback loops between the brain and technological systems. Cognitive activity therefore no longer occurs solely within the mind, but through interactions between humans and machines. This model of embodied and extended cognition challenges the traditional humanist notion of the isolated thinking subject and presents cognition as relational, materially situated, and technologically mediated.

Hayles further redefines agency within a posthuman framework by moving beyond the humanist conception of the freely acting autonomous individual. Drawing on cybernetics and ecological thought, she proposes a model of distributed agency in which actions emerge through interactions among humans, technologies, and material systems rather than through individual intention alone (Hayles, 1999). Technological devices are therefore no longer understood as passive tools controlled entirely by humans, but as active participants within informational networks and decision-making processes. Consequently, creativity, causality, and authorship become distributed across systems and networks rather than centered within a single human agent.

This transformation also reshapes subjectivity and identity. Hayles rejects the Enlightenment conception of the unified and stable individual and instead presents posthuman subjectivity as relational, dynamic, and constituted through systems of interaction

(Hayles, 1999). Human identity develops through relationships between biological processes, digital media, communication technologies, and computational systems. In this sense, the self becomes a “system of systems” composed of evolving relations rather than a fixed and autonomous entity. Posthuman subjectivity is therefore fragmented, multiple, and adaptive, reflecting the complexity of the digital and cybernetic age (Hayles, 2012).

The posthuman condition also produces forms of hybridization between human cognitive abilities and machine computational capacities. Hayles explains that cybernetic developments integrate humans and machines within shared informational circuits in which human perception shapes technological processing while technological systems simultaneously influence human cognition (Hayles, 1999). Technology thus becomes more than an auxiliary instrument; it actively participates in shaping narrative structures, language, creativity, and artistic production. As a result, the traditional image of the autonomous creative author is destabilized and replaced by a networked model of creativity emerging through human-machine interaction.

Closely related to this is the notion of technological mediation. Hayles argues that digital technologies transform not only communication but also perception, cognition, and the experience of reality itself. In digital environments, language becomes what she calls the “flickering signifier,” where words exist simultaneously as visual representations and computational code (Hayles, 2005). Consequently, digital technologies alter the ways humans think, create, and process knowledge. Through extended cognition, humans increasingly rely on technological systems for memory, computation, and artistic production, creating reciprocal processes in which humans shape technology while technology simultaneously reshapes human consciousness and behavior (Hayles, 2012).

Finally, posthumanism embraces multiplicity and plurality by rejecting the unified human subject in favor of heterogeneous, dynamic, and interconnected forms of identity. Hayles argues that posthuman subjectivity consists of multiple interacting processes and entities whose relationships generate complex forms of consciousness and agency (Hayles, 1999). Identity is therefore characterized by multiplicity, hybridity, relationality, and continuous transformation through interaction with informational and technological systems. In this way, posthumanism challenges the traditional humanist belief in a singular and stable self and instead conceptualizes subjectivity as fluid, distributed, and constantly evolving within digital culture

2.2.3 Posthumanism and Subjectivity

Posthuman theory redefines literature, authorship, and creativity within contemporary technological culture. In traditional humanist literary criticism, literature is understood as a representation of human consciousness and intention, and the text is viewed as a self-contained object produced by an autonomous author. However, posthuman theorists such as N. Katherine Hayles, Francesca Ferrando, and Rosi Braidotti challenge this perspective by arguing that literary production emerges through the interaction between the human mind, technology, environment, and cultural systems (Hayles, 2012; Ferrando, 2019; Braidotti, 2013). From this perspective, literature is no longer a closed structure, but a dynamic and distributed process that extends beyond the boundaries of the printed book and singular authorship.

In this context, Hayles argues that textuality must be understood as a material and informational process shaped by technological environments. The shift from print to digital media transforms the literary text into a process that is constantly generated through interaction between code, screen, and reader (Hayles, 2002; Hayles, 2012). Unlike printed texts, which appear stable and fixed, digital texts are fluid and continuously reconfigured through computational processes. This instability challenges the traditional idea of textual unity and introduces a form of writing and reading in which meaning is co-produced through human engagement and machine operations.

Building on this transformation, posthumanism redefines literary creation as a distributed activity involving both human and non-human agents. Algorithms, software systems, and digital platforms participate in the production of meaning, which dissolves the idea of a single controlling author. As a result, authorship becomes a shared and networked process in which meaning is generated through interaction between text, reader, and technological systems (Hayles, 2012). This shift also implies that reading itself becomes an active process of interpretation and construction rather than passive reception.

Within this evolving context, Hayles develops the concept of technogenesis, which describes the mutual evolution of humans and technology. Digital environments reshape cognitive processes through neuroplasticity, leading to new forms of attention and information processing. She distinguishes between deep attention, associated with sustained focus, and hyper attention, characterized by rapid shifts between multiple sources of information (Hayles, 2012). Rather than replacing one with the other, contemporary readers operate within a tension between these two modes, reflecting the cognitive conditions of digital culture.

Similarly, technological mediation plays a central role in transforming creative processes. Digital tools enable new forms of literary production through interaction with databases, algorithms, and multimedia platforms. Writing becomes a hybrid cognitive activity in which human creativity and computational processes interact to produce new narrative forms. This interaction also reshapes the concept of authorship, positioning it as a collaborative process between human and technological systems.

Electronic literature further illustrates these transformations by presenting texts that exist only within digital environments. As Hayles explains, electronic literature often combines textual, visual, and auditory elements, and allows for non-linear and interactive narrative structures (Hayles, 2008). Unlike printed literature, electronic texts function through a dual structure consisting of surface language and underlying code. The reader becomes an active participant who navigates, selects, and interacts with the narrative, producing meaning through engagement with the system. In this sense, electronic literature represents a clear example of posthuman storytelling, where both reader and machine function as co-agents in narrative production.

Posthumanism also redefines creativity and authorship as relational processes rather than individual acts. Francesca Ferrando argues that creativity should be understood as an emergent process produced through interactions between humans, technologies, cultures, and environments, rather than as the expression of an isolated genius (Ferrando, 2019). In this framework, non-human agents such as algorithms and digital platforms become active participants in the creative process. Consequently, authorship becomes distributed across multiple systems, challenging traditional notions of ownership and originality.

Similarly, Rosi Braidotti emphasizes that posthuman subjectivity is characterized by relationality, multiplicity, and continuous transformation (Braidotti, 2013). Identity is no longer understood as a unified essence but as an assemblage of biological, technological, and social relations. Within digital culture, new forms of identity emerge through hybrid interactions between the material and the virtual. However, Braidotti also warns against overly optimistic interpretations of digital culture, stressing that technological identities remain embedded within broader economic, ecological, and political contexts.

Finally, posthumanism calls for new narrative forms capable of representing complex and distributed subjectivities. Instead of the traditional individual hero, posthuman narratives focus on relational, collective, and networked forms of existence. These narratives reflect the transformation of subjectivity in the digital age and open space for more complex representations of human and non-human interaction within contemporary culture.

2.3 N. Katherine Hayles: *How We Think*, and the Posthuman Subject

The theoretical contributions of N. Katherine Hayles occupy a central position within contemporary debates on posthumanism, particularly in relation to cognition, subjectivity, and the epistemology of digital media. In *How We Became Posthuman* (Hayles, 1999), she critically examines the emergence of informational models of subjectivity developed within cybernetics and information theory, which tend to abstract cognition from embodiment and reduce the human subject to a pattern of information.

Hayles (1999) challenges this reduction by insisting that information cannot exist independently of material instantiation. In other words, all informational processes are necessarily embedded within physical, biological, and technological environments. This argument becomes further developed in *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (Hayles, 2012), where she shifts her analytical focus from ontological concerns about “what the human is” to cognitive questions regarding “how thinking is shaped” within digital environments.

A central concept in this theoretical evolution is technogenesis, which Hayles (2012) defines as a process of co-evolution between humans and technologies. This concept rejects the classical assumption that technology is merely an external tool used by humans. Instead, it proposes a model of mutual transformation in which both human cognitive structures and technological systems continuously reshape each other. Within this framework, digital infrastructures such as databases, hyperlinks, interfaces, and algorithmic systems do not simply transmit information, but actively participate in reorganising perception, attention, and interpretive practices.

Consequently, cognition is no longer understood as an exclusively human capacity but as a distributed process emerging from interactions between biological and technological systems. This leads to a fundamental shift in the understanding of subjectivity, from an autonomous and self-contained entity to a relational and technologically embedded configuration.

2.3.1 Beyond the Autonomous Subject

Within this framework, Hayles (2012) introduces a crucial distinction between consciousness and cognition. Consciousness refers to reflective, self-aware thought processes, while cognition encompasses a broader range of non-conscious processes that structure perception, action, and interpretation.

From this perspective, a significant proportion of human cognitive activity occurs below the level of awareness, including processes such as pattern recognition, sensory

integration, and affective regulation. These processes are not purely internal but are significantly shaped by external technological systems.

In digital environments, algorithmic infrastructures such as search engines, recommendation systems, and interface designs actively structure the conditions of perception. They determine what is visible, accessible, and prioritised before conscious reflection occurs. As a result, cognition becomes distributed across human and non-human systems.

Hayles further extends this argument by including computational systems within the domain of cognition. While she does not attribute consciousness or intentionality to machines, she argues that they perform cognitive functions such as classification, data sorting, and probabilistic inference. This redefinition leads to the concept of cognitive assemblages, understood as heterogeneous systems in which human and technical agents interact to produce emergent cognitive effects that cannot be reduced to either component alone.

2.3.2 Cognition, Writing, and Digital Media

In *How We Think* (Hayles, 2012), the transformation of cognitive practices is also reflected in changing modes of reading and writing. One of the most significant shifts identified by Hayles is the transition from deep attention to hyper attention.

Deep attention is characterised by sustained focus on a single object over extended periods, typically associated with print culture and traditional literary reading. Hyper attention, by contrast, involves rapid switching between multiple streams of information, characteristic of digital environments.

Importantly, Hayles does not interpret this shift as a cognitive deficit. Instead, she argues that it represents an adaptive transformation in response to contemporary media ecologies. Individuals operate within a tension between both modes of attention, rather than replacing one with the other.

Writing practices are similarly transformed. Contemporary writing is no longer a purely linear and individual process but a distributed activity involving human authors, software platforms, databases, and algorithmic systems. In this sense, the author becomes one node within a larger network of textual production, where meaning emerges through interaction rather than singular intention.

2.3.3 Distributed Cognition and Agency

Hayles (2012) further develops her theoretical framework through the distinction between narrative and database as two fundamentally different logics of knowledge organisation. Narrative structures experience temporally and causally, constructing meaning through sequencing and interpretation. Databases, on the other hand, organise information spatially, allowing for non-linear access and retrieval.

In digital environments, these two logics increasingly interact. Cognitive processes are distributed across human interpretive activity and computational systems that organise and filter information. Within this context, meaning production becomes a collaborative process between human cognition and technological infrastructure.

This leads to the notion of cognitive assemblages, in which agency is no longer located within an individual subject but emerges from the interaction of heterogeneous components, including humans, machines, texts, and platforms. Agency is therefore relational, dynamic, and distributed.

2.4 What is Human-AI Co-Creation?

Human–AI co-creation refers to collaborative processes in which human agents and artificial intelligence systems jointly participate in the production of creative outputs, particularly in literary and artistic domains (Rezwana & Maher, 2022). Unlike traditional digital tools, AI systems increasingly function as generative participants within the creative process. They contribute not only technical support but also content variation, stylistic suggestions, and structural alternatives.

semantic intention with machine-generated linguistic structures. Meaning is therefore not produced by a single authorial source but emerges through interaction between human intentionality and computational generation.

This challenges conventional models of authorship based on originality, singularity, and individual ownership, while simultaneously preserving the role of human interpretation and ethical evaluation.

2.4.1 Human-AI collaboration

Human–AI collaboration is structured through iterative feedback loops in which humans and machines continuously interact through cycles of prompting, generation, evaluation, and revision. Rather than functioning as isolated agents, both human and artificial systems participate in a relational process of knowledge production and creative development.

Humans contribute contextual knowledge, interpretive frameworks, emotional understanding, and normative judgment, while AI systems provide computational capabilities such as large-scale pattern recognition, probabilistic text generation, data processing, and structural variation. In literary contexts, this interaction enables the production of hybrid textual forms shaped through the combined activities of human interpretation and computational assistance.

This configuration reflects a shift from automation to augmentation, where AI does not replace human cognition but extends its capacities within specific task-oriented environments (Rezwana & Maher, 2022). From a posthumanist perspective, collaboration between humans and AI can therefore be understood as a form of distributed cognition in which creative activity emerges through interaction between biological and technological systems rather than from an isolated human subject alone (Hayles, 2012).

2.4.2 Roles and Contributions

Within co-creative systems, cognitive labour is distributed across human and machine agents. Human cognition is characterised by intentionality, ethical reasoning, emotional interpretation, and contextual understanding, while AI systems operate through statistical modelling, computational processing, and data-driven pattern extraction (Hayles, 2017).

AI systems do not possess consciousness, intention, lived experience, or moral responsibility. Their outputs are generated through probabilistic mechanisms based on training data and algorithmic prediction rather than genuine semantic understanding. Consequently, humans retain responsibility for interpretive validation, ethical assessment, cultural appropriateness, and final decision-making throughout the creative process.

However, this does not imply a strict separation between human and machine functions, but rather a dynamic interaction in which roles are continuously negotiated within the creative process. Human authors may guide thematic direction and interpretive meaning, while AI systems contribute alternative formulations, stylistic suggestions, and narrative possibilities. In this sense, literary production becomes a collaborative and hybrid activity in which creativity emerges through the interaction between human cognition and computational systems rather than through a single autonomous source (Rezwana & Maher, 2022).

2.4.3 Challenges and Opportunities in Co-Creation

Human–AI co-creation significantly expands the possibilities of literary production by enabling large-scale generation of textual variations, accelerating creative experimentation, and assisting authors in processes such as brainstorming, stylistic reformulation, and narrative development. Through computational systems capable of analysing extensive textual corpora and generating multiple linguistic possibilities in a short period of time, AI technologies introduce new forms of creative support that were not previously available within traditional literary practices.

From a posthumanist perspective, these developments illustrate how creativity increasingly operates through distributed cognitive systems rather than through the isolated activity of an autonomous author (Hayles, 2012). Human and machine therefore participate together in hybrid forms of textual production where creative processes emerge through interaction, feedback, and technological mediation.

However, despite these opportunities, human–AI co-creation also introduces significant theoretical and practical limitations. One major limitation concerns the absence of embodied experience in AI systems, which restricts their capacity for producing deep semantic, emotional, and contextual meaning (Hayles, 2017). Unlike human authors, AI systems do not possess consciousness, lived experience, memory, intentionality, or emotional awareness. Their outputs are generated through statistical prediction and probabilistic pattern recognition rather than genuine understanding. As a result, AI-generated texts often rely on recombination of existing linguistic structures instead of experiential interpretation or symbolic insight.

This limitation affects the production of emotional depth and thematic complexity in literary texts. Although AI systems may generate grammatically coherent and stylistically convincing narratives, they frequently struggle to sustain subtle symbolic structures, nuanced characterization, or culturally situated emotional experiences. In many cases, the generated content reproduces patterns already present in training data rather than creating genuinely original literary perspectives.

Additional challenges concern questions of originality, authorship, ownership, and transparency. Since AI systems operate through opaque computational processes often described as “black box” systems, the origin of specific outputs is difficult to identify or fully explain. This raises important ethical questions regarding accountability and intellectual ownership in collaborative creative production (Rezwana & Maher, 2022). The increasing

integration of AI into literary production therefore complicates traditional understandings of authorship based on individual human intention and creative autonomy.

Another concern relates to stylistic homogenisation. Because generative AI systems are trained on extensive datasets composed of existing textual patterns, excessive dependence on AI-generated suggestions may reduce stylistic diversity and weaken individual literary voice. Human creativity risks becoming constrained by algorithmically dominant linguistic structures if computational assistance is accepted uncritically.

Nevertheless, despite these limitations, human–AI co-creation represents a fundamental reconfiguration of authorship and creativity within contemporary digital culture. Creativity is no longer understood exclusively as the product of an isolated human consciousness, but increasingly as a relational process distributed across human and non-human systems (Hayles, 2012). In this context, AI functions not as an autonomous creator but as a technological participant within broader cognitive assemblages that reshape literary production while still requiring human interpretation, ethical judgment, and cultural understanding.

2.5 Thematic and Narrative Analysis as an Analytical Approach

This section focuses on the analytical framework adopted in this study for the examination of meaning construction in narrative texts. Rather than treating language as an isolated system of linguistic units, this approach emphasises the way meaning is produced through thematic development and narrative organisation.

Narrative texts are understood as structured systems in which meaning emerges through the arrangement of events, the progression of temporal sequences, and the interaction between narrative components such as characterisation, focalisation, and plot structure. In this sense, narrative is not merely a representation of events but a cognitive and interpretive framework through which experience is organised and made intelligible.

Thematic analysis complements this perspective by focusing on the recurrence and development of central ideas throughout the text. Themes such as perception, identity, interaction, and transformation are not explicitly fixed within the narrative but emerge progressively through textual relations and interpretive processes.

From this perspective, meaning is not treated as a static property embedded in the text but as a dynamic outcome of narrative construction. It is produced through the interaction between textual structure and reader interpretation, which together activate the semantic potential of the narrative. As Paul Simpson (2004) argues, textual meaning is closely connected to patterns of organisation that guide interpretation. While this study does not

adopt stylistics as its primary framework, Simpson's insight remains relevant in understanding how linguistic and structural patterns contribute to meaning formation.

This analytical framework is particularly significant for the present study, as it enables a comparative examination of human-authored and AI-generated narratives. Both forms rely on structured organisation to produce meaning, although they differ in terms of cognitive origin and generative mechanisms. Therefore, thematic and narrative analysis provides a unified approach for evaluating coherence, thematic depth, and interpretive complexity across different types of textual production.

2.6 Narrative Logic and Meaning Construction

This section investigates the concept of narrative logic, understood as the underlying principle that governs the organisation of events within a narrative structure. Narrative logic is concerned with how events are selected, ordered, and connected in order to produce coherence and meaning.

Following the theoretical frameworks of Gérard Genette (1980) and Seymour Chatman (1978), narrative is not a random sequence of events but a structured system shaped by temporal organisation, causality, and interpretive coherence. These structural principles determine how meaning is constructed and how the reader engages with the narrative.

In human-authored narratives, narrative logic is deeply connected to intentionality and lived experience. The author selects and organises events based on cognitive, cultural, and ideological frameworks. As a result, narrative structure reflects both subjective interpretation and socio-cultural context.

In contrast, AI-generated narratives operate according to computational and statistical principles. According to Emily M. Bender et al. (2021), large language models generate text by predicting probable sequences of words based on patterns learned from extensive datasets. Consequently, narrative structure in AI-generated texts emerges from statistical regularities rather than intentional meaning-making.

Although AI-generated narratives may appear coherent at the surface level, their internal organisation is not grounded in experiential understanding. This distinction becomes particularly important when analysing emotional depth, symbolic meaning, and thematic development.

From a philosophical perspective, John Searle (1980) argues that computational systems operate syntactically rather than semantically. In other words, they manipulate symbols without understanding their meaning. This limitation affects the interpretive depth of AI-generated narratives, which may simulate meaning without actual experiential grounding.

Similarly, Floridi and Chiriatti (2020) suggest that AI-generated creativity is primarily based on recombination rather than genuine invention. While such processes can produce structurally valid outputs, they often lack originality in the strong sense of semantic and symbolic innovation.

However, from a posthumanist perspective, these distinctions do not eliminate the analytical value of AI-generated narratives. Instead, they highlight the need to reconceptualise narrative production as a distributed process involving both human and non-human systems. Meaning is therefore not exclusively located in human intention but emerges through interaction between computational structures and human interpretation.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter explored the theoretical framework of this study through exploring the development of posthumanism and its impact on subjectivity, creativity and literary production within new media environments.

This chapter started by giving a sbrief overview of posthumanist theory and traces through to its origins the development of posthumanism away from the classical humanist tradition and towards the dissolution of the autonomous and rational human subject posited within this tradition by contemporary developments in philosophy and technology, away from a humanist and towards a posthumanist understanding of the subject as a relational entity fully situated within networks of relations, interactions and exchanges between biological, cultural and informational elements.

It seems that the ideas of some influential posthumanist scholars have been extensively used in the discussion. Braidotti and Ferrando, for example, suggest that posthuman subjectivities are plural, relationist, and always interconnected with non-human entities, whether organic or technological, material or virtual, including therefore cyber-physical systems (CPS) and digital technologies. They propose new models of creativity, authorship and agency that depart from an anthropocentric worldview and take into account the contemporary ecological and technological setting.

This is the context for my reading of N. Katherine Hayles' work on the interface between digital media and the human mind. Hayles explores the ways in which new media environments change our reading and writing practices and therefore the way we think. Ideas such as distributed cognition and technological mediation can help us understand how more and more of our cognitive and knowledge-making activities are distributed between our brains and digital devices.

Building on this theoretical foundation, this chapter explores the concept of human–AI co-creation as a new mode of collaboration between the human mind and AI systems in the process of creative production. The chapter draws on various discussions by scholars, such as Luciano Floridi and Massimo Chiriatti, on the significant role of AI in contemporary knowledge production and culture, as well as on critical perspectives on language models given by scholars like Emily M. Bender, that shed light on the social determinants of language models, and therefore on the limits of AI-generated human language, which is a crucial aspect of the debate opened by John Searle on the possibility of truly cognitive machines.

This chapter concludes by introducing stylistics as an approach for the study of language and style in literary texts. Based on the theory of stylistics by Paul Simpson, in addition to Seymour Chatman's and Gérard Genette's approaches to narrative, it introduced the theories of narrative voice, structure and style in literary discourse.

When taken together, these perspectives provide a foundational conceptual framework for addressing the evolving relationship between creativity, digital technology and literary production. This chapter bridges posthuman philosophy, cognitive approaches and narrative stylistics in order to lay the theoretical groundwork for investigating the complex and evolving nature of authorship and creativity in the context of new technologies.

**Practical/
ANALYTICAL
PART**

Chapter Three

Thematic and Narrative Analysis of *Cathedral*

PRACTICAL /ANALYTICAL PART

Chapter Three

Thematic and Narrative Analysis of *Cathedral*

3.1 Introduction

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3.1 Introduction

This chapter applies the theoretical framework established in Chapter One and Chapter Two to a detailed analysis of Raymond Carver's short story *Cathedral*. While Chapter One examined literature in the context of digital transformation and the emergence of new narrative forms, and Chapter Two introduced posthumanist perspectives on subjectivity, cognition, and human–AI co-creation, the present chapter focuses on how meaning is constructed within a human-authored literary text.

The analysis centres on narrative logic, thematic development, and the processes through which meaning emerges from the interaction between narrative elements. Particular attention is given to how perception, language, and relational experience shape the narrative.

The chapter begins with an overview of the text, including plot, characters, and setting. It then examines narrative construction through economy of language and implicit meaning. This is followed by a thematic analysis focusing on isolation, perception, and human connection. Finally, the chapter explores symbolism and the nature of transformation within the narrative.

Overall, this chapter demonstrates that *Cathedral* constructs meaning through restraint, interaction, and gradual perceptual change, thereby preparing the ground for comparison with AI-generated narratives in the following chapter.

3.2 Overview of the Text

3.2.1 Plot Summary

Cathedral is narrated by an unnamed first-person narrator who initially displays emotional distance and limited understanding, particularly in relation to blindness. The story begins with the arrival of Robert, a blind man who is a long-time acquaintance of the narrator's wife. This situation creates discomfort for the narrator, whose perceptions are shaped by stereotypes rather than direct experience.

This discomfort is explicitly expressed when the narrator admits: "I wasn't enthusiastic about his visit. He was no one I knew. And his being blind bothered me" (Carver, 1981). He further states: "My idea of blindness came from the movies" (Carver, 1981). These remarks demonstrate that his perception of blindness is constructed through stereotypical cultural representations rather than direct human experience.

As the narrative progresses, the interaction between the narrator and Robert develops through ordinary activities such as conversation, shared meals, and watching television. These everyday moments gradually reduce the narrator's sense of distance and contribute to a shift in his perception.

Gradually, ordinary interaction destabilises the narrator's assumptions and opens the possibility of a new perceptual awareness. This transformation becomes particularly evident during the final drawing scene when the narrator declares: "It was like nothing else in my life up to now" (Carver, 1981). The statement reflects an epiphanic moment grounded in shared and embodied experience.

A key turning point occurs in the final scene, when the narrator attempts to describe a cathedral seen on television but struggles to do so. Robert suggests drawing the cathedral together while the narrator closes his eyes. This shared activity leads to a new form of perception that is not based on visual observation but on embodied experience.

The plot is therefore minimal in terms of external action but significant in terms of internal transformation. It moves from misunderstanding and detachment towards a more open, though still incomplete, form of awareness.

The ending reinforces this incomplete yet meaningful transformation. After drawing with Robert, the narrator states: "My eyes were still closed. I was in my house. I knew that. But I didn't feel like I was inside anything" (Carver, 1981). The ambiguity of this moment suggests a destabilisation of ordinary perception and a temporary expansion of consciousness.

3.2.2 Characters and Their Roles

Characterisation in *Cathedral* is constructed through interaction rather than detailed psychological exposition. The narrative relies on dialogue and relational dynamics to define each character's role.

The narrator serves as the central consciousness through which the story is presented. At the beginning, he appears emotionally detached, insecure, and reliant on preconceived ideas about blindness.

His understanding of blindness is largely shaped by mediated images rather than authentic interaction. Early in the narrative, he explains: "In the movies, the blind moved slowly and never laughed" (Carver, 1981). This reference to cinematic representation reveals the superficial and stereotypical nature of his perception.

His perspective limits the reader's understanding, reinforcing the subjectivity of perception. The narrator's limited perception is also reflected in his obsessive attention to Robert's physical appearance. He remarks: "I saw the left pupil turn in toward his nose while the other made an effort to keep in one place" (Carver, 1981). Symbolically, this excessive focus on visual difference suggests that the narrator himself suffers from a deeper form of blindness rooted in prejudice and emotional limitation.

Through his interaction with Robert, however, he undergoes a gradual shift towards openness and engagement. This transformation culminates during the collaborative drawing scene in which perception becomes relational rather than individual. Robert tells the narrator: "I'll follow along with you. It'll be okay" (Carver, 1981). The statement presents understanding as a shared process grounded in interaction and embodied participation.

Robert, the blind man, functions as a catalyst for this transformation. Despite his lack of sight, he demonstrates awareness, patience, and communicative sensitivity. Robert's role as a guide becomes especially significant during the final scene when he instructs the narrator: "Close your eyes now" (Carver, 1981). Symbolically, the blind man becomes the figure who leads the sighted narrator toward deeper understanding.

His role is not merely symbolic but structural, as he facilitates the narrator's movement from prejudice to a more relational form of understanding.

The narrator's wife plays a mediating role. Her dialogue also exposes the narrator's emotional isolation. When he states, "I don't have any blind friends," she replies: "You don't have any friends. Period" (Carver, 1981). This exchange highlights his broader inability to establish meaningful human connection. She establishes the connection between the two men and creates the conditions for their interaction. Although her presence becomes less central as

the narrative progresses, her role is essential in initiating the encounter that drives the narrative.

From a posthumanist perspective, these characters can be understood not as isolated individuals but as participants in a relational network through which meaning is constructed (Hayles, 1999).

3.2.3 Narrative Context and Setting

The narrative takes place within a domestic setting, primarily the narrator's home. This confined and ordinary space reflects the minimalist nature of the story and reinforces the focus on interpersonal interaction rather than external events.

The story unfolds over the course of a single evening, creating a concentrated temporal structure. This limited timeframe intensifies the interaction between the characters and allows for a focused exploration of perceptual change.

Initially, the domestic space reflects emotional distance and discomfort, particularly in the narrator's attitude towards Robert.

At the beginning of the story, the narrator experiences Robert's presence as an intrusion into his personal environment. However, the domestic setting gradually evolves into a space of communication and relational interaction through shared activities such as eating, watching television, and drawing.

However, as the narrative progresses, the same space becomes a site of connection and transformation, especially during the final drawing scene. The setting therefore functions as more than a passive background.

Carver's minimalist use of domestic space reinforces the narrative focus on internal transformation rather than external action. Meaning emerges progressively through interaction, silence, and shared experience.

It supports the thematic development of the narrative by emphasising the shift from isolation to relational experience, a concept that aligns with posthumanist understandings of cognition as emerging through interaction (Hayles, 1999).

3.3 Narrative Construction and Meaning

3.3.1 Economy of Language and Simplicity

The narrative of *Cathedral* is characterised by a restrained use of language. Sentences are short, direct, and largely descriptive, reflecting the rhythm of everyday speech. This simplicity, however, does not limit meaning; rather, it creates a space in which interpretation becomes necessary.

The narrator's language is concrete and repetitive, particularly when dealing with abstract concepts. This reflects his limited capacity to articulate complex ideas and reinforces the connection between language and perception.

Meaning is not explicitly stated but emerges through the accumulation of details and the interaction between narrative elements. Ordinary actions such as eating, talking, and watching television are presented without elaboration, yet they contribute significantly to the development of the narrative.

From a theoretical perspective, this process can be related to the concept of distributed cognition, where understanding emerges through interaction rather than isolated thought (Hayles, 1999). In this sense, meaning in the narrative is not produced solely by the narrator but develops through relational engagement.

This becomes evident in the narrator's struggle to define abstract experience, especially when he attempts to explain the cathedral on television and admits: "I'm just no good at it" (Carver, 1981). The statement reflects linguistic limitation and highlights the gap between perception and articulation, reinforcing the minimalist aesthetic of the narrative.

3.3.2 Dialogue and Implicit Meaning

Dialogue plays a central role in the construction of meaning in *Cathedral*. The exchanges between characters are simple and often understated, yet they carry significant interpretative weight.

The narrator does not explicitly explain his thoughts or emotions. Instead, meaning emerges through what is said, as well as through what remains unspoken. This reliance on implication requires active participation from the reader.

At the beginning of the narrative, the narrator's language reflects discomfort and prejudice. However, as the interaction with Robert develops, dialogue becomes a space of engagement rather than distance. This transformation is conveyed indirectly through changes in tone and interaction rather than explicit commentary.

Therefore, silence and omission are equally important. Moments where the narrator fails to articulate his thoughts invite interpretation and contribute to the overall meaning of the text.

This dynamic is particularly visible when Robert gently redirects the interaction during the drawing scene, saying: “Go ahead, bub, draw” (Carver, 1981). The short imperative shifts communication from verbal explanation to embodied collaboration, marking a transition from linguistic limitation to experiential understanding.

The final drawing scene represents a shift from verbal to embodied communication. Understanding is achieved not through language but through shared action, reinforcing the idea that meaning is constructed through experience and interaction.

This is further emphasised when Robert instructs the narrator: “Close your eyes now” (Carver, 1981). The command symbolically suspends visual dominance and privileges tactile and relational perception, suggesting that meaning in the narrative ultimately exceeds language and operates through shared embodied experience.

3.4 Thematic Analysis

3.4.1 Isolation and Human Connection

Isolation structures the narrator’s initial cognitive and relational position, as his understanding of others is mediated by stereotypes rather than direct engagement. This is immediately visible in his reaction to Robert, expressed through the statement “a blind man in my house was not something I looked forward to” (Carver, 1983). The formulation reflects a pre-established interpretive framework in which difference is not encountered but classified in advance.

The narrator’s perception of reality is further shaped through mediated cultural forms, particularly television, which functions as a secondary system of representation. His inability to describe what Robert asks him to report from the screen reveals a limitation in translating perception into meaning, suggesting that visual input does not automatically produce understanding.

Within Hayles’ framework of distributed cognition, such a condition reflects the dependence of meaning-making on interactions between human cognition and mediating systems rather than isolated mental processes (Hayles, 2012). The narrator’s isolation is therefore not only interpersonal but cognitive, resulting from a restricted configuration of relational and interpretive structures.

The gradual shift in the narrative occurs through sustained interaction with Robert, where shared presence replaces mediated perception. The drawing scene marks a decisive reconfiguration of relational engagement, particularly when Robert places his hand over the narrator's and directs him to draw, stating "put your hand on mine" (Carver, 1983). Cognition here becomes materially and relationally co-produced rather than individually controlled.

This aligns with Ferrando's understanding of posthuman creativity as a relational process in which meaning emerges through interaction between human agents rather than isolated authorship (Ferrando, 2019).

3.4.2 Blindness and Perception

Blindness operates as a structural reconfiguration of perceptual hierarchies. Although Robert lacks visual capacity, his interpretive engagement with others exceeds that of the narrator, who remains constrained by visual and stereotypical modes of understanding.

This inversion becomes apparent when Robert engages with television and requires verbal description of visual content. The narrator's difficulty in translating visual data into coherent meaning destabilises the assumption that sight guarantees understanding.

A critical shift occurs when the narrator is instructed to close his eyes during the drawing process, recorded as "I closed my eyes as he said" (Carver, 1983). This moment suspends visual dominance and introduces tactile and embodied cognition as an alternative mode of perception.

From Hayles' perspective, this reflects the displacement of vision-centred epistemology toward embodied cognition, where meaning arises through multisensory and relational engagement rather than isolated sensory authority (Hayles, 1999). Perception is thus redistributed across embodied interaction rather than located in a single sensory channel.

Braidotti's conception of relational subjectivity further supports this transformation, as identity is constituted through dynamic relations rather than autonomous self-enclosure (Braidotti, 2013). Blindness, in this sense, functions as a condition that exposes the instability of perceptual hierarchies.

3.5.1 Symbolism of the *Cathedral*

The *Cathedral* initially functions as an inaccessible conceptual object for the narrator, who lacks the experiential framework necessary to imagine it. This limitation reflects a restricted cognitive structure grounded in visual dependency and absence of relational knowledge.

During the drawing sequence, this structure is transformed through collaborative construction. The act of drawing, described as "we worked on it together" (Carver, 1983),

shifts the cathedral from objecthood to process. Meaning emerges through coordinated interaction rather than individual representation.

In Hayles' terms, this reflects distributed cognition, where meaning is produced through interaction between embodied agents and material processes rather than residing in a single interpretive source (Hayles, 2012).

Ferrando's relational ontology reinforces this reading, as creative meaning is understood as emerging from interactional networks rather than isolated authorship (Ferrando, 2019). The *Cathedral* thus becomes a cognitive event produced through relational engagement.

3.5.2 Epiphany and Transformation

The narrative resists closure through a form of transformation that remains partial and open-ended. The narrator's final articulation, "It's really something" (Carver, 1983), does not stabilise meaning but leaves it suspended within ongoing interpretive openness.

Rather than a moment of resolution, the transformation reflects a shift in perceptual configuration, where understanding is no longer anchored in fixed interpretation but in relational exposure.

Within Braidotti's posthuman framework, subjectivity is defined as continuous becoming rather than completed identity (Braidotti, 2013). The narrator's shift therefore does not represent enlightenment but reconfiguration within relational experience.

Hayles' concept of technogenesis further supports this reading, as cognition is understood as continuously evolving through interaction rather than reaching final stability (Hayles, 2012). Meaning thus remains processual rather than conclusive.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined *Cathedral* through a thematic and narrative approach, focusing on how meaning is constructed within the text. The analysis has shown that the narrative relies on simplicity, interaction, and implicit meaning rather than explicit explanation.

Themes such as isolation, perception, and human connection emerge through relational dynamics and narrative progression. The symbolism of the *Cathedral* and the transformation of the narrator further illustrate how meaning develops through shared experience.

By connecting these findings to the theoretical framework established in previous chapters, the analysis demonstrates that meaning in the narrative is not fixed but constructed through interaction. This provides a foundation for the comparative analysis of AI-generated texts in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

AI-Generated Narratives Based on
Cathedral

Chapter Four

AI-Generated Narratives Based on *Cathedral*

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Generative AI Systems Used in the Study

4.2.1 ChatGPT

4.2.2 Gemini

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4.3.1 Recurrent Themes

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4.4 Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter examined the construction of meaning in *Cathedral* through narrative structure, thematic development, and relational interaction, the present chapter shifts the focus towards the imitation of literary narrative through artificial intelligence systems. This transition reflects the broader framework established in Chapter One and Chapter Two, where literature was discussed in relation to digital transformation and posthumanist perspectives on cognition and authorship.

In this context, the study adopts the concept of foundation models as a unifying framework for understanding contemporary generative AI systems. As defined by Rishi Bommasani et al.(2021), foundation models refer to large-scale machine learning systems trained on extensive datasets and capable of performing a wide range of language-based tasks, including text generation. Rather than examining each tool as an isolated system, this study considers them as instances of this broader category (Bommasani et al., 2021).

Accordingly, systems such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI are treated as generative instruments used to produce comparable narrative outputs. The focus is not on their technical architecture, but on their capacity to imitate narrative structure, thematic patterns, and meaning construction as identified in Chapter Three.

The chapter begins with a brief presentation of the selected AI systems, followed by the generated text samples based on a controlled prompt. It then proceeds to a thematic and narrative analysis of these outputs, focusing on recurrent themes, narrative patterns, and the limits of emotional and symbolic depth. This analysis aims to evaluate the extent to which AI-generated texts approximate human-authored literary meaning.

4.2 Generative AI Systems Used in the Study

4.2.1 ChatGPT

ChatGPT is a large language model based on the transformer architecture, designed to generate coherent and contextually relevant text through probabilistic prediction. It operates by identifying patterns in language derived from large-scale datasets rather than through intentional or experiential understanding.

In this study, ChatGPT is used to examine the extent to which it reproduce narrative coherence, minimal expression, and implicit meaning, particularly in relation to the narrative logic identified in *Cathedral*

4.2.2 Gemini

Gemini is a generative AI system developed within the framework of foundation models, capable of producing structured textual outputs across various contexts. Its architecture allows for a more explicit organisation of narrative elements.

Within this study, Gemini is analysed in terms of how it constructs narrative progression and expresses thematic meaning, particularly in relation to clarity and explicit interpretation.

4.2.3 Perplexity AI

Perplexity AI integrates large language models with retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), combining language generation with access to external information sources. This hybrid structure influences how narratives are constructed and how external information is incorporated.

In this study, Perplexity AI is examined to evaluate how its retrieval-based mechanism affects narrative coherence and the balance between description and interpretation.

4.3 Thematic and Narrative Analysis of AI-Generated Texts

This section provides a comparative analysis of the three AI-generated narratives produced by ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI. The analysis examines how each system reconstructs thematic meaning and narrative structure in relation to Raymond Carver's *Cathedral*, particularly focusing on minimalism, implicit meaning, and perceptual transformation.

4.3.1 Recurrent Theme

Across the three AI-generated recreations of *Cathedral*, the dominant thematic structures consistently revolve around perception, blindness, communication, emotional isolation, and personal transformation through interpersonal interaction.

Although all three systems: ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI preserve the central narrative premise of the blind visitor functioning as a catalyst for the narrator's self-awareness, each model reconstructs these themes through different stylistic and interpretive mechanisms. The variations reveal important distinctions in how AI systems simulate literary subtlety, emotional implication, and symbolic depth. From a posthumanist perspective, this reflects the growing capacity of artificial intelligence to imitate forms of human literary consciousness and narrative production (Hayles, 1999; Ferrando, 2019).

In the version generated by ChatGPT, themes emerge implicitly through dialogue, silence, and observational narration rather than direct explanation. The text reproduces a minimalist narrative atmosphere strongly reminiscent of Carver's original aesthetic. The narrator's emotional distance is not openly declared; instead, it becomes visible through restrained interactions and fragmented communication. For instance, when the narrator states, "He knows you don't like him," and responds, "I don't know him," the exchange indirectly exposes emotional discomfort and psychological defensiveness.

Similarly, the theme of perception extending beyond physical sight gradually develops through Samuel's repeated insistence on detailed description. When Samuel asks, "What kind of black?", the question transforms ordinary observation into interpretive perception, suggesting that true understanding depends on attentiveness rather than vision itself. This corresponds with posthumanist arguments that perception and consciousness should not be understood exclusively through traditional human-centered frameworks (Hayles, 1999).

Moreover, ChatGPT's version preserves thematic ambiguity, which is fundamental to Carver's minimalist style. The narrator's transformation is not openly announced but implied through symbolic interaction. This becomes particularly evident during the cathedral drawing scene when the narrator closes his eyes and says, "It's there." The statement remains deliberately open-ended: the "cathedral" symbolizes not only the drawing itself but also the narrator's newly emerging emotional awareness. Such symbolic openness reflects what posthumanist theorists identify as fluid and evolving forms of subjectivity and understanding (Ferrando, 2019).

In contrast, Gemini retains the same thematic concerns but expresses them in a more direct and emotionally transparent manner. Themes such as alienation, discomfort, and transformation are communicated with less interpretive ambiguity. From the beginning, the narrator explicitly confesses his unease: “The idea of having one in my house made me uncomfortable.” Unlike ChatGPT’s restrained implication, Gemini verbalizes emotional states openly, reducing the subtle inferential work required from the reader.

Gemini also intensifies emotional symbolism during the cathedral scene. When the narrator closes his eyes, the narration states: “I didn’t feel like I was inside my living room anymore. I didn’t feel like I was anywhere.” Here, personal transformation is represented through overt psychological disorientation rather than understated sensory realization. Similarly, the concluding statement, “It didn’t look like a cathedral. It didn’t look like anything recognizable. It looked like chaos,” explicitly interprets the drawing as symbolic confusion and emotional rupture. Consequently, although Gemini preserves the thematic framework of Carver’s narrative, it reduces the interpretive openness that characterizes minimalist fiction.

The version generated by Perplexity AI differs more significantly in thematic execution. Although it preserves the central motifs of blindness, companionship, and spiritual awakening, it relies heavily on exposition and narrative explanation. Themes are frequently articulated directly rather than emerging organically from dialogue or silence. For example, Robert openly recounts emotional experiences connected to his deceased wife: “Hospital smells, beeps. Her hand in his. Last words. ‘Keep living,’ she said.” Such passages foreground emotional meaning immediately, leaving little room for interpretive ambiguity.

Furthermore, Perplexity expands the narrative through additional scenes and descriptive elaboration, including drives through town, restaurant visits, and extended discussions about religion and travel. While these additions increase narrative detail, they dilute the thematic concentration characteristic of Carver’s minimalist structure. In this sense, the AI system privileges narrative explanation over symbolic restraint, producing a more conventional storytelling style.

Another important thematic distinction concerns the representation of communication. In ChatGPT’s version, communication emerges through pauses, incomplete statements, and understated emotional recognition. Samuel’s observation, “Nothing alone,” encapsulates the philosophical core of the narrative while remaining concise and indirect. Gemini presents communication more emotionally and psychologically, emphasizing interpersonal vulnerability. Perplexity, however, approaches communication conversationally and

narratively, often extending dialogue into explanatory exchanges that reduce symbolic compression.

Similarly, the treatment of blindness differs across the three systems. ChatGPT frames blindness as an alternative mode of perception that destabilizes the narrator's assumptions gradually and subtly. Gemini portrays blindness more emotionally, emphasizing intimacy, sensory awareness, and existential uncertainty. Perplexity tends to transform blindness into a narrative device for philosophical discussion and experiential storytelling, making the theme more accessible but less symbolically complex. These differences demonstrate varying AI capacities in reproducing literary ambiguity and symbolic depth.

Thematically, all three AI systems preserve the essential structural trajectory of Carver's narrative: an initially detached narrator undergoes a form of internal transformation through interaction with a blind visitor. However, the quality of thematic representation varies considerably according to each model's stylistic tendencies. ChatGPT most effectively reproduces Carver's minimalist thematic ambiguity by privileging implication, silence, and symbolic openness. Gemini maintains thematic coherence but introduces greater emotional explicitness, thereby reducing interpretive subtlety. Perplexity preserves the thematic framework while shifting toward explanatory narration and emotional exposition, weakening the restrained realism characteristic of the original story.

Consequently, the comparison demonstrates that AI systems can successfully reproduce recurring literary themes at the structural level, yet they differ substantially in their ability to sustain the implicitness, ambiguity, and symbolic restraint associated with minimalist fiction. From a posthumanist perspective, these findings suggest that artificial intelligence increasingly approximates human literary production while still revealing limitations in reproducing the aesthetic subtlety and interpretive depth characteristic of human-authored minimalist literature (Hayles, 1999; Ferrando, 2019; Braidotti, 2013).

4.3.2 Narrative Patterns and Levels of Implicitness

In terms of narrative construction, the three AI-generated versions demonstrate different degrees of alignment with Raymond Carver's minimalist narrative model, particularly in relation to implicitness, narrative economy, and the distribution of meaning through interaction rather than explanation.

The ChatGPT-generated version exhibits the highest degree of fidelity to Carver's minimalist logic. It maintains a restrained narrative structure dominated by dialogue, situational progression, and minimal authorial explanation. Meaning emerges indirectly through interactional exchanges rather than explicit psychological commentary, compressed

utterances such as “He has a name” and “Then use it” where meaning is not explained but implied through relational tension. Such narrative economy produces a high level of interpretive openness, consistent with the posthumanist understanding of cognition as distributed across interactional systems. In this sense, meaning is not located within a single consciousness but emerges relationally between speakers, aligning with Hayles’ (1999) concept of distributed cognition.

From a posthumanist perspective, this structure also resonates with Ferrando’s (2019) understanding of subjectivity as decentered and relational rather than autonomous. The narrative does not privilege internal psychological depth but instead constructs meaning through situational exchange, where identity and perception are continuously negotiated rather than fixed.

The Gemini-generated version, however, introduces a moderate shift away from strict implicitness by increasing psychological and contextual clarification. While it retains the basic narrative framework, it frequently externalizes interpretive framing, reducing ambiguity. For example, the narrator explicitly states, “Everything I knew about them came from the movies”, which foregrounds cognitive bias rather than allowing it to emerge indirectly through interaction. This explicit self-reflection reduces the interpretive gap and increases narrative transparency. As a result, meaning becomes more pre-structured, and the reader’s inferential role is partially reduced. Although relational dynamics remain present, they are filtered through a more self-aware and explanatory narratorial voice, weakening the minimalistic implicitness of Carver’s model.

The Perplexity AI version represents the furthest deviation from minimalist narrative implicitness.

It is characterized by overt emotional articulation and explanatory narration, where meaning is frequently stated rather than suggested. The narrator explicitly declares, “I wasn’t thrilled about it” and “I didn’t like the idea of him in my house”, thereby eliminating interpretive ambiguity. This form of direct emotional labeling significantly reduces narrative openness and limits the reader’s role in constructing meaning. In contrast to Hayles’ (1999) distributed model of cognition, where meaning emerges through interactional processes, Perplexity’s version centralizes meaning within explicit narratorial statements.

From Ferrando's (2019) perspective, this version also reinforces a more traditional and bounded conception of subjectivity, where the narrator's internal states are clearly defined and linguistically fixed, rather than emerging through relational exchange. Consequently, the narrative becomes more linear and interpretively closed, reducing the posthuman relational complexity present in Carver's original aesthetic.

Overall, a clear gradation of implicitness emerges across the three systems. ChatGPT remains the closest to Carver's minimalist and posthuman relational structure due to its reliance on dialogue, silence, and emergent meaning. Gemini occupies an intermediate position, maintaining structural coherence but increasing psychological explicitness. Perplexity, however, represents a shift toward overt exposition, where meaning is stabilized through explicit narration rather than co-constructed through interaction.

4.3.3 Limits of Emotional and Symbolic Depth

The analysis of emotional and symbolic depth across the three AI-generated versions reveals a gradual decline in interpretive density and symbolic complexity when compared to Raymond Carver's minimalist aesthetic in *Cathedral*. This decline is not merely stylistic but structural, affecting the way emotional meaning and symbolic significance are constructed through narrative restraint, implication, and reader participation.

The ChatGPT-generated version demonstrates the strongest degree of symbolic layering among the three systems, primarily through the emergence of meaning from embodied interaction rather than explicit exposition. This is where symbolic transformation is constructed through shared action rather than verbal explanation. The narrative emphasizes experiential co-construction, as seen when "We kept drawing. Page full. Turned it. New one. Whole thing now" , where meaning emerges through process rather than statement. Emotional expression remains restrained but not absent, allowing symbolic significance to develop indirectly through sensory and relational engagement.

This structure aligns with Hayles' (1999) concept of distributed cognition, in which meaning is not located within an individual subject but emerges through interaction between agents, language, and material practice. In addition, Ferrando's (2019) posthumanist framework supports this reading by positioning subjectivity as relational and processual, rather than fixed or internally self-contained. The symbolic dimension in this version is therefore not explicitly declared but gradually constructed through embodied participation, maintaining a degree of interpretive openness consistent with minimalist aesthetics.

The Gemini-generated version increases emotional explicitness while simultaneously reducing symbolic ambiguity. Emotional states are more directly articulated, as in “Everything I knew about them came from the movies. In the movies, they moved slowly and never laughed” , where perception and bias are explicitly foregrounded rather than implied. While this enhances psychological clarity, it reduces the necessity for interpretive inference. The symbolic dimension becomes secondary to explanatory narration, limiting the reader’s role in constructing meaning.

Although relational elements are still present, they are more explicitly framed and cognitively explained rather than emerging through interaction. This shift weakens symbolic density, as meaning is increasingly stabilized through narrative explanation rather than distributed experiential construction. In Ferrando’s (2019) terms, subjectivity here becomes more narratively centralized and less processually emergent, reducing the fluidity of symbolic interpretation.

The Perplexity AI version exhibits the weakest symbolic and emotional depth. Emotional meaning is frequently stated in a direct and explicit manner, leaving minimal space for interpretive engagement. This is evident in statements such as “I wasn’t thrilled about it. I didn’t know the man. I had never met a blind person in my life” , where emotional positioning is explicitly declared rather than inferred through interaction or narrative tension. As a result, symbolic meaning is significantly flattened, as the narrative prioritizes explanation over implication.

In contrast to Hayles’ (1999) distributed cognition model, where meaning emerges through interactional complexity and systemic relations, Perplexity’s version centralizes cognition within explicit narratorial statements. Similarly, from Ferrando’s (2019) posthumanist perspective, subjectivity in this version is rigidly defined and linguistically fixed, rather than relationally constructed. This leads to a reduction in symbolic openness and interpretive multiplicity.

Overall, the comparative analysis reveals a clear gradient in symbolic and emotional depth across the three systems. ChatGPT retains a partial alignment with Carver’s minimalist symbolic economy through its reliance on embodied interaction and implicit meaning construction. Gemini shifts toward psychological transparency, increasing emotional explicitness while reducing symbolic ambiguity. Perplexity, however, significantly reduces symbolic depth by prioritizing direct emotional and interpretive articulation.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter compared three AI systems: ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI in their rewriting of Raymond Carver's *Cathedral*. The analysis focused on recurrent themes, narrative implicitness, and symbolic depth.

Results show that all models preserved the main themes (perception, blindness, communication, isolation, and transformation), but they differed in expression. ChatGPT was the closest to Carver's minimalist style, using implicit meaning and dialogue. Gemini kept the themes but made emotions more explicit. Perplexity AI used more explanation and direct narration, reducing ambiguity and symbolic depth.

Therefore, ChatGPT showed the highest level of literary subtlety, Gemini was moderately explicit, and Perplexity was the most descriptive and least implicit. This confirms that AI systems can reproduce themes, but they differ in maintaining minimalist literary style and interpretive depth.

Importantly, the comparison also indicates that these differences are not only stylistic but also affect how meaning is constructed for the reader. Systems that rely on implicitness, such as ChatGPT, encourage greater interpretive engagement, while more explicit systems like Gemini and Perplexity reduce the reader's inferential role by making meaning more direct and fixed.

Chapter Five

Comparative Analysis of Human and AI-Generated Narratives in Raymond's *Cathedral*

Chapter Five

Comparative Analysis of Human and AI-Generated Narratives in Raymond's *Cathedral*

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Narrative Logic and Structural Coherence

5.3 Thematic Construction and Levels of Explicitness

5.4 Character Interaction and the Construction of Meaning

5.5 Creativity and Authorship in Human and AI-Generated Texts

5.6 Posthuman Interpretation and Co-Creation

5.7 Conclusion

Chapter Five Comparative Analysis of Human and AI-Generated Narratives in Raymond's *Cathedral*

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comparative analysis of the human-authored narrative of *Cathedral* by Raymond Carver and the AI-generated narratives produced by ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI. Building on the analytical framework developed in Chapters Three and Four, the comparison focuses on narrative logic, thematic construction, character interaction, and the broader question of creativity and authorship.

Rather than treating artificial intelligence as a purely technical phenomenon, this chapter approaches it as a textual and interpretative problem. The central objective is to examine how meaning is constructed differently in human-authored and AI-generated texts, particularly in relation to narrative restraint, implicit meaning, and relational experience. In line with the posthumanist framework discussed in Chapter Two, especially the work of N. Katherine Hayles, the analysis considers whether meaning emerges through interaction and experience or through structural reproduction.

The chapter is organised into four analytical sections. It begins with a comparison of narrative logic and structural coherence, followed by an examination of thematic construction and levels of explicitness. It then analyses character interaction as a site of meaning production, and finally addresses the question of creativity and authorship in the context of AI-generated narratives, as well as posthuman interpretation and co-creation.

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5.2 Narrative Logic and Structural Coherence

Narrative logic refers to the internal organisation through which events, dialogue, and perceptual shifts generate meaningful progression, whereas structural coherence concerns the integration of these narrative elements into a unified and interpretable whole. Within this study, both concepts are employed to evaluate how meaning is constructed across human-authored and AI-generated narratives.

In Raymond Carver's *Cathedral*, narrative progression is not driven by dramatic action but by gradual experiential development. The story constructs meaning through ordinary interaction, conversational pauses, and subtle perceptual shifts. At the beginning of the narrative, the narrator's emotional distance is clearly expressed in the statement: "A blind man in my house was not something I looked forward to" (Carver, 1981). This initial discomfort establishes a restricted perceptual framework shaped by prejudice and emotional detachment. However, the narrative slowly destabilises this position through sustained interaction with Robert. By the final drawing scene, the narrator reaches a moment of perceptual transformation, admitting: "It was like nothing else in my life up to now" (Carver, 1981). The significance of this transformation lies precisely in its gradualness, since meaning emerges cumulatively through relational experience rather than through explicit psychological explanation.

This narrative structure reflects Hayles' (1999) concept of distributed cognition, according to which understanding emerges through interaction and shared processes rather than isolated consciousness. Likewise, Ferrando (2019) conceptualises subjectivity as relational, dynamic, and continuously produced through encounter. In *Cathedral*, perception is therefore reconstructed collaboratively through dialogue, shared attention, and embodied participation, particularly during the final drawing scene where communication moves beyond verbal language into experiential connection.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the three AI systems are capable of reproducing coherent narrative sequencing and recognisable structural patterns. Nevertheless, significant differences emerge in interpretive pacing, relational depth, and the gradual construction of meaning.

Among the generated texts, the ChatGPT version remains the closest to Carver's minimalist narrative logic because it preserves narrative restraint and progressive experiential unfolding. Meaning is not immediately clarified but develops through understated interaction and implicit dialogue. Exchanges such as "You wouldn't be interested" and "That's

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something” (ChatGPT, 2026) maintain ambiguity and encourage interpretive participation from the reader. Similarly, the drawing scene develops incrementally through fragmented descriptive movements: “We kept drawing. Page full. Turned it. New one. Whole thing now” (ChatGPT, 2026). The short sentences and controlled pacing reproduce the cumulative rhythm characteristic of minimalist fiction, allowing transformation to emerge gradually rather than appearing suddenly as a direct revelation.

By contrast, the Gemini-generated version maintains structural coherence while reducing narrative implicitness through stronger psychological exposition. The narrator explicitly states: “Everything I knew about them came from the movies” (Gemini, 2026), directly explaining his assumptions from the outset. Although this increases emotional clarity, it simultaneously limits interpretive openness because the reader is given immediate access to the narrator’s perspective instead of inferring it progressively through behaviour and interaction.

The Perplexity AI version represents the furthest departure from Carver’s narrative economy. Emotional responses are frequently stated directly through explicit declarations such as “I wasn’t thrilled about it” and “I didn’t like the idea of him in my house” (Perplexity AI, 2026). As a result, interpretation becomes simplified and compressed, reducing the subtle experiential accumulation that characterises *Cathedral*. The narrative remains structurally organised, yet its coherence functions primarily at a formal level rather than through gradual perceptual development.

The comparison ultimately demonstrates that AI systems can successfully reproduce formal narrative organisation and chronological coherence; however, they continue to struggle with the slower experiential logic characteristic of human-authored minimalist fiction. In *Cathedral*, meaning emerges through silence, restraint, relational interaction, and progressive perceptual destabilisation. AI-generated narratives, by contrast, tend to prioritise clarity and immediate intelligibility, thereby reducing the interpretive complexity produced by minimalist narrative restraint.

5.3 Thematic Construction and Levels of Explicitness

The comparative analysis between Raymond Carver’s *Cathedral* and the AI-generated versions produced by ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI reveals a fundamental distinction in how thematic meaning is constructed and how explicitness is managed across human and machine-authored texts. The findings demonstrate that while AI systems are capable of

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reproducing thematic structures, they diverge significantly from human minimalist writing in terms of implicitness, symbolic density, and interpretive openness.

In the human-authored text, thematic construction is primarily implicit and emergent. Themes such as isolation, perception, and transformation are not directly stated but unfold through interaction, silence, and narrative restraint. For example, the narrator's discomfort is not explicitly theorized but appears indirectly through statements such as "I wasn't enthusiastic about his visit" and "My idea of blindness came from the movies" (Carver, 1981). These expressions do not explain emotional states but instead allow them to surface through implication. Similarly, transformation is not declared but gradually constructed through embodied interaction, particularly in the final drawing scene where meaning emerges without explicit interpretation. This reflects a high degree of interpretive openness, where the reader actively participates in constructing thematic significance.

In contrast, AI-generated texts demonstrate varying degrees of thematic explicitness. ChatGPT remains the closest to the human model, as it preserves thematic subtlety through dialogue and restrained narration. For instance, emotional distance is conveyed indirectly through exchanges such as "He knows you don't like him" and "I don't know him" (ChatGPT, 2026), where tension is embedded in interaction rather than explicitly analyzed. Thematic meaning, particularly perception beyond sight, emerges through experiential dialogue rather than explanation, maintaining a relatively high level of implicitness similar to the human text.

Gemini, however, shifts toward moderate explicitness. While it retains the same thematic framework, it frequently verbalizes emotional and cognitive states directly. The narrator explicitly states discomfort, and transformation is articulated through phrases such as "I didn't feel like I was anywhere" (Gemini, 2026), which reduces interpretive ambiguity. The thematic meaning of blindness and perception is still present but becomes more psychologically transparent and less open to inference. This indicates a partial movement away from minimalist construction toward interpretive clarification.

Perplexity AI represents the most explicit thematic construction among the three systems. Themes are frequently stated rather than inferred, and emotional meaning is directly articulated through narration. For example, Robert's emotional history is explicitly described through statements such as "Her hand in his. Last words. 'Keep living,' she said" (Perplexity AI, 2026), which foregrounds emotional content rather than allowing it to emerge indirectly.

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Additionally, the narrative expands thematic meaning through explanatory episodes and extended contextualization, which further reduces ambiguity and symbolic compression. As a result, thematic interpretation becomes more fixed and less dependent on reader inference.

When compared to human writing, the key distinction lies in the distribution of meaning-making. Carver's text constructs themes through absence, restraint, and indirectness, requiring the reader to infer meaning from fragmented interaction. AI systems, by contrast, tend to increase semantic clarity, either moderately (ChatGPT), significantly (Gemini), or extensively (Perplexity). This shift reflects a gradient from implicit to explicit thematic construction.

A similar pattern emerges in levels of explicitness. Human writing operates through controlled ambiguity, where meaning is deliberately withheld or partially revealed. AI-generated texts progressively reduce this ambiguity. ChatGPT maintains a balance between implication and clarity, Gemini introduces psychological explanation that narrows interpretive space, and Perplexity fully externalizes meaning through direct narration. Consequently, the reader's interpretive role is strongest in the human text, moderate in ChatGPT, and increasingly reduced in Gemini and Perplexity.

From a theoretical perspective, this distinction can be understood through posthumanist notions of cognition and meaning-making. In human minimalist writing, meaning emerges through relational gaps, silence, and distributed interpretation. In AI-generated texts, meaning tends to be centralized within narrative statements, reflecting a shift toward computational clarity rather than aesthetic ambiguity. This confirms that while AI systems can replicate thematic content, they differ fundamentally from human writing in their handling of implicitness and symbolic openness.

In conclusion, the comparison demonstrates a clear continuum: human writing exhibits maximal thematic implicitness and symbolic depth, ChatGPT approximates this structure with moderate fidelity, Gemini moves toward explicit psychological articulation, and Perplexity prioritizes explanatory narration. This gradient highlights not only stylistic variation but also deeper differences in how meaning is constructed, distributed, and interpreted across human and artificial literary production.

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5.4 Character Interaction and the Construction of Meaning

The comparison between Raymond Carver's *Cathedral* and the AI-generated versions produced by ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI reveals that meaning in narrative is largely shaped through character interaction, yet the modes of interaction differ significantly between human and machine-generated texts. In Carver's original work, meaning is constructed through restrained dialogue, silence, and gradual relational development, where characters function as co-constructors of perception rather than carriers of explicit psychological exposition.

In the human text, interaction between characters is minimal but highly loaded with interpretive significance. The narrator's exchanges with Robert are often indirect and fragmented, allowing meaning to emerge through implication rather than explanation. For instance, simple conversational exchanges such as "I don't know him" (Carver, 1981) and Robert's presence in the domestic space do not explicitly define relationships but instead construct emotional distance through interactional tension. The collaborative drawing scene becomes the most significant moment of meaning construction, where interaction replaces explanation and shared action produces perceptual transformation.

In the ChatGPT-generated version, character interaction remains relatively close to the human model in terms of structure, relying on dialogue and situational exchange to generate meaning. However, an important deviation occurs in naming: Robert is consistently renamed "Samuel," which alters the intertextual continuity with Carver's original character system. Despite this change, interactional dynamics still function as the primary site of meaning production. For example, exchanges such as "He knows you don't like him" and "I don't know him" (ChatGPT, 2026) preserve relational tension and allow emotional meaning to emerge indirectly through dialogue. The drawing scene similarly maintains collaborative interaction as the central mechanism of transformation, where meaning is constructed through shared embodied activity rather than explicit narration.

Gemini, by contrast, maintains clearer and more psychologically explicit forms of interaction. Dialogue is still central, but it is frequently accompanied by direct emotional articulation, which reduces interpretive openness. For example, when the narrator states, "The idea of having one in my house made me uncomfortable" (Gemini, 2026), the emotional state is explicitly declared rather than inferred through interaction. Similarly, during the transformation scene, the narrator's reaction is directly expressed through "I didn't feel like I was anywhere," (Gemini, 2026), which replaces subtle relational inference with overt

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psychological description. As a result, interaction still constructs meaning, but it does so in a more cognitively pre-structured and emotionally transparent manner.

Perplexity AI extends interaction through expansion and narrative supplementation, introducing additional conversational contexts such as travel discussions, extended life stories, and philosophical reflections. While this increases the volume of interaction, it reduces its intensity and symbolic concentration. For instance, Robert's emotional past is explicitly narrated through statements such as "Her hand in his. Last words. 'Keep living,' she said" (Perplexity AI, 2026), where interaction becomes a vehicle for exposition rather than a site of emergent meaning. Consequently, character interaction shifts from implicit construction toward explicit storytelling.

A key distinction therefore lies in the degree of relational density. Human writing relies on minimal interaction to generate maximum interpretive effect, whereas AI systems tend to increase interactional clarity, either moderately or extensively, which reduces the inferential burden on the reader. ChatGPT occupies an intermediate position due to its preservation of dialogue-based ambiguity, though the change of the character name from Robert to Samuel introduces a subtle disruption in narrative continuity. Gemini reduces ambiguity by embedding emotional interpretation within interaction, while Perplexity transforms interaction into extended exposition.

From a theoretical perspective, this shift can be understood through posthumanist frameworks of distributed cognition. In the human text, meaning emerges through relational gaps and interactional incompleteness, requiring active reader participation. In AI-generated texts, meaning becomes progressively centralized within dialogue or narrative explanation, reducing the openness of interactional structures. This demonstrates that while AI systems successfully reproduce character interaction as a narrative mechanism, they differ fundamentally in how this interaction generates meaning.

Thus, the analysis shows a clear gradient in the construction of meaning through character interaction: Carver's human text relies on minimal and implicit interaction to generate interpretive depth, ChatGPT (with the notable substitution of Robert by Samuel) maintains a relatively close approximation through dialogue-based construction, Gemini increases psychological explicitness within interaction, and Perplexity expands interaction into explanatory narration. This progression highlights a shift from relational ambiguity toward interpretive closure across AI systems, contrasting sharply with the minimalist openness of human literary construction.

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5.5 Creativity and Authorship in Human and AI-Generated Texts

The comparison between human-authored and AI-generated narratives raises key questions concerning creativity and authorship. Rather than being treated as opposing categories, they are understood here as distinct modes of narrative production shaped by different conditions of meaning-making and textual generation.

In Raymond Carver's *Cathedral*, creativity emerges from lived experience, perceptual limitation, and relational engagement "A blind man in my house was not something I looked forward to" (Carver, 1981). Meaning is not directly articulated but constructed through narrative restraint, ambiguity, and interpretative openness. The narrative deliberately withholds explicit explanation, allowing meaning to emerge gradually through interaction, silence, and shared perception, particularly in the final drawing scene where understanding becomes embodied rather than verbal "It was like nothing else in my life up to now" (Carver, 1981).

By contrast, AI-generated narratives rely on computational processes of pattern recognition and probabilistic linguistic association. While they are capable of producing coherent and structurally organised texts, their creativity is primarily recombinatory rather than experiential. In this sense, they simulate narrative production without grounding it in lived perception or subjective awareness.

This distinction becomes evident through comparison of the three generated versions. The ChatGPT version remains the closest to Carver's minimalist logic, as it preserves indirect meaning and restrained dialogue. Exchanges such as "You wouldn't be interested" and "That's something" (ChatGPT, 2026) maintain ambiguity and allow interpretation to emerge through implication rather than explicit explanation. Similarly, the drawing scene is constructed through fragmented progression: "We kept drawing. Page full. Turned it. New one. Whole thing now" (ChatGPT, 2026), reflecting a gradual accumulation of meaning.

The Gemini version, however, introduces stronger psychological explicitness. The narrator directly states: "Everything I knew about them came from the movies" (Gemini, 2026), which reduces interpretive ambiguity by immediately revealing the source of perception instead of allowing it to unfold through narrative interaction.

The Perplexity AI version departs further from Carver's minimalist economy by relying on direct emotional articulation. Statements such as "I wasn't thrilled about it" and "I didn't like the idea of him in my house" (Perplexity AI, 2026) explicitly state emotional states rather than constructing them indirectly. In addition, it introduces narrative expansions not

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grounded in the original text, such as the baseball reference, which reflects a tendency toward probabilistic narrative supplementation rather than textual fidelity. This shift illustrates how AI systems may prioritise completion and coherence over minimalist restraint.

From this perspective, creativity should be understood as a continuum rather than a binary opposition. Human creativity in *Cathedral* is characterised by experiential density, perceptual ambiguity, and interpretative openness, whereas AI creativity is associated with linguistic fluency, structural organisation, and recombinatory expansion of learned patterns.

The question of authorship further complicates this distinction. In human narrative production, authorship is grounded in consciousness, perception, and intentional ambiguity. In *Cathedral*, authorial presence is expressed not only through what is written but also through what is withheld, creating space for readerly interpretation and co-construction of meaning. This aligns with Ferrando's understanding of subjectivity as relational and continuously produced through encounter, rather than fixed or self-contained.

Likewise, Hayles' concept of distributed cognition reinforces the idea that meaning emerges through interaction rather than isolated consciousness (Hayles, 1999). In *Cathedral*, this is embodied in the gradual transformation of perception through dialogue and shared activity, particularly in the final drawing scene.

In AI-generated texts, however, authorship becomes distributed across multiple layers: the human prompt, the computational architecture, and the generated output. This produces a form of procedural authorship in which meaning is assembled through system-driven operations rather than intentional experience. While this distribution destabilises the traditional notion of a single authorial consciousness, it does not eliminate the absence of lived perceptual grounding.

Moreover, the analysis demonstrates that AI systems can replicate the formal structures of creativity and authorship, but they remain dependent on recombination rather than experiential intentionality. In *Cathedral*, authorship is inseparable from perception and restraint, whereas in AI-generated narratives it becomes a functional process of textual production rather than a lived act of meaning creation.

5.6 Posthuman Interpretation and Human–AI Co-Creation

The findings of this chapter can be interpreted within a posthumanist framework, particularly in relation to distributed cognition (Hayles, 1999). Posthumanism challenges the notion of isolated authorship and instead reframes meaning-making as a relational and distributed process across human and technological systems. Within this perspective, textual

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production is no longer confined to a single autonomous subject but emerges through interaction between human agency and computational systems.

The comparative analysis of *Cathedral* and the AI-generated versions demonstrates that narrative production is structurally co-dependent on human input and machine-generated output. However, this relation remains asymmetrical. While AI systems such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity generate linguistically coherent sequences, their narrative behaviour is shaped by probabilistic patterning rather than experiential awareness. This is evident in the variation of interpretive depth across the generated texts: ChatGPT preserves ambiguity and minimalism “You wouldn’t be interested”; “That’s something” (ChatGPT, 2026), Gemini introduces explicit psychological framing “Everything I knew about them came from the movies” (Gemini, 2026), while Perplexity compresses emotional meaning into direct statements “I wasn’t thrilled about it” (Perplexity AI, 2026).

In contrast, Raymond Carver’s *Cathedral* constructs meaning through perceptual limitation, silence, and relational transformation. The narrator’s initial statement “A blind man in my house was not something I looked forward to” (Carver, 1981) establishes a restricted consciousness that is gradually destabilised through interaction. The final drawing scene marks a shift from verbal narration to embodied co-perception, where meaning is no longer explained but jointly produced.

From a posthumanist standpoint, Rosi Braidotti’s relational ontology is particularly relevant here, as it conceptualises subjectivity not as fixed identity but as a process of becoming through relations and encounters (Braidotti, 2013). In this sense, the transformation in *Cathedral* reflects a processual subjectivity shaped through interaction with the Other, whereas AI systems simulate relationality without undergoing experiential transformation.

Although AI-generated narratives can replicate structural progression, they do not reproduce the ontological depth of lived experience present in Carver’s text. Their coherence remains formal rather than experiential, as meaning is organised through syntactic and statistical relations rather than embodied perception.

Therefore, co-creation in this study should not be interpreted as equality between human and machine, but rather as a posthuman configuration of distributed agency. Following Hayles (1999), cognition is shared across systems; however, in line with Braidotti’s (2013) relational framework, subjectivity and interpretive depth remain grounded in embodied human experience. AI functions as a generative extension of textual production, but not as a site of becoming or lived perception.

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Consequently, posthuman co-creation does not erase authorship but reconfigures it as a layered system of distributed production, where meaning emerges through interaction but remains anchored in human experiential interpretation.

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5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the comparative dynamics between Raymond Carver's *Cathedral* and the AI-generated narratives produced by ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI, focusing on narrative logic, thematic construction, character interaction, creativity, authorship, and posthuman co-creation. Across all analytical dimensions, a consistent pattern emerges: while AI systems are capable of reproducing structural coherence, thematic continuity, and recognizable narrative progression, they diverge significantly from human minimalist writing in their handling of implicitness, experiential depth, and interpretive openness.

In terms of narrative organisation, Carver's text constructs meaning through gradual perceptual transformation, where events unfold through silence, dialogue, and restrained description rather than explicit explanation. This produces a layered narrative logic in which meaning is accumulated rather than immediately revealed. AI-generated texts, by contrast, tend to prioritize clarity and immediacy, often compressing interpretive development into direct psychological or emotional statements. ChatGPT maintains the closest approximation to minimalist structure, Gemini introduces moderate levels of explanation, and Perplexity shifts strongly toward overt narration and expanded exposition.

Similarly, thematic analysis confirms a clear gradient in explicitness. Human writing constructs themes indirectly through implication and relational tension, while AI systems progressively increase semantic transparency. This results in a reduction of symbolic ambiguity, particularly in Gemini and Perplexity, where emotional and perceptual states are frequently verbalized rather than inferred. ChatGPT remains comparatively closer to the human model, although it still operates within computational patterns of textual generation.

The analysis of character interaction further reinforces this distinction. In *Cathedral*, meaning is generated through minimal but dense interaction, where dialogue and silence function as co-constructive forces of perception. AI-generated versions preserve interaction as a narrative mechanism but alter its function: ChatGPT sustains dialogic ambiguity (despite substituting the name Robert with Samuel), Gemini embeds psychological interpretation within interaction, and Perplexity transforms dialogue into explanatory discourse. This progression reflects a shift from relational emergence toward narrative clarification.

From the perspective of creativity and authorship, the study demonstrates that human writing is grounded in experiential consciousness and deliberate narrative restraint, whereas AI-generated texts operate through recombinatory linguistic processes. Although they

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simulate creative output, they do not reproduce the perceptual or intentional dimension that characterizes human authorship. Instead, authorship in AI contexts becomes distributed across computational systems, user prompts, and probabilistic language modelling.

Within a posthumanist framework, these findings suggest that meaning-making is increasingly distributed across human and non-human agents. However, this distribution remains asymmetrical, as human writing retains experiential grounding and interpretive openness, while AI systems generate structurally coherent but ontologically limited narratives. In this sense, AI functions as a productive extension of textual generation rather than a fully equivalent creative consciousness.

Overall, the comparative analysis confirms that the transition from human to AI-generated narrative production is not a simple replacement of authorship but a reconfiguration of literary meaning. While AI systems successfully reproduce form, structure, and thematic consistency, they consistently reduce the depth of implicitness and experiential ambiguity that define minimalist literature. Consequently, *Cathedral* remains distinct in its ability to generate meaning through absence, restraint, and relational perception, whereas AI-generated texts increasingly prioritize explicitness, interpretive closure, and narrative transparency

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This dissertation examined the transformation of narrative meaning when literary production shifts from human authorship to generative artificial intelligence. Using Raymond Carver's *Cathedral* as the primary literary reference, and comparing it with AI-generated versions produced by ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI, the study explored whether artificial intelligence is capable of reproducing literary meaning in its full aesthetic and interpretive depth, or whether it mainly reproduces narrative form and surface-level coherence.

The theoretical framework of this research was grounded in posthumanist thought, particularly the works of Hayles (1999; 2012) and Ferrando (2019). These perspectives were essential in redefining authorship and cognition as distributed processes rather than isolated human acts. In particular, Hayles (2012) introduces the concept of technogenesis, which explains that human cognition and digital systems evolve together through continuous interaction. This means that AI-generated texts cannot be understood as fully autonomous creations, but rather as products of a shared cognitive environment shaped by human prompts, algorithmic structures, and linguistic probability systems. However, despite this co-evolution, embodied human experience remains fundamental for producing interpretive depth, emotional ambiguity, and symbolic richness.

The analysis of Raymond Carver's *Cathedral* demonstrated that narrative meaning is constructed through minimalism, restraint, and gradual perceptual transformation. Carver does not rely on explicit explanation or complex plot development; instead, meaning emerges through silence, fragmented dialogue, and subtle shifts in perception. The narrator's transformation is not directly stated but gradually constructed through interaction with Robert, especially in the final drawing scene where perception becomes shared and embodied. This confirms that in minimalist fiction, meaning is not fixed or explicitly delivered but emerges through absence, implication, and reader participation.

In contrast, the AI-generated texts revealed both similarities and fundamental differences in narrative construction. All three systems—ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI—successfully reproduced the general narrative framework of *Cathedral*, including character interaction, thematic direction, and structural coherence. However, the way meaning is produced varies significantly across the systems.

ChatGPT demonstrated the closest approximation to Carver's minimalist style. It preserved dialogue-based interaction, restrained narration, and indirect thematic development, allowing meaning to emerge through implication rather than explicit explanation. Gemini maintained structural coherence but introduced more psychological clarity and emotional directness, which reduced interpretive ambiguity and limited reader inference. Perplexity AI moved further toward explicit narration, expanding emotional and contextual explanation, which resulted in a more accessible but less symbolically dense narrative form.

Across Chapters Three, Four, and Five, a consistent pattern emerged. In terms of narrative logic and structural coherence, human writing constructs meaning through gradual experiential development, where silence, delay, and minimal action play a central role. AI-generated narratives, although coherent, tend to accelerate meaning by making emotional and cognitive states more explicit. This reduces the slow interpretive rhythm that characterises minimalist fiction.

In terms of thematic construction and levels of explicitness, Cathedral develops themes such as isolation, perception, blindness, and transformation indirectly. Meaning is not stated but emerges through interaction and narrative progression. In contrast, AI systems increasingly shift toward explicit thematic articulation. ChatGPT maintains relative subtlety, Gemini introduces clearer psychological framing, and Perplexity AI fully externalises thematic meaning through explanatory narration. This creates a clear continuum from implicit to explicit construction of meaning.

Regarding character interaction and meaning formation, Carver's text relies on minimal but highly significant dialogue, where meaning is generated through relational tension and silence. Interaction is not used to explain emotions but to reveal them indirectly. ChatGPT remains relatively close to this model, although the substitution of the character Robert with Samuel introduces a slight deviation in narrative continuity. Gemini embeds emotional interpretation within dialogue, reducing ambiguity, while Perplexity transforms interaction into extended exposition, weakening its symbolic and relational depth.

Moreover, the comparative analysis demonstrates that AI systems are highly effective in reproducing narrative structure, thematic coherence, and linguistic fluency. However, they differ fundamentally from human writing in their handling of ambiguity, symbolic depth, and gradual meaning construction. Human writing in Cathedral depends on what is left unsaid, on silence, restraint, and interpretive openness. AI-generated texts, by contrast, tend to prioritise clarity, explanation, and completeness, which reduces the reader's interpretive role.

Consequently, the study confirms that artificial intelligence can simulate literary storytelling but cannot fully replicate the experiential and aesthetic depth of human minimalist fiction. The distinction does not lie in narrative correctness, but in the mode through which meaning is constructed: human writing generates meaning through absence and implication, while AI systems generate meaning through explicit articulation and structural completion.

In conclusion, this dissertation demonstrates that literature is not merely a matter of narrative structure, but a complex process of meaning-making shaped by ambiguity, perception, and relational experience. While AI systems such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity AI show increasing ability to imitate literary form, they also reveal the limits of computational generation in reproducing the subtle emotional and symbolic layers that define human literary creativity. Literature, therefore, remains a space where human experiential depth and machine-generated structure intersect, but do not fully converge.

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Appendix

AI-Generated "*Cathedral*"

Appendix A: AI ChatGPT -Generated "*Cathedral*"

My wife said the blind man would be staying with us two nights.

She told me this on a Tuesday. I was at the table with the paper open in front of me. I was not reading it. I was looking at a picture of a man standing beside a burned-out car.

"He'll come Friday," she said.

I said, "Who?"

"You know who."

I turned the page.

"The blind man," she said.

I looked up.

"He has a name."

"Then use it."

"Samuel."

"All right," I said. "Samuel."

She stood by the sink with a cup in her hand. She had washed it already, but she was still holding it under the water. The water was running.

"He was my father's friend," she said. "Then he became mine."

"I know."

"You don't know."

"I know enough."

She turned off the water.

"He helped me after Dad died."

"How?"

“He listened.”

I folded the paper.

“That’s something.”

“It is.”

She put the cup in the rack. Then she wiped her hands on a towel and looked at me.

“I don’t want you to be strange with him.”

“I won’t be strange.”

“You get strange.”

“When?”

“When you don’t know what to do.”

“I know what to do. I say hello. I ask if he wants coffee. I don’t move the furniture.”

She did not smile.

“He isn’t a child,” she said.

“I didn’t say he was.”

“You don’t have to say things.”

That was the sort of thing she said when she had already decided what I meant.

Samuel had been blind for twenty years. My wife told me that once. He had been a teacher before that, then a counselor at a hospital. Now he lived alone two towns over. His wife had died in winter. Her name was Elise. My wife said Elise had a dry laugh and wore rings on nearly every finger. I had never met her.

My wife and Samuel talked on the phone every other Sunday. Sometimes she shut the bedroom door. Sometimes she didn’t. Her voice changed when she talked to him. It became lower. Slower. She did not speak that way to me.

I asked her once what they talked about.

“Things,” she said.

“What things?”

“Ordinary things.”

“That narrows it.”

She had looked at me then.

“You wouldn’t be interested.”

Maybe she was right.

On Friday she cleaned the house before lunch. She changed the sheets in the spare room. She put a chair near the bed and moved a box of old magazines out of the way. She made soup. She bought bread from the bakery and a bottle of wine.

“He won’t see any of this,” I said.

She was putting flowers in a jar.

“He’ll know.”

“How?”

“He’ll know.”

I went outside and smoked by the garage.

At five she drove to the station. I went with her. She had not asked me to, and I had not offered until she had her coat on.

“You don’t have to,” she said.

“I know.”

In the car she was quiet. She kept touching the steering wheel with her thumbs. The sky was low and gray. The radio was off.

At the station, Samuel stood near the bench with a small suitcase beside him. He held a folded cane in his hand. He wore dark glasses, a brown hat, and a long coat. He was thinner than I expected. I don’t know what I had expected.

My wife went to him.

“Sam,” she said.

He turned his face toward her voice.

“Clara,” he said.

They held each other. I stood beside the car and watched.

When she brought him over, she said, “This is David.”

I put out my hand. He put out his. We shook.

“Good to meet you,” he said.

“You too.”

His hand was warm. He held mine a second longer than most people do.

“Clara says you work with houses,” he said.

“Insurance,” I said. “Mostly damage claims.”

“So you see houses after something has happened.”

“I read reports.”

“That too.”

My wife picked up his suitcase, but he took it from her.

“I’ve got it,” he said.

“I know.”

At the house he stood in the entry and took off his hat. He held it against his chest.

“Same kind of house as your father’s,” he said.

“Almost,” my wife said.

“Hall on the right?”

“Left.”

“Then not the same.”

She laughed.

I took his coat. He unfolded his cane and moved it once across the floor.

“Kitchen ahead,” he said.

“Yes.”

“Soup.”

“Vegetable.”

“And bread.”

“Fresh.”

“And something sweet.”

“Apple cake,” she said.

“You always overdo things.”

“I do not.”

“You do.”

He smiled when he said it.

We ate early. Samuel sat across from me. My wife sat between us at the end of the table. She told him where things were. Plate, spoon, bread, butter, glass. He nodded once and began eating.

He did not spill anything. He did not ask for help. I noticed because I had expected both.

The soup was hot. We ate slowly.

Samuel asked about the town. My wife told him the theater had closed. He said it had smelled of dust and candy. She told him the hardware store had become a bank. He said that was a loss. She told him the old bridge was still closed.

“Still?” he said.

“Still.”

“What do people do?”

“Complain and drive around.”

“Same as always.”

He asked me how long I had lived here.

“Eight years.”

“Long enough to leave,” he said.

“I haven’t.”

“No.”

He ate a piece of bread.

“You from here?”

“No.”

“Where?”

“South.”

“That can mean a lot.”

“It does.”

My wife looked at me. I knew that look. She wanted me to say more.

I said, “A small place. Nothing there now.”

Samuel nodded.

“There is always something there,” he said.

I did not answer.

After dinner, my wife brought out the apple cake. She had made coffee too. Samuel held the cup in both hands before drinking.

“Strong,” he said.

“Too strong?” she asked.

“No. Strong is not too strong.”

My wife smiled.

After we ate, we sat in the living room. My wife sat on the couch with Samuel. I sat in the chair. The television was on with the sound low. A show about hospitals. People in white coats moving fast down hallways.

Samuel turned his head toward the sound.

“What are we watching?”

“Hospital show,” I said.

“Anyone dying?”

“Probably.”

“Anyone living?”

“Probably.”

“That covers it.”

My wife laughed. I did not.

She asked Samuel about his trip. He told her about the bus driver who forgot to announce the stop and then apologized three times. He told her about a boy behind him who kept opening a bag of chips and closing it. He told her about a woman with perfume like cut grass.

“You always notice smells,” my wife said.

“So does everyone. They pretend they don’t.”

“That isn’t true,” I said.

Samuel turned toward me.

“You don’t smell things?”

“I smell smoke. Gas. Food burning.”

“Danger and dinner.”

My wife laughed again.

I drank from my beer.

Samuel asked if I smoked.

“Sometimes.”

“That means yes.”

“That’s what everyone says.”

“Everyone is right sometimes.”

My wife looked down. She was still smiling, but less.

Later, she brought out an old photograph album. I thought this was a bad idea, but she opened it anyway.

“I don’t know why I’m showing you pictures,” she said.

“Because pictures are not only for eyes,” Samuel said.

She described them. Her father in a short-sleeved shirt beside a lake. Her mother holding a baby. My wife at seventeen, sitting on the hood of a car. Samuel listened.

“What was I wearing?” he asked.

“You aren’t in this one.”

“I was asking about you.”

“A white dress.”

“No.”

“No?”

“You hated white.”

She looked at the picture.

“It was pale blue,” she said. “You’re right.”

I looked at Samuel. His hands rested on his knees. His head was tilted slightly, as if he were hearing something far off.

“How did you know that?” I asked.

“She told me once,” he said.

“When?”

“Years ago.”

“You remember a dress from years ago?”

“I remember her saying she looked like a nurse and wanted to leave.”

My wife closed the album halfway.

“I did want to leave,” she said.

“Where did you want to go?” I asked.

She looked at me.

“Anywhere.”

It was quiet after that.

At ten, Samuel said he was tired. My wife showed him to the spare room. I heard her explaining the bed, the table, the lamp, the bathroom across the hall. I heard him thank her.

When she came back, she stood in the living room doorway.

“You were all right,” she said.

“That sounds generous.”

“It is.”

I turned off the television.

“He knows you don’t like him,” she said.

“I don’t know him.”

“That’s not the same.”

“I didn’t say I didn’t like him.”

“No.”

She went to the kitchen. I heard her washing cups.

The next morning, I woke before my wife. When I came into the kitchen, Samuel was already there. He sat at the table with a cup of coffee. I had not heard him get up.

“Morning,” he said.

“Morning.”

“Clara sleeping?”

“Yes.”

“Good.”

I poured coffee. The pot was almost empty.

“You made this?”

“I found things.”

“You found the coffee?”

“I found the smell first.”

I sat across from him.

There was a bowl beside him with one slice of toast in it. He had put butter on it. Not evenly, but well enough.

“You need anything?” I asked.

“No.”

We drank coffee.

The house was quiet. A truck passed outside. The refrigerator started and stopped.

Samuel said, “Do you read the paper?”

“Sometimes.”

“Would you read it?”

“To you?”

“Yes.”

I got the paper from the porch. It was folded tight and damp at the edge. I opened it and read the front page. A school budget. A fire in an apartment building. A missing dog found seven miles from home.

“Read the dog one,” Samuel said.

I read it. The dog’s name was Benny. He had crossed two highways. A girl cried when he came home. There was a photograph.

“What kind of dog?” Samuel asked.

“Medium.”

“That is not a kind.”

“Brown.”

“Also not a kind.”

“I don’t know dogs.”

“Describe him.”

“He has long ears. Short legs. Looks tired.”

“Good.”

“That’s good?”

“It is more than medium.”

I looked at the photograph again. The dog stood between the girl and an older man. Its tongue hung out.

“The girl is holding his collar,” I said. “The man has his hand on her shoulder. The dog is looking away.”

“Where?”

“Sideways. Like he wants to leave again.”

Samuel smiled.

“Maybe he does.”

I read more. He asked questions. Not many at first. Then more. What did the apartment building look like after the fire? How many windows? Were people standing outside? Did the mayor look sorry or only serious? What kind of coat was the woman in the advertisement wearing?

“I don’t know,” I said. “It’s just a coat.”

“Then say it is just a coat.”

“It is just a coat.”

“What color?”

“Black.”

“What kind of black?”

I put the paper down.

“There are kinds of black?”

“Yes.”

I looked at the coat.

“Shiny black.”

“Good.”

“Long.”

“Yes.”

“Too expensive.”

He laughed.

“That is a good description.”

My wife came in wearing a robe. Her hair was pulled back badly. She stopped when she saw us.

“You two are up,” she said.

“We read the paper,” Samuel said.

“He criticized my reading.”

“I improved it.”

She came over and kissed the top of his head. Then she looked at me.

“Coffee?”

“Almost gone,” I said.

“I’ll make more.”

After breakfast, my wife said she needed to go to the grocery store. Samuel said he would go with her. She said it was crowded on Saturdays.

“I know stores,” he said.

“You hate stores.”

“I hate bad music in stores. There is a difference.”

I said I would stay home. My wife asked if I was sure. I said I was.

They were gone over an hour. I watched television, then turned it off. I walked through the house. In the spare room, Samuel’s suitcase was open. A shirt folded over the chair. A small machine on the table. A talking clock, maybe. Beside it was a photograph in a frame. I picked it up.

A woman stood in front of a porch. She had one hand lifted against the sun. She was smiling but not much. There were rings on her fingers.

I put it back.

When they returned, my wife carried two bags. Samuel carried one.

“He knew where the onions were,” she said.

“They moved them,” Samuel said.

“He still knew.”

“I knew where they should have been.”

My wife was pleased. She put groceries away and told me about an old woman in the store who asked Samuel if he needed prayer.

“What did you say?” I asked.

“I said everyone does,” Samuel said.

“She didn’t know what to do with that,” my wife said.

“People ask questions they don’t want answered,” he said.

At lunch we had sandwiches. My wife talked more than usual. She told a story about work, about a patient who refused to remove his hat in the dental chair. Samuel asked what kind of hat. She said a hunting cap. He asked if the man hunted. She said no, he worked at the bank.

“That is another kind of hunting,” Samuel said.

My wife laughed. I smiled.

In the afternoon, she took a nap. Samuel and I sat outside on the back step. The air was cold. I smoked.

“Does it bother you?” I asked.

“What?”

“The smoke.”

“Yes.”

I held the cigarette away.

“But not enough to ask you to stop,” he said.

“You could.”

“I could.”

I put it out on the step and dropped it into a can.

“Clara says you don’t like your work,” Samuel said.

“She says a lot.”

“Does she?”

“To you, apparently.”

He turned his face toward the yard.

“She worries about you.”

“She worries about everything.”

“No.”

I waited.

“She worries about things that stay quiet,” he said.

I did not like that.

“You a counselor now?” I asked.

“No.”

“You sound like one.”

“That is not always my fault.”

I stood and went to the edge of the yard. There was nothing there but dead grass and a fence leaning a little.

“She talks to you more than she talks to me,” I said.

Samuel did not answer right away.

Then he said, “Maybe I ask different questions.”

“Maybe you don’t have to live with the answers.”

He nodded.

“That too.”

I turned around. He sat with his hands folded between his knees. His glasses reflected the pale sky.

“Do you miss seeing?” I asked.

It was a rude question. I knew that after I asked it.

Samuel did not seem offended.

“Sometimes.”

“What do you miss?”

“Driving at night.”

“That’s all?”

“No.”

“What else?”

He rubbed his thumb over the back of his hand.

“Elise reading in bed,” he said. “She moved her lips when the book was hard.”

I looked away.

“Faces?” I asked.

“Not as much.”

“That surprises me.”

“It surprises people.”

“Why not faces?”

“Because people think their faces tell the truth. They don’t always.”

“And voices do?”

“No.”

“What does?”

“Nothing alone.”

He leaned back against the door.

“You learn to take what you can. A voice. A pause. A hand on a table. A door closed harder than needed. A person standing across the yard because he does not know what to say.”

I said nothing.

He smiled a little.

“That was a guess,” he said.

“It was accurate.”

“Good.”

That evening, we had chicken and potatoes. My wife opened the wine. She seemed rested. Samuel told a story about his wife, Elise, trying to fix a sink with a butter knife. My wife laughed hard. I laughed too, because the way he told it was plain and the plainness made it funny.

“She flooded the bathroom,” he said.

“What did you do?” my wife asked.

“I stood in the hall and gave advice.”

“Useful advice?”

“No.”

“Did she listen?”

“No.”

“Smart woman,” I said.

Samuel pointed toward me.

“There,” he said. “He speaks.”

My wife looked at me and smiled.

After dinner, Samuel asked if my wife still kept her recorder. She said yes. He asked if she would play an old tape. She said she didn’t know where they were. But she did. She went to the hall closet and took down a box.

I did not want to sit there while they listened to old voices. But I stayed.

She put a tape in the recorder. It clicked, then hissed. Her younger voice came out.

“Sam, I don’t know if this thing is working. If it isn’t, you’ll get a blank tape and think I’ve become very mysterious.”

My wife covered her mouth.

Samuel smiled.

On the tape, she talked about her father’s funeral. She talked about the flowers. She talked about how she could not remember what anyone said to her, only their hands touching her arm. Then she stopped talking for a long time. The tape hissed.

My wife reached to turn it off.

“No,” Samuel said.

She left it.

Then her younger voice said, “I think everybody wants me to be better now. I don’t know how to do that.”

My wife turned it off.

No one spoke.

Samuel said, “You did become better.”

She shook her head.

“I became different.”

“That is better sometimes.”

She put the tape back in the box.

“I forgot I said that.”

“I didn’t,” Samuel said.

My wife stood.

“I’m going to wash up,” she said.

I watched her leave the room. She did not take the dishes.

Samuel sat still. The box of tapes was on the table between us.

“She was young,” he said.

“We all were.”

“Not all in the same way.”

I took the wine bottle and poured more into my glass.

“You ever send tapes?” I asked.

“Yes.”

“What did you say?”

“Ordinary things.”

“That word again.”

“Most things are ordinary until you lose them.”

I drank.

He said, “Elise used to say I made everything sound final.”

“Did you?”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Because I was afraid things would end before I understood them.”

The kitchen tap ran. A plate knocked against another plate.

“I don’t understand much,” I said.

Samuel turned toward me.

“That is a beginning.”

I laughed once.

“You really do sound like a counselor.”

“Yes,” he said. “I know.”

The next day was Sunday. Samuel would leave after supper. My wife made pancakes in the morning. She burned the first two. Samuel said burned pancakes were still pancakes. I said that was generous. He said it was practical.

After breakfast, my wife asked if we wanted to go to the park. I said it was cold. She said we could walk a little. Samuel said he would like that.

The park was near the river. There were few people there. A man threw a ball for a dog. Two children climbed on the metal bars. We walked slowly. Samuel used his cane. My wife walked on one side of him. I walked on the other.

At the river, we stopped.

“It’s high,” my wife said.

“Can you hear it?” Samuel asked me.

“Yes.”

“What does it sound like?”

“Water.”

He smiled.

I listened.

“It sounds heavy,” I said.

“Yes.”

“And close.”

“It is close.”

My wife looked at me but said nothing.

We sat on a bench. The bench was cold. My wife put her hands in her coat pockets.

Samuel asked us how we met. My wife told the story. I had heard her tell it before, but not this way. She said I was standing outside a party smoking in the rain. She said I looked like I had been asked to guard the house. I said she had come outside to tell me smoking was stupid. She said I had offered her one. Samuel laughed.

“Romance,” he said.

“It was not romantic,” my wife said.

“No,” I said.

But it had been, a little.

On the way back, my wife held Samuel’s arm. I walked behind them. I watched their steps. His were measured. Hers adjusted to his without thinking. Once he slowed before a crack in the path. She had not warned him.

“How did you know?” I asked.

“Sound changed,” he said.

“What sound?”

“My cane. Your shoes. Her shoes. The path.”

I looked at the crack. It was small.

At home, my wife went to lie down again. She said the cold had given her a headache. Samuel said he was sorry. She said not to be.

I made coffee. Samuel sat in the living room. The television was on. A church service had just ended, and a program about old buildings came on after it. I was about to change the channel.

“Leave it,” Samuel said.

“You like buildings?”

“Yes.”

The program showed cathedrals. The host stood outside one and spoke about stone, labor, faith, and time. I watched because Samuel seemed to be watching in his way.

“What is it now?” he asked.

“A cathedral.”

“What kind?”

“Old.”

“That helps no one.”

“Stone. Two towers. Big front door. A round window.”

“Rose window.”

“Yes. That.”

“Pointed arches?”

I looked.

“Yes.”

“Tall?”

“Very.”

“What else?”

“Statues over the door. People carved in stone. Some missing heads.”

“Weather and men,” Samuel said.

“What?”

“They both take heads.”

The camera moved inside. The ceiling rose high over rows of benches. Light came through colored glass.

“Inside now,” I said.

“Tell me.”

“It’s high. Long. There are columns. The ceiling has lines crossing each other. The windows are high too. Colored.”

“What colors?”

“Blue. Red. Gold maybe. I can’t tell.”

“Where does the light fall?”

“On the floor. On the seats. Some on the wall.”

“Is it empty?”

“Mostly. A few people.”

“What are they doing?”

“Looking up.”

Samuel nodded.

“People look up in cathedrals,” he said.

“That’s what they’re for?”

“Partly.”

The program showed a drawing of the cathedral from above.

“It looks like a cross from the top,” I said.

“Yes.”

“You knew that.”

“I know some things.”

I leaned back.

“I don’t know how to describe it.”

“You are describing it.”

“Badly.”

“Badly is better than not at all.”

The host on the television talked about buttresses. The picture changed to the outside wall. Great stone arms leaned from the building to the ground.

“Those things,” I said. “The supports.”

“Flying buttresses.”

“Right.”

“They hold the wall by standing away from it,” Samuel said.

I looked at him.

“That sounds like a trick.”

“It is a kind of trick.”

The program went to a commercial. A truck. Toothpaste. A woman smiling into a mirror.

Samuel said, “Draw it.”

“What?”

“The cathedral.”

“I can’t draw.”

“That is not important.”

“It is if you want a drawing.”

“I want to know what you think it is.”

I looked toward the bedroom. The door was closed.

“Clara has paper in the desk,” Samuel said.

“You know everything in this house?”

“No. Only what she told me.”

I got paper and a pencil. I put them on the coffee table. Samuel moved to the floor slowly and sat with his back against the couch.

“You don’t have to get down,” I said.

“I want to be near the table.”

I sat beside him. My knees cracked.

“This is foolish,” I said.

“Yes.”

I drew a rectangle.

“That’s the front,” I said.

“Good.”

I drew two towers.

“Two towers,” I said. “One on each side.”

“Are they plain?”

“Not now.”

I added lines. Little windows. Points at the top.

“There’s a big door,” I said.

“Open?”

“Closed.”

“Why?”

I looked at the door I had drawn.

“I don’t know.”

“Make it open.”

I drew the door open. It looked worse.

“Now the round window,” he said.

I drew a circle above the door and spokes inside it.

“Rose window.”

“Yes.”

“Arches?”

I drew arches over the smaller windows.

“Buttresses?”

I drew supports on the sides. They looked like bent sticks.

“These are bad,” I said.

“They may still work.”

I kept drawing. Stone lines. Steps. A cross. More windows. The building became crowded with marks.

Samuel leaned closer.

“May I put my hand on yours?”

I hesitated.

“All right.”

His hand came over mine. It was large and dry. He did not guide me at first. He only rested there.

“Draw the height,” he said.

“How do you draw height?”

“Try.”

I made the towers taller. The pencil went up and up until it nearly left the paper.

“Good,” he said.

“You don’t know.”

“I know your hand changed.”

I drew more lines upward. Then lines inside the door. Then more windows. The paper shifted. Samuel held it with his other hand.

“Close your eyes,” he said.

“No.”

“Try.”

I looked at him. His dark glasses faced the paper.

“It won’t help.”

“Then it won’t hurt.”

I closed my eyes.

At first I saw the inside of my eyelids. A dull red-black. I heard the television. The commercial had ended. The host was speaking again. I heard the refrigerator start in the kitchen. I heard Samuel’s breathing. I heard the pencil on paper.

“Keep drawing,” he said.

“I am.”

“What now?”

“The inside.”

“Can you see it?”

“No.”

“Draw it anyway.”

I drew. My hand moved under his. Or his moved with mine. It was hard to tell. I drew columns. I drew windows where there could not be windows. I drew the roof through the walls. I drew lines that crossed and crossed again.

“What is there?” he asked.

“Light.”

“Where?”

“High up.”

“Then put it there.”

I shaded near the top. The pencil made a rough sound.

“What else?”

“People.”

“Where?”

“Small. Near the door.”

“Are they going in or out?”

I kept my eyes closed.

“I don’t know.”

“That is fine.”

I drew small marks near the open door. I drew steps under them. I drew more lines around the building, like supports, like arms, like something holding something else from a distance.

My wife came into the room. I heard the door open. I did not open my eyes.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

“Drawing a cathedral,” Samuel said.

“Both of you?”

“Yes.”

No one said anything for a moment.

Then she said, “David?”

I kept the pencil moving.

“I’m still drawing,” I said.

Samuel’s hand stayed over mine.

The room felt quiet, though the television was still on. I could hear my wife standing there. I could hear her shift her weight. I could hear Samuel beside me. I could hear the pencil making lines I could not see.

I thought of the first night, the way I had stood beside the car and watched him hold my wife. I thought of the tapes in the box. I thought of Elise with rings on her fingers. I thought of houses after fires and floods, and people trying to explain what had happened. I thought of doors closed and doors open. I thought of walls held up from the outside.

“Done?” Samuel asked.

I stopped.

“You can open your eyes,” he said.

I did not open them at first.

“Well?” he said.

“It’s there,” I said.

“What is?”

“The cathedral.”

My wife did not speak.

Samuel lifted his hand from mine.

I opened my eyes.

The drawing was not good. The towers leaned. The door was too large. The windows were everywhere. The buttresses ran into the steps. The people near the door looked like scratches.

But it was more than I thought I could make.

My wife sat on the couch behind us. She looked at the paper, then at me.

“It’s something,” she said.

“Yes,” Samuel said.

I put the pencil down.

The television showed another cathedral now, somewhere else. Another stone building, another high roof, another door.

No one reached for the remote.

Appendix B: AI Gemini Generated "*Cathedral*"

My wife had a friend who was blind. He was coming to spend the night with us. His wife had recently died, and he was taking a train up the coast to visit her relatives. Our house was on the way back, so he was stopping over. I wasn't thrilled about it. I didn't know the man. I had never met a blind person in my life. Everything I knew about them came from the movies. In the movies, they moved slowly and never laughed. They wore dark glasses and carried white canes. The idea of having one in my house made me uncomfortable.

She used to work for him, years ago, before we were married. She answered an ad in the paper. She went to his office, and her job was to read to him. Case studies, reports, memos. She organized his files. When she moved away to another state, they kept in touch. They didn't write letters. Instead, they sent audio tapes back and forth. She would go into our spare room, close the door, and talk into a small plastic cassette recorder for an hour or two. Then she'd put the tape in a padded envelope and drop it in the mail. A week later, one would come back.

I never listened to them. She offered once. She held out the recorder, her finger hovering over the play button.

"You should hear this," she said. "He's a fascinating man."

"I'm alright," I said. "I don't want to eavesdrop."

"It's not eavesdropping if I'm asking you to listen," she said.

"Still," I said. "It feels strange."

She pressed play anyway. I heard a man's voice. It was deep and a little scratchy. He was talking about a dream he'd had. I held up my hand and told her to turn it off. I told her I didn't care about another man's dreams. She looked disappointed, but she clicked it off and took the tape back to the spare room.

Now his wife was dead, and he was sleeping in that same room.

"Just be pleasant," my wife told me. She was standing at the kitchen counter, aggressively chopping an onion. "He's grieving. He's my friend."

"I'm always pleasant," I said. "I just don't know what we're supposed to talk about."

"You talk to him," she said, scraping the onions into a pan. "Like a regular human being. Ask him about his trip. Ask him if he wants a drink. Offer him a drink."

"I can do that," I said.

I went to the refrigerator and got myself a beer.

He arrived in a taxi around six in the evening. I was standing by the front window, looking out through the blinds. The taxi pulled into the driveway. The driver got out and opened the back door. The blind man stood up. He was a large man, broad-shouldered, wearing a brown corduroy suit. He had a full beard. That surprised me. I didn't think a blind man would bother to grow a beard, or know how to maintain it. He wasn't wearing dark glasses, either. His eyes were open, but they didn't focus on anything.

My wife ran out the front door. She went right up to him and hugged him. He wrapped his large arms around her. Then she took his arm, placing his hand just above her elbow, and guided him toward the porch.

I walked over to the front door and opened it.

"Robert, this is my husband," she said.

He let go of her arm and held out his hand. He didn't look at me, exactly, but he aimed his face in the general direction of my voice. I took his hand. His grip was firm.

"Good to finally meet you," he said.

"Welcome," I said. "Come on in."

He stepped over the threshold. "It's a nice place," he said.

I looked at my wife. She smiled and raised her eyebrows.

"Thanks," I said. "Can I get you something to drink? I was about to pour some scotch."

"Scotch sounds perfect," Robert said. "Just a splash of water, if you have it."

We moved into the living room. My wife sat him down on the armchair by the television. I went into the kitchen and made the drinks. I made them strong. I brought them out and handed him his glass. He found it easily. He reached out, his fingers brushing the rim, and took it from me without spilling a drop.

"Cheers," he said, raising the glass.

We drank. My wife sat on the sofa. I sat on the other end of the sofa. The silence settled into the room.

"How was the train?" my wife asked.

"Fine," Robert said. "I like the train. You can feel the country changing underneath you. The rhythm shifts when you go over bridges, or when the track curves."

"I haven't been on a train in years," I said.

"You should try it," he said. "It gives you time to think."

I didn't say anything to that. I took another pull of my scotch.

At dinner, we ate roast beef, green beans, and scalloped potatoes. I watched him eat. I couldn't help it. It was fascinating, in a strange way. He found his fork beside his plate. He used his left hand to locate the edges of the plate, to figure out where the meat was, where the potatoes were. He didn't use a knife. He just pushed the food onto his fork with his fingers. He didn't miss his mouth once. He ate quickly, enthusiastically. We all did. There wasn't much conversation at the table, just the sound of silverware scraping against china and the chewing of food.

"This is wonderful," Robert said, wiping his mouth with a napkin. "I haven't had a home-cooked meal like this in a long time."

"I'm glad you like it," my wife said.

After dinner, we had coffee and a heavy, sweet cherry pie. Then we poured more scotch and moved back into the living room.

My wife talked about her new job at the school district. She talked about the weather we'd been having, and the weather he'd had on the coast. Robert nodded, smiled, and occasionally offered a short comment. His eyes were milky white, fixed on a spot somewhere above the lamp on the side table. I sat there and drank. I was on my third scotch. I felt loose, but still tired.

Around ten o'clock, my wife yawned loudly.

"I'm exhausted," she said, rubbing her face.

"It's been a long day," Robert agreed.

"I think I'm going to close my eyes for just a minute," she said. She pulled her legs up onto the sofa and tucked a throw pillow under her head. "You boys keep talking."

Within five minutes, she was asleep. I could hear her breathing evenly.

I looked at Robert. He was sitting up straight in the armchair, his empty glass resting on his knee.

"She's asleep," I said.

"I thought she might be," he said.

I stood up. "Can I get you another drink?"

"I think I've had enough," he said. "But don't let me stop you."

I went to the kitchen and poured myself another two fingers of scotch. When I came back, the silence in the living room felt heavier. I didn't want to sit there and just look at him. I reached for the remote control.

"Do you mind if I turn on the television?" I asked.

"Not at all," he said. "I listen to the television quite a bit."

I turned it on and kept the volume low. I flipped through the channels. There was a rerun of a cop show, a local news broadcast, and a documentary on the public broadcasting station. I left it on the documentary. The announcer had a calm, British voice. He was talking about history. The screen showed a flat, green landscape in Europe somewhere.

We sat there for a while. The British man talked about the Middle Ages.

"What are they showing?" Robert asked.

"Just a field," I said. "Some grass. Looks like England or France."

"Ah," he said.

The scene changed. The camera panned up the side of a massive stone structure. There were men walking around the base of it, looking very small.

"Now they're showing a building," I said. "A church. Wait, the guy says it's a cathedral."

"Cathedrals," Robert said. He leaned back in his chair. "Those are something. They took generations to build. A man could work his whole life carrying stones and never see the finished product."

"That's exactly what the guy on TV is saying," I told him.

The camera moved inside the cathedral. It showed high, arched ceilings and rows of wooden pews. It showed light filtering down through colored glass.

"Do you have any idea what a cathedral looks like?" I asked. The question just came out. I didn't think about it before I said it.

Robert tilted his head toward me. "I know they're large," he said. "I know they have high ceilings and heavy doors. But to be honest, no. I don't really have a clear picture. Why? Could you describe one for me?"

I looked at the television. The screen was filled with intricate stonework. Gargoyles jutting out from the corners. Flying buttresses holding up the walls.

"They're big," I started. "Massive. They're made of stone. They go up, way up into the sky."

"Up," Robert repeated.

"Yeah. And they have these supports on the outside. Like ribs. They hold the walls up. And the windows are huge, made of colored glass."

I stopped. It sounded terrible. I wasn't doing it justice. I'm not a religious man. I haven't been to church since I was a kid. I didn't have the vocabulary for it.

"I'm not doing a very good job," I said. "I can't really explain it."

"That's alright," Robert said. He smiled. He reached his hand out toward the coffee table. "Do you have any heavy paper? And a pen?"

"Paper?"

"Yes," he said. "Let's draw one. Together."

I stared at him. "I can't draw," I said.

"Sure you can," he said. "Go find some paper."

I stood up. I felt a little drunk, but mostly I just felt confused. I went into the hallway where we kept a desk for bills and mail. I opened the bottom drawer and found some thick cardstock. I grabbed a black felt-tip pen from a mug. I walked back into the living room.

My wife shifted on the couch but didn't wake up.

"I've got it," I said.

"Good," Robert said. He slid out of the armchair and knelt on the rug next to the coffee table.

"Bring it here."

I sat on the floor beside him. I put the paper down on the glass surface of the table.

"Now," he said. "Take the pen."

I picked up the pen.

He reached out and found my wrist. He moved his hand down until his fingers covered my fingers. His hand was warm and surprisingly heavy.

"Go ahead," he said. "Draw."

I touched the pen to the paper. I felt ridiculous. If my wife woke up and saw us kneeling on the floor, a blind man holding my hand, she'd think we'd both gone crazy. But I started drawing.

I drew a square base. I drew a set of large, heavy doors.

"Good," Robert said. "Keep going."

I drew the walls going up. His hand moved with mine, pressing down slightly when I pressed down. I drew the arched windows. I drew a steep, pointed roof.

"Put in the supports," he said. "The ribs."

I drew lines coming off the sides of the building, curving down to the ground.

"I'm drawing the buttresses," I said.

"I feel them," he said.

We kept drawing. We drew the towers. We drew the small, jagged edges of the stonework. I found myself focusing entirely on the point where the ink met the paper. The room was perfectly silent except for the low hum of the television and the scratching of the pen. I forgot

about the scotch. I forgot about my wife sleeping a few feet away. There was only the weight of his hand and the movement of the pen.

"Close your eyes," Robert said softly.

I stopped. "What?"

"Close your eyes," he repeated. "Keep drawing."

I looked at his face. His milky eyes were still fixed on nothing, but his expression was completely serious.

I closed my eyes.

"Now," he said. "Just move."

I moved the pen. I didn't know where it was on the paper anymore. I was just making lines, sweeping arcs across the dark. I wasn't guiding the pen anymore. His hand was leading mine, or my hand was leading his. I couldn't tell the difference. We were just moving together in the dark.

"That's it," he murmured. "I can see it."

I kept my eyes closed. The floor felt solid under my knees. The house felt quiet. I didn't feel like I was inside my living room anymore. I didn't feel like I was anywhere.

"You can open them," Robert said. His hand lifted off mine.

I kept my eyes closed for another long moment. I felt the darkness pressing against my eyelids. It wasn't an empty darkness.

"How does it look?" he asked.

I opened my eyes. The heavy paper was covered in thick black lines. They crossed over each other, overlapping, spiraling toward the edges. It didn't look like a cathedral. It didn't look like anything recognizable. It looked like chaos.

"It's really something," I said.

I stayed on the floor, looking down at the paper. I didn't want to get up just yet.

Appendix C: AI Perplexity Generated "*Cathedral*"

My wife had this blind man coming to visit. His name was Robert. She said he was an old friend from years back, before we met. They'd kept in touch through tapes. She'd read him stories and poems, stuff like that. He'd send tapes back, talking about his life, his wife dying, his travels. Now he was flying in from the West Coast for a night. My wife was excited. I wasn't.

She said he'd lost his wife a couple years ago. Cancer. He'd been married forty-five years. No kids. She said he was flying alone, no wife anymore. I pictured him on the plane, hands on the armrests, head back, listening to the engines. I wondered what he saw in his head. Nothing, probably. I didn't like the idea of him in my house.

We made the guest room ready. Clean sheets, fresh towels. My wife vacuumed the carpet, dusted the blinds. She put out a new bar of soap. I watched her fuss. "Why all this?" I said. She didn't look up. "He's coming a long way," she said.

That night, I sat in the living room with the TV on low. News was over. Some show about wildlife in Africa. Elephants walking across a plain. My wife paced. "The plane's late," she said. She checked the clock. I poured scotch. "Relax," I said. She sat down, then stood up again.

The doorbell rang around eleven. She jumped up, smoothed her skirt, went to answer. I stayed put. Heard voices in the hall. Low talking. Then they came in. She had her arm through his. He was tall, wore a beard, dark glasses. Suit and tie. Cane in one hand. She introduced us. "This is my husband," she said. He put out his hand. I shook it. His grip was firm.

"Robert," he said. "Pleased to meet you."

We stood there. My wife said, "Let me get you a drink." He said he'd like that. Bourbon, if we had it. We did. I fixed it. Ice clinked. She led him to the sofa. He sat, cane across his knees. I handed him the glass. "Thanks," he said. He lifted it, sipped.

My wife sat next to him. They talked. How was the flight? Rough, he said. Turbulence over the Rockies. Did he mind flying alone? Not at all. Stewardesses helped. One read him the safety card. They laughed. I stood by the TV, glass in hand. Watched the animals on screen. Lions now, circling something.

"You watch a lot of TV?" he said to me.

I shrugged. "Sometimes."

He nodded. "My wife and I used to watch the late show. Couldn't sleep some nights."

My wife said, "Tell him about your trip to the Holy Land."

He set his glass down. "Last year. Group tour. Touched everything. Wailing Wall. Felt the stones. Old, rough. People praying around me."

I said, "What'd it feel like?"

"Real," he said. "Solid."

She poured him more bourbon. They talked about tapes. What she'd sent last. A novel. He said he listened to it twice. "Good reader," he said, nodding at her. She smiled.

I changed channels. Baseball. Bottom of the ninth. Bases loaded. Pitcher wound up. I turned the volume up a notch. Robert tilted his head. "Ball game?" he said.

"Yeah," I said. "Close one."

He listened. Crowd noise swelled. Batter swung. Strike three. I said, "Over."

We sat quiet after that. My wife yawned. "I'm beat," she said. "You two okay?"

"Fine," Robert said.

She kissed his cheek, then mine. Went to bed.

He and I stayed up. I offered more bourbon. He took it. We talked some. His wife. How they met. High school. She saw for both of them first years. Then she got sick. Slow. He described her voice fading. Tapes of her singing after. I listened. Didn't say much.

TV flickered. Old movie now. Black and white. Ship sinking. People in lifeboats. He asked what was on. I described it. Captain going down with the ship. "Titanic?" he said.

"No. Some other one."

He nodded. "I saw that one. With my wife. Theater. She described the screen."

I wondered how that worked. Her talking through a movie. Him beside her, listening.

Smoke curled from my cigarette. He smelled it. "Mind if I have one?"

I gave him the pack, lighter. His fingers found it quick. Lit up. Inhaled deep.

We sat like that awhile. TV droned. Ads for cars, beer. I glanced at him. Glasses still on. Beard trimmed neat. Hands steady.

"You ever been drunk?" I said.

He laughed. Short. "More than once."

"Me too."

Quiet again. I stubbed my cigarette. He did too. I said, "Hungry? There's some food."

He said sure. I went to the kitchen. Leftover roast, bread, cheese. Put it on a tray. Brought it back. He ate slow, feeling for pieces. "Good," he said.

We ate in front of the TV. Talked about food. What he liked. Steak rare. Potatoes mashed. No fancy stuff. I told him about a restaurant downtown. Steaks big as plates. He said he'd try it

sometime.

Wife came out once, robe on. Hair mussed. “You two still up?” She poured water, went back. Midnight passed. Movie ended. News again. Weather. Rain coming. I turned it off. Room went dark except lamp. He sat back. “Tired?” I said.

“A little.”

I showed him the guest room. Bathroom next door. Extra blankets in closet. He thanked me. Shook hands again. Firmer this time. I went to bed.

Slept hard. Dreamed of planes, blindfolds. Woke early. Coffee on. Wife still asleep. Robert up already. In the kitchen, feeling the counter. “Morning,” I said.

“Morning.” He smiled. Found a chair.

I poured coffee. Black for him. We sat. Quiet at first. Birds outside. Then he said, “Your wife make good coffee.”

“Yeah.”

Talked about the day. She had work. I was off. Maybe drive him around. Show the town. He said that’d be good. Never been here.

She came down. Kissed him good morning. Fixed eggs. We ate. Simple talk. Weather, traffic. She left for work. Hugged him long. “See you tonight.”

Door shut. Just us. I washed dishes. He listened to radio. News, farm reports. I dried hands. “Ready to go?”

“Sure.”

Helped him to the car. Cane tapping. Folded it in back. Seatbelt. Drove slow. Town first. Bank, post office. Stopped at a light. “What’s that sound?” he said.

“Traffic.”

Described it. Cars waiting, horns light. Light changed. Moved on.

Parked downtown. Walked him to a bench. Park nearby. Ducks in pond. People feeding them. He listened to quacks, splashes. “Describe it,” he said.

“Ducks swimming. Gray, some white. Kids throwing bread.”

He nodded. Sat quiet. Wind on water. Leaves rustling.

We walked more. Cafe. Coffee again. Pastry. He broke it, ate careful. Talked about his life. Taught history once. High school. Kids asking about blindness. “What do you see?” he’d say. “Everything.”

I laughed. First time.

Drove to the river. Bridge over it. Parked. Walked to rail. Water rushing below. He leaned, felt the vibration. “Fast,” he said.

“Yeah. After rain.”

Stood there long. Trucks rumbling past. Seagulls calling. He turned his face to it. I watched. Back home. Lunch. Sandwiches. Beer. Sat on porch. Neighbor mowing. Smell of grass. He inhaled. “Summer coming.”

Talked about jobs. Mine, insurance office. Dull. His, now tapes, visits. Friends like my wife. “Keeps me going,” he said.

Afternoon slow. Radio on. Baseball again. Sat listening. He asked scores, plays. I filled in. Inning by inning.

Wife called. Home late. Dinner out? Sure.

Picked a place. Steakhouse. Booth in back. Waiter helped him menu. Read specials slow. We ordered. Sirloins, baked potatoes.

Food came. He cut careful, ate. Talked over it. Trip stories. Egypt once. Pyramids. Climbed inside. Dark, echoing. Guides touching stones. “Felt the age,” he said.

I nodded. Ate my steak.

After, pie. Coffee. Bill. Walked out slow. Night air cool.

Home. TV on. Wife tired. Yawned through news. Bed early.

Robert and I stayed up again. Bourbon this time. Same couch. Talked deeper. His wife dying. Hospital smells, beeps. Her hand in his. Last words. “Keep living,” she said.

I said nothing. Poured more.

TV to documentaries. Old cathedral show. St. something. In France. Arches, stained glass. Narrator droning history. Built over centuries. Kings, plagues.

“What’s on?” he said.

“Cathedral. Big church. Tall spires.”

He leaned forward. “Tell me.”

I did. Outside, stone towers. Flying buttresses holding walls. Inside, nave long, columns rising. Windows with colors. Light through them, reds, blues.

“More,” he said.

Altar gold. Statues of saints. People kneeling. Organ playing low.

He sat back. Fingers tapping glass. “Never seen one. Seen with fingers, maybe. Models.”

Quiet. TV went to commercials. Cars speeding. I muted it.

“You believe in anything?” he said.

I shrugged. “Not really.”

He nodded. “Me neither. Used to. Not now.”

Talked about that. Churches he visited. Services. Voices rising. Incense thick. “Felt it,” he

said. "Even blind."

I lit a cigarette. Offered one. He took it.

Wife came out once. Water. "Don't stay up all night."

We didn't laugh.

Back to TV. Cathedral show returned. Close-ups now. Rose window, huge circle. Patterns like wheels.

"Draw one," he said sudden. "For me. Like you're seeing it."

I got paper, pen from kitchen. Sat down. "Okay."

"What's it look like?" He meant the cathedral.

I tried. "Tall. Pointy at top. Windows all sides."

"Draw the front."

Pen on paper. Line across bottom. Two towers up. Slanted roofs. Door in middle, arched.

He listened to the pen scratch. "Good?"

"Yeah."

"Add windows."

Dots and rectangles. Crosses on top.

"Now the inside. What do you see?"

Turned page. Long rectangle. Columns like trees. Arches curving.

"Roof high?"

"Yeah." Lines up, ribs crossing.

He reached over. Fingers on paper. Traced lines slow. "Here," he said. "Door?"

I drew it bigger.

Quiet. Pen scratching filled room. His fingers followed.

"More detail," he said.

Drew pews, lines of seats. Altar far end, steps up. Candles.

He nodded. "Light?"

Shaded windows. Colors with scribbles—red, blue.

His hand over mine now. Guided a line. "Higher arch."

I did.

We kept going. Page full. Turned it. New one. Whole thing now. Spires piercing sky. Bells imagined in towers.

"Put us in it," he said.

Stick figures. One with glasses, beard. Me next, cigarette.

He laughed. Touched them.

Silence after. Pen down. His hand stayed on paper. Mine too.

Eyes closed. Not his. Mine. Picture stayed. Lines, shapes. Not dark. Full.

He said nothing. I said nothing.

Morning came later.

Appendix D: Prompt Used for Generation

Write a minimalist short story in the style of Cathedral. The story should be narrated from a skeptical and emotionally detached point of view. The narrator meets a blind visitor and gradually develops a deeper understanding through their interactions. Maintain Raymond Carver's minimalist narrative style by using sparse language, restrained description, and natural, concise dialogue with underlying emotional tension.

The narrative should unfold progressively and organically, allowing scenes, conversations, and character interactions to develop in detail rather than being condensed into a short summary. Avoid overly descriptive passages of landscape or physical appearance, but provide enough narrative development to create psychological depth and thematic complexity. The relationship between the narrator and the blind visitor should evolve gradually across multiple scenes and interactions.

The story should culminate in a quiet moment of insight through the act of drawing a cathedral together. Blindness should not be represented as a lack of understanding, but rather as an alternative mode of perception and insight. Meaning should emerge implicitly through dialogue, gesture, silence, and interaction rather than through explicit explanation or moralization.

The generated text should approximate the narrative length and structural development of Cathedral, producing a fully developed short story of substantial length (approximately 10–14 pages, depending on formatting) suitable for comparative literary analysis with the original text.

المُلخَص:

تبحث هذه الدراسة في العلاقة بين السرد الإنساني والسرد المولّد بالذكاء الاصطناعي من خلال تحليل مقارن لقصة *Cathedral* للكاتب ريموند كارفر (Raymond Carver) والنصوص التي تم إنتاجها بواسطة ChatGPT و Gemini و IPerplexity A وتحذف الدراسة إلى فحص ما إذا كان الذكاء الاصطناعي قادرًا على إعادة إنتاج العمليات السردية والتفسيرية التي يُبنى من خلالها المعنى الأدبي. تعتمد الدراسة على منهج تحليلي نوعي يستند إلى نظرية السرد وإطار ما بعد الإنسانية، مع الاستناد بشكل خاص إلى أفكار ن. كاترين هايلس (N. Katherine Hayles) حول الإدراك الموزع والتشارك بين الإنسان والآلة. يقدّم الفصل الثالث قراءة تحليلية للنص الإنساني مع التركيز على المنطق السردى وبناء الموضوعات وتفاعل الشخصيات. أما الفصل الرابع فيحلّل النصوص المولّدة بالذكاء الاصطناعي من حيث التماسك البنيوي وتطوّر الموضوعات ودرجة الوضوح، في حين يقدّم الفصل الخامس تفسيرًا مقارنًا للنتائج. تُظهر النتائج أن النصوص المولّدة بالذكاء الاصطناعي قادرة على إنتاج بنية سردية متماسكة وموضوعات واضحة، لكنها تميل إلى الوضوح المباشر والتدرّج السريع. في المقابل، يتميز نص كارفر بالغموض والتكثيف والتفاعل العلاقي في بناء المعنى، مما يسمح بعمق أكبر في التأويل. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الذكاء الاصطناعي قادر على محاكاة الشكل السردى، لكنه لا يعيد إنتاج الأبعاد التجريبية والتفسيرية للمعنى الأدبي بشكل كامل. ومن منظور ما بعد الإنسانية، تشير النتائج إلى أن إنتاج السرد يمكن فهمه كعملية موزعة وغير متكافئة تجمع بين الإنسان والآلة، حيث تظل عملية بناء المعنى وتفسيره مرتبطة أساسًا بالإدراك والتجربة الإنسانية.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

المنطق السردى؛ السرد المولّد بالذكاء الاصطناعي؛ التشارك بين الإنسان والآلة؛ ما بعد الإنسانية؛ الإدراك الموزع؛ المعنى الأدب