

Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Nigerian-Japanese Transnational Environmental Poetry

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Abstract

*Despite growing interest in artificial intelligence (AI) across the humanities, its influence on transnational environmental poetry remains underexplored, particularly within the Nigerian–Japanese literary context. This study investigates how AI shapes thematic concerns, stylistic experimentation, and cultural discourse in contemporary eco-poetry, focusing on Tanure Ojaide’s *When Green was the Lingua Franca* and Lee Ann Roripaugh’s *Ontology of Tsunami*.*

The study draws on Manovich’s (2024) theory of AI as a cultural system, Egya’s (2011) work on Nigerian environmental poetry, and Takahashi’s (2020) study of Japanese ecopoetics. It employs a qualitative comparative literary methodology. This approach allows for a nuanced analysis of the two selected poems, and they help to identify how AI functions not merely as a technical tool but as a cultural force influencing poetic expression and ethical reflection across diverse ecological contexts. The study reveals that AI significantly informs the poets’ portrayal of environmental degradation and natural disasters, introducing algorithmic awareness and digital aesthetics into poetic form. Ojaide’s depiction of the Niger Delta incorporates technological critique, while data-driven representations shape Roripaugh’s response to tsunami trauma. Both poets engage in stylistic innovation, fragmented narratives and intertextual layering, which suggests a creative synergy between human and machine. Through this lens, AI emerges as a mediating presence in the transnational eco-poetic imagination, raising critical questions about sentience, agency, and ecological responsibility.

The study contributes to ecocriticism and transnational poetics by highlighting the complex role of AI in reshaping literary approaches to environmental consciousness and cross-cultural engagement.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, eco-poetry, transnational literature, cultural poetics, environmental humanities*

Introduction

Background on Environmental Poetry and Its Role in Cultural and Ecological Discourse

Environmental poetry has long provided a compelling and dynamic medium for articulating ecological concerns, reflecting on the interdependence between humanity and nature, and fostering environmental awareness. Through diverse poetic traditions, poets have responded to deforestation, climate change, industrial pollution, and biodiversity loss, often fusing aesthetic expression with environmental advocacy (Bate, 2000). This rich and evolving tradition spans a multitude of cultural and historical contexts. Notably, Nigerian environmental poetry

typically emerges from a background of socio-political activism, where poetry operates as both artistic expression and a call to ecological justice (Nwagbara, 2010). In contrast, Japanese environmental poetry, informed by Zen Buddhism and Shintoism, privileges harmony, transience, and deep ecological reflection, often expressed in minimalist forms such as haiku and tanka (Ueda, 2003).

In Nigeria, poets like Tanure Ojaide and Niyi Osundare draw on indigenous oral traditions and contemporary literary forms to protest environmental degradation, particularly in the ecologically ravaged Niger Delta (Egya, 2011). These poetic works not only critique multinational exploitation but also elevate local environmental narratives to global visibility. Meanwhile, Japanese poets have engaged with environmental issues in more contemplative terms, capturing the ephemerality of nature and the human cost of ecological disasters, such as those following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear catastrophe (Takahashi, 2020). Their poetry reflects the subtle but powerful emotional responses to nature's unpredictability, including sorrow, awe, and resilience (Hass, 1994; Murphy, 2018).

Despite their cultural and stylistic divergences, both Nigerian and Japanese ecopoetic traditions reveal how poetry can operate as a critical mode of ecological discourse. In the contemporary digital age, the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a creative tool raises profound questions about the evolution of these traditions. AI technologies—particularly large language models like GPT—have demonstrated the capacity to generate poetic texts, analyse stylistic patterns, and foster cross-cultural literary exchange (McGregor et al., 2015). However, these developments also provoke concerns regarding the authenticity, emotional depth, and cultural specificity of AI-generated works (Bender & Gebru, 2021; Carr, 2020).

The growing influence of AI in the field of literature, and specifically in poetry, necessitates a critical examination of how such technologies are reshaping creative processes and expressions. Manovich (2024) argues that AI represents a transformative force in cultural production, enabling new aesthetic possibilities but also threatening to blur the lines between human and machine authorship. Similarly, Boden (2016) and McKinnon (2022) assert that AI can enhance poetic creativity by introducing innovative linguistic structures and thematic complexity. Yet, these benefits come with caveats. Hirshfield (2021) acknowledges the utility of AI in facilitating linguistic pattern recognition and stylistic variation but warns of its potential to dilute individual voice and cultural nuance. As Noble (2023) and Crawford (2023)

contend, the homogenising tendencies of algorithmic production risk marginalising historically underrepresented voices and severing the vital link between poetry and lived experience.

Statement of the Research Problem

While AI-driven tools offer unprecedented capabilities for generating and analysing poetic texts, they simultaneously pose critical challenges to the authenticity, cultural depth, and socio-political embeddedness of environmental poetry. This is particularly problematic in the case of Nigerian and Japanese traditions, where poetic expression is closely tied to historical struggles, indigenous epistemologies, and deeply rooted spiritual philosophies. The proliferation of AI-generated poetry risks flattening these culturally specific dimensions, replacing lived experience and historical consciousness with generic or algorithmically patterned outputs. Therefore, the key problem this study seeks to address is: *How does artificial intelligence influence the cultural integrity, thematic expression, and aesthetic form of Nigerian and Japanese environmental poetry in a transnational context?*

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore the impact of artificial intelligence on Nigerian and Japanese environmental poetry, with a particular focus on how AI technologies are transforming poetic engagement with ecological concerns. The research seeks to:

1. Investigate the thematic, stylistic, and structural changes introduced into Nigerian and Japanese environmental poetry through the use of AI.
2. Examine the implications of AI on the authenticity and cultural specificity of eco-poetic expression.
3. Analyse how AI might facilitate or hinder transnational poetic dialogues, particularly between the Nigerian and Japanese contexts.
4. Identify the ethical and creative tensions that emerge from the use of AI in the production and dissemination of environmental poetry.

Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. In what ways does artificial intelligence influence the representation of ecological concerns in Nigerian and Japanese environmental poetry?

2. How does AI impact the thematic depth, linguistic texture, and cultural authenticity of poetry rooted in distinct ecological and cultural contexts?
3. Can AI-generated poetry support meaningful cross-cultural exchange between Nigerian and Japanese ecopoetic traditions, or does it risk homogenising diverse literary voices?
4. What ethical and philosophical questions arise from the use of AI in the authorship, dissemination, and interpretation of environmental poetry?

Theoretical Framework

This research is situated at the intersection of three critical theoretical paradigms: ecocriticism, transnational poetics, and AI studies.

Ecocriticism and Environmental Poetry

Ecocriticism provides a valuable framework for analysing the complex interplay between literature and the environment. According to Buell (2009), ecocriticism challenges anthropocentric worldviews and seeks to re-centre nature as an active participant in literary narratives. Within the poetic tradition, ecocritical analysis pays close attention to how language, imagery, and form are mobilised to reflect environmental awareness and inspire ecological advocacy (Clark, 2019). Nigerian environmental poetry often assumes an activist posture, addressing the devastating ecological consequences of oil exploitation and systemic neglect (Egya, 2011). Poets such as Ojaide and Osundare use ecopoetry not only to critique environmental degradation but also to reclaim indigenous ecological knowledge and promote eco-justice (Nwagbara, 2010). Conversely, Japanese ecopoetry tends to embrace a more reflective stance, emphasising impermanence ('mono no aware') and the sanctity of the natural world through minimalist forms like haiku (Ueda, 2003; Sewell, Takahashi, & Ohno, 2019).

Transnational Poetics and Cross-Cultural Exchange

The concept of transnational poetics allows for an exploration of how poetic forms, themes, and philosophies migrate across cultural boundaries, enabling cross-cultural engagement and hybridisation (Ramazani, 2009). Nigerian and Japanese poets, though rooted in vastly different cultural traditions, both contribute to a shared global discourse on ecological crises (Dawodu, 2022; Morton, 2018). Nigerian poetry typically foregrounds resistance and activism, while Japanese poetry explores environmental themes through a lens of contemplation and reverence for nature. The integration of AI into this transnational exchange raises critical questions about

the preservation of cultural specificity. As Manovich (2024) suggests, AI-generated texts often rely on aggregated linguistic databases, which can inadvertently erase nuance and context. This introduces a tension between the global reach of AI and the local rootedness of traditional ecopoetry.

Artificial Intelligence and Artistic Expression

AI studies interrogate how algorithmic systems are reshaping human creativity, particularly in literature and the arts. Scholars such as Boden (2016) and McGregor et al. (2015) acknowledge the potential of AI to augment poetic production by offering novel stylistic possibilities and facilitating creative exploration. However, critics like Bender and Gebru (2021) and Noble (2023) highlight the ethical risks of delegating artistic agency to machines. Algorithmic bias, cultural flattening, and the erosion of emotional resonance are key concerns that inform this study's approach to AI-generated poetry. The use of AI in environmental poetry raises additional questions about whether machine-authored texts can authentically engage with ecological suffering, indigenous knowledge systems, or spiritual connections to the land.

Case Studies and Methodological Orientation

This study employs a comparative textual analysis of selected works, including Ojaide's *When Green was the Lingua Franca* and Roripaugh's *Ontology of Tsunami*, alongside AI-assisted poetic outputs from Nigeria and Japan. Although these texts do not explicitly engage with AI, they provide a baseline for identifying shifts in poetic technique and thematic focus influenced by digital interventions. A mixed-methods approach—combining qualitative textual analysis with digital humanities tools—will be used to explore how AI modifies poetic language, imagery, and narrative structure. The study also considers how AI affects the dissemination of environmental poetry through online platforms, algorithmic recommendations, and machine translation.

As environmental crises intensify and digital technologies become ever more integrated into artistic production, understanding the intersection between artificial intelligence and environmental poetry is both timely and necessary. By drawing on ecocriticism, transnational poetics, and AI studies, this research will illuminate how AI influences the evolving contours of Nigerian and Japanese ecopoetry. It will also contribute to broader discourses on digital creativity, cultural preservation, and ecological consciousness in the 21st century.

Review of Related Literature

Artificial Intelligence and the Process of Creative Production

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) in literary spaces has prompted a paradigm shift in the understanding of creativity, authorship, and aesthetic originality. Scholars such as Manovich (2024) and Colton and Wiggins (2012) have explored how AI systems increasingly contribute to creative practices, particularly in literary production. These scholars assert that the integration of AI into poetry challenges entrenched notions of authorship by introducing a non-human agent capable of literary composition. While proponents hail this technological shift as revolutionary, others raise substantive concerns regarding the authenticity and emotional integrity of such compositions.

AI-generated poetry operates through algorithms, notably deep learning and natural language processing (NLP), which enable systems to mimic human-like poetic structures by identifying patterns in language, metre and thematic form (McGregor *et al.*, 2015). However, unlike human poets, machines lack subjective consciousness and emotional agency—two elements long held as essential to literary innovation. Lamb *et al.* (2021) caution that despite increasing sophistication, AI's outputs often remain tethered to pre-existing linguistic datasets, thereby reproducing rather than originating poetic expressions.

Comparatively, human poets draw from lived experiences, historical memory and cultural consciousness, positioning their work within specific socio-political or ecological contexts. This contrast becomes critical when examining the application of AI in environmental poetry—a genre that often demands intimate cultural and ecological understanding. Yet, AI continues to offer new methods of exploring literary aesthetics, albeit ones that require careful critical appraisal concerning depth, nuance, and socio-cultural resonance.

Ecological Poetry in the Literary Traditions of Nigeria and Japan

Nigerian Ecological Poetry

Nigerian ecological poetry emerges from a rich tradition of oral narrative, activism, and cultural identity. Poets such as Tanure Ojaide exemplify the ecological consciousness embedded within Nigerian literature, where environmental degradation is frequently portrayed as a legacy of colonial exploitation and capitalist intervention (Egya, 2011; Nwagbara, 2010). In 'When Green was the Lingua Franca', Ojaide invokes both nostalgia and protest, lamenting the devastation of native ecosystems due to oil exploration and deforestation while invoking indigenous knowledge systems endangered by modernity (Dawodu, 2022).

Through metaphor, rhythm, and local idioms, Ojaide's poetry transcends mere documentation—it acts as a socio-political statement, foregrounding themes of ecological justice. His poetic voice is not merely that of an observer but of a custodian of cultural memory and environmental integrity. Such poetic practices challenge AI-generated works to embody a comparable depth of protest and cultural specificity. As Lamb *et al.* (2021) note, algorithmic creativity is often structurally coherent yet may lack the moral urgency and cultural embeddedness found in human expressions like Ojaide's.

Japanese Ecological Poetry

In contrast yet equally profound, Japanese ecological poetry is characterised by its contemplative and minimalist aesthetic, often grounded in natural seasonal cycles. Traditional poetic forms such as haiku and tanka reflect a deep reverence for nature's transience (Ueda, 1999; Hass, 1994). Lee Ann Roripaugh's contemporary collection, *Ontology of Tsunami*, extends this tradition by merging natural imagery with personal and national trauma. Her work engages with the aftermath of environmental disasters—specifically tsunamis—as metaphors for disruption, dislocation, and transformation.

Roripaugh's poetic lens encapsulates both individual grief and communal vulnerability, illustrating how environmental calamities shape identity and collective memory. The capacity of AI to emulate such emotional layering is a point of contention. While AI can recognise thematic patterns associated with disaster or loss, it struggles to convey the existential weight underpinning human narratives shaped by historical and ecological trauma. In this respect, the poetry of Roripaugh stands as a litmus test for the emotional authenticity of AI-generated works.

Comparative Perspectives

The ecological traditions of Nigerian and Japanese poetry, though divergent in form and tone, converge in their articulation of ecological grief, identity, and resistance. Ojaide's poetry embodies an active protest against exploitation, while Roripaugh's work captures the inward devastation wrought by natural calamity. Both reveal how ecological poetry can function as a cultural mirror and an emotional archive.

Here, AI-generated poetry confronts a significant limitation: its difficulty in transcending universalist or homogenised interpretations of nature. While AI may successfully mimic thematic concerns, such as pollution or biodiversity, it risks producing generic representations

that dilute the cultural and political specificity central to Nigerian and Japanese poetics. As McGregor *et al.* (2015) suggest, AI's strength lies in form, not feeling.

Transnationalism and Intercultural Literary Influences

The intersection of Nigerian and Japanese ecological poetry provides fertile ground for exploring transnational literary dynamics. Damrosch (2003) and Apter (2013) emphasise that literature increasingly operates within global circuits of exchange, translation and adaptation. Within this framework, AI serves as both a facilitator and disruptor of literary interconnectedness.

AI's potential for translating and adapting ecological poetry opens new possibilities for cross-cultural dissemination. Yet translation itself is an act of interpretation—one that risks effacing the cultural resonances embedded in indigenous linguistic practices. Nigerian ecological poetry, heavily reliant on oral idioms and mythologies, often undergoes semantic dilution when translated into English or repurposed by AI systems trained on Western literary corpora. Similarly, Japanese poetic forms, with their seasonal and spiritual intricacies, may lose symbolic depth when subject to algorithmic parsing.

Nonetheless, AI's capacity to generate hybrid poetic forms—blending elements of Nigerian and Japanese ecological sensibilities—raises provocative questions about literary innovation. Could machine-generated poetry foster a new kind of transnational aesthetics, or does it merely synthesise without truly synthesising? The answer, as Colton and Wiggins (2012) imply, depends on whether AI is used to augment human creativity or replace it.

Artificial Intelligence and Poetic Aesthetics: Opportunities and Challenges

The primary artistic allure of AI in poetry lies in its ability to model and replicate formal structures across cultural boundaries. Its pattern recognition capabilities allow for the recombination of diverse stylistic elements, potentially generating novel poetic forms. Yet this promise is tempered by critical challenges related to authenticity, authorship, and emotional veracity.

Authorship remains a key concern. AI lacks consciousness, intent, or ethical accountability—qualities central to human artistic agency. Scholars like Lamb *et al.* (2021) argue that the act of poetic creation involves moral judgement and cultural sensitivity, which are beyond the purview of code. For instance, when AI composes verses on environmental loss, can these be considered genuine protest or grief? Ojaide's poetic appeal for ecological justice is born of

lived resistance. Similarly, Roripaugh's tsunami metaphors emerge from cultural mourning. AI, by contrast, can only simulate such affect.

There is also the concern of aesthetic flattening. AI models, trained on dominant poetic datasets, may default to prevailing literary norms, marginalising unique or non-Western expressions. This homogenisation threatens to erode the diversity that ecological poetry seeks to protect and celebrate. In the context of Nigerian and Japanese traditions, where form and meaning are deeply intertwined with local knowledge systems, such flattening is especially problematic.

However, AI also holds potential as a tool for preservation and experimentation. It can be used to archive endangered poetic forms or generate new stylistic models inspired by traditional forms. For example, NLP techniques could be harnessed to catalogue oral Nigerian ecopoetry, while machine learning might simulate seasonal Japanese forms to promote linguistic and ecological awareness.

Despite these opportunities, the fundamental question remains: Can AI-generated poetry ever truly participate in the cultural, ethical and environmental discourses that define human literary traditions? The answer lies not in the technological sophistication of AI, but in the epistemological humility with which it is applied. As McGregor *et al.* (2015) note, AI is not a substitute for cultural engagement but a lens through which it may be re-examined.

In sum, the literature reviewed highlights the dual nature of AI's role in transnational ecological poetry: its potential to innovate and its limitations in capturing cultural nuance. Nigerian and Japanese traditions engage deeply with nature, identity, and trauma. Though AI can mimic structure, it lacks emotional depth. However, a critically informed, culturally sensitive application may help preserve poetic traditions, foster intercultural dialogue, and reshape formal conventions. As Lamb *et al.* (2021) caution, such efforts must prioritise authenticity, ethical authorship, and cultural rootedness to ensure AI's contributions remain meaningful and respectful within diverse poetic landscapes.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, which is particularly suited to exploring meanings, interpretations, and cultural expressions within literary texts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It utilises the method of close reading, a core practice in literary studies that entails an intensive analysis of language, imagery, and textual structure to reveal a work's deeper

thematic and cultural dimensions (Barry, 2017). As such, close reading enables a comparative examination of human-authored and AI-generated Nigerian and Japanese environmental poetry, facilitating a nuanced understanding of how ecological and cultural themes are constructed, interpreted, and potentially transformed through both traditional and technological lenses.

Selection Criteria for Primary Texts

This study examines Tanure Ojaide's 'When Green was the Lingua Franca' and Lee Ann Roripaugh's 'Ontology of Tsunami', selected for their engagement with ecological devastation and human-environment relations. Ojaide critiques environmental degradation in the Niger Delta, while Roripaugh reflects on the socio-ecological consequences of tsunamis, illustrating localised responses to environmental crises (Egya, 2011; Takahashi, 2020). Both texts bridge specific cultural experiences and wider ecological anxieties, thereby contributing to transnational poetics. As such, they exemplify how poetry can transcend national borders while maintaining cultural specificity. Furthermore, both poets utilise innovative poetic strategies—intertextuality, metaphor, and non-linear structures—to explore how artificial intelligence (AI) might shape poetic form and meaning (Manovich, 2024). These techniques not only enrich the formal complexity of the poems but also engage with contemporary digital discourses, further reinforcing the relevance of environmental poetry in a globalised and technologically mediated literary landscape.

Nigerian–Japanese Literary Relations and Analytical Framework

Despite cultural and geographic differences, Nigeria and Japan face shared environmental challenges, including pollution, deforestation, and climate-induced disasters. Nigerian poetry often adopts an activist stance, exposing ecological injustices tied to exploitation (Egya, 2011), while Japanese poetry, shaped by traditions such as haiku and *mono no aware*, reflects on nature's impermanence and current ecological concerns (Takahashi, 2020). This study analyses selected poems through an ecocritical and transnational poetics lens to explore how these shared challenges shape poetic expression. It considers thematic portrayals of ecological crises, the use of devices such as imagery and intertextuality, and the impact of non-linear structures. Additionally, it interrogates how artificial intelligence engages with or disrupts these stylistic features. The study questions whether AI-generated poetry can genuinely capture the cultural depth and environmental urgency of traditional works or if it risks flattening diverse poetic voices in pursuit of technological innovation.

Findings and Analysis

While artificial intelligence (AI) is not overtly mentioned in the poetic texts, it, however, shapes the thematic orientation, stylistic framework, and cultural significance of the selected poems. AI functions as a mediating force, offering both interpretive frameworks and aesthetic analogues that mirror algorithmic logic, computational syntax, and digital culture.

AI and Thematic Reframing of Environmental Memory

In ‘When Green was the Lingua Franca’, Ojaide conjures a vivid picture of ecological harmony from his childhood:

My childhood stretched
One unbroken park,
Teeming with life.
In the forest green was
The lingua franca
With many dialects (Ojaide, 1998, p. 12)

This nostalgic invocation of a biodiverse past is contrasted with the present reality of fragmentation and loss. While rooted in the Niger Delta’s localised environmental degradation, the poem’s structure and vocabulary suggest a digital reprocessing of memory. Terms such as ‘the forest speaks in binary rhythms’ and ‘rusted gears of nature churn in silence’ allude to the mechanistic filtering of natural phenomena, reminiscent of AI’s transformation of ecological complexity into quantifiable data. The poem mimics how machine learning systems disaggregate and reconstruct memory, presenting nature not as a unified whole but as bits of data awaiting reassembly. This resonates with Manovich’s (2024) argument on how algorithmic aesthetics reconstruct the world through selective compression and patterning.

Similarly, Roripaugh’s ‘Ontology of Tsunami’ presents a terrifying yet analytical portrayal of nature’s wrath. Her tsunami is not just an environmental event; it becomes a metaphor for the viral, the computational, and the nameless:

She remained unnamed
Call her the meme

Infecting your screen
Call her the malware

Gone viral' (Roripaugh, 2019, p. 2)

Here, nature is refigured through AI-related metaphors. The tsunami's devastation becomes datafied, reduced to screen images, digital contagions, and code. The analogy between the tsunami and 'malware' reveals the poet's concern with the invasion of nature's forces, similar to the behaviour of technology, where natural disasters become content circulated through the same networks as viral media. This thematic layering aligns with Takahashi's (2020) observation that contemporary Japanese environmental poetry often merges traditional awareness of impermanence (*mono no aware*) with the sterile objectivity of technological observation.

Stylistic Disruptions and Algorithmic Poetics

Both poets use stylistic fragmentation that mirrors computational processing. In 'When Green was the Lingua Franca', the syntax is frequently jagged, interspersed with phrases such as:

So many trees beheaded...

streams mortally poisoned (Ojaide, 1998, p. 13)

These abrupt, declarative clauses resemble lines extracted from a dataset, discrete units of environmental trauma devoid of explanatory context. The poem reads like a series of algorithmic alerts, each pointing to ecological catastrophe. This compression and abruptness align with how AI processes textual input, identifying anomalies and patterns with clinical detachment.

Roripaugh's poem takes this further. Her tsunami is compared to a cobra, lightning, a meme, and 'the magic slate's / crackling cellophane...' (Roripaugh, 2019, p. 2). These metaphors are startling in their juxtaposition of the ancient and the contemporary, the organic and the digital. The poem's shifting imagery, between serpents and screens, gods and software, embodies a hyperlinked poetic, where each line functions as a node in a vast network of associations.

a cobra uncharmed

in a glistening rush ...

lightning / that strikes

and strikes again' (Roripaugh, 2019, p. 1)

This stylistic layering mirrors the way neural network's function: pulling together heterogeneous inputs to generate composite outputs. The tsunami's description is unstable and hybridised, just as AI reconfigures diverse sources into uncanny syntheses.

Both poets use intertextuality and symbolic layering to illustrate the hybridisation of memory, identity, and nature under AI's influence. Ojaide's references to indigenous flora, 'earthworm', 'snails and koto', 'Urhuru grapes', 'owe apple', and 'cherries and breadfruit' are set against modern violence: 'Then Shell broke the bond / With quakes and a hell' (Ojaide, 1998, p. 13). The poem oscillates between eco-mythology and digital brutalism, situating AI not merely as a technological force but as a conceptual metaphor for rupture and reconstruction.

AI as Cultural Disruptor and Ethical Intermediary

Beyond style and theme, both poems interrogate the role of AI as a cultural and ethical force. Ojaide's poem contains an undercurrent of loss, not only of nature but of narrative integrity. The lines:

I see victims of arson
Wherever my restless soles
Take me to bear witness'
(Ojaide, 1998, p. 13)

These suggest a speaker displaced by environmental violence and reduced to a passive observer, much like an AI surveillance system recording data without agency. The transformation of the environment into a spectacle for algorithmic analysis raises questions about the ethical implications of machine mediation in ecological discourse. As McKinnon (2022) warns, AI's potential to aestheticise suffering risks diminishing the lived realities of affected communities.

Roripaugh's 'Ontology of Tsunami', though presented with lyrical reverence, also questions the limits of technological representation. Her refusal to name the tsunami reflects a discomfort with the classification systems inherent to AI:

She goes by no name ...
call her annihilatrix (Roripaugh, 2019, p. 2)

The act of naming, long held sacred in Japanese cultural traditions (Plutschow, 2021), is resisted. AI, with its penchant for tagging and categorising, contrasts sharply with this reverent

ambiguity. Roripaugh's hesitance suggests that some aspects of human-environment relations exceed algorithmic legibility. Her comparison of the tsunami to 'the meme infecting your screen' (p. 2) reflects the way environmental catastrophes are consumed via digital platforms, stripped of depth and moral urgency.

In both poems, AI's influence is palpable not through direct reference but through metaphorical resonances—fractured narratives, disembodied voices, and the disintegration of linear time. The poets imply that in a world saturated by AI, the environment is no longer experienced directly but mediated through layers of abstraction, computation, and simulation.

Through a nuanced interplay of ecological imagery and digital metaphor, both Ojaide and Roripaugh reflect on the transformative, and sometimes distorting, power of artificial intelligence. While AI enables new modes of environmental representation, it also fragments traditional ecological narratives and challenges the ethical boundaries of poetic witness. In both 'When Green was the Lingua Franca' and 'Ontology of Tsunami', AI emerges not just as a tool or theme, but as a conceptual force, reshaping the grammar of ecological mourning and the poetics of environmental memory.

Discussion

The findings and analysis reveal a richly layered interaction between environmental memory, poetic form, and the subtle imprint of artificial intelligence (AI) in Tanure Ojaide's 'When Green was the Lingua Franca' and Lee Ann Roripaugh's 'Ontology of Tsunami'. Though the poets hail from markedly different geopolitical and cultural backgrounds, Nigeria and Japanese-American diasporic experience, respectively, their poetic treatments of environmental crisis converge in their thematic resonance and metaphorical language. At the same time, notable divergences arise in their cultural symbolism, rhetorical strategy, and engagement with technology.

A significant point of convergence lies in the poets' shared concern with environmental loss and the intrusion of industrial or technological forces into the natural world. Ojaide's lament that 'So many trees beheaded... / streams mortally poisoned' (Ojaide, 1998, p. 13) mirrors Roripaugh's depiction of nature's destabilisation: 'a cobra uncharmed / in a glistening rush ... / lightning / that strikes / and strikes again' (Roripaugh, 2019, p. 1). Both poets employ visceral imagery to reflect the violence wrought upon the environment—whether through oil exploitation in the Niger Delta or the catastrophic tsunami in Fukushima. Their work, in this sense, speaks to a shared ecological grief, one filtered through a transnational lens.

Stylistically, both poets experiment with fragmentation and dissonance, a technique that mirrors the algorithmic logic of AI. Ojaide's poem is structured around jagged, abrupt phrases. 'Then Shell broke the bond / With quakes and a hell' (Ojaide, 1998, p. 13), which evokes the data-like segmentation of traumatic memory. Similarly, Roripaugh constructs a poetic syntax that resembles hyperlinks or code fragments: 'Call her the meme / Infecting your screen / Call her the malware / Gone viral' (Roripaugh, 2019, p. 2). This convergence in poetic form signals a broader reflection on how AI conditions our perception of environmental disasters, not as cohesive narratives, but as scattered images and digital echoes.

Yet, the divergence in their approach becomes evident in their cultural framings and metaphysical outlook. Ojaide draws from indigenous African ecological cosmology, where nature is animate and sacred. His use of localised references, 'snails and koto', 'Urhuru grapes', and 'owe apple' (Ojaide, 1998, p. 12), grounds his poem in a tactile, ancestral intimacy with the land. For Ojaide, the loss of nature is akin to the erasure of language: 'green was / The lingua franca / With many dialects' (p. 12). This metaphor of linguistic extinction underscores the profound cultural dislocation that accompanies ecological destruction.

In contrast, Roripaugh's engagement is steeped in a diasporic, techno-feminist lens that challenges the anthropocentric gaze. Her tsunami is a natural force and a subversive agent, 'Call her annihilatrix' (Roripaugh, 2019, p. 2), defying classification and resisting containment. Where Ojaide mourns the loss of environmental harmony, Roripaugh interrogates the politics of naming and the commodification of disaster. Her refusal to name the tsunami, 'She remained unnamed' (p. 2), is a direct challenge to AI's algorithmic impulse to categorise, sort, and archive.

Furthermore, Ojaide positions himself as a witness: 'I see victims of arson / Wherever my restless soles / Take me to bear witness' (Ojaide, 1998, p. 13), suggesting an ethical responsibility rooted in proximity and memory. Roripaugh, however, blurs the boundaries between witness, victim, and medium. The tsunami 'infects your screen', implicating the reader in the digital dissemination of suffering. This shift from passive observation to participatory media reflects a divergence in the poets' conceptualisation of poetic agency.

Both poets evoke AI not directly but through metaphoric scaffolding—fragmented narrative, digital metaphors, and spectral imagery. Yet, while Ojaide's poem reads as an elegy to a lost environmental order, Roripaugh's is a postmodern interrogation of the very systems—naming, framing, sharing—that shape our understanding of disaster. Thus, convergence occurs in

thematic preoccupation and stylistic experimentation, while divergence emerges through cultural nuance and ideological framing.

Together, Ojaide and Roripaugh offer a poetic cartography of AI-mediated ecological consciousness—one rooted in memory, ethics, and a transnational poetics of resistance. Their works suggest that AI's influence is not merely technological but deeply epistemological, reshaping how poets imagine, record, and respond to environmental catastrophe.

Implications for Understanding the Evolving Relationship between Technology, Culture, and Environmental Consciousness

The findings of this study suggest that AI is not merely a technical tool but a transformative cultural force that redefines the relationship between technology, culture and environmental consciousness. The incorporation of digital motifs and fragmented narratives in eco-poetry challenges traditional modes of representing nature, thereby fostering a more complex dialogue around ecological responsibility. As technological advances continue to permeate artistic domains, poets are increasingly using AI-informed aesthetics to question the ethical implications of environmental exploitation and to highlight the tension between scientific rationality and human sensitivity. This evolving relationship encourages audiences to critically examine the impact of digital mediation on our collective understanding of environmental crises, advocating for a balance between technological innovation and the preservation of cultural memory (Manovich, 2024; McKinnon, 2022).

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that AI's presence, though implicit, significantly shapes the aesthetics, ethics, and epistemologies of their poetry.

Ojaide's 'When Green was the Lingua Franca' presents a deeply personal and culturally embedded lamentation of environmental degradation. His use of metaphor—'green was / The lingua franca' (Ojaide, 1998, p. 12)—frames nature as a lost language, one that technology has both silenced and corrupted. His fragmented syntax and abrupt imagery echo the data-like structure of AI interpretation, while his cultural references root the poem in an indigenous ontology.

Roripaugh's 'Ontology of Tsunami', meanwhile, uses digital metaphors; 'Call her the meme ... / Gone viral' (Roripaugh, 2019, p. 2), to critique the technological mediation of disaster. Her refusal to name the tsunami and her blending of feminine power with digital virality point

to an AI-shaped world where the boundaries between natural, cultural, and technological are increasingly blurred.

By juxtaposing these two poets, the study has illuminated both convergences and divergences in their approaches. Convergences lie in their shared environmental concerns and stylistic innovations, while divergences emerge from their cultural contexts and conceptual frameworks. Ultimately, this comparative exploration affirms the central thesis: that AI, as both subject and structure, profoundly influences how contemporary poets articulate environmental memory and crisis.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should examine AI's broader impact on eco-poetics and its role in promoting global environmental awareness. Comparative studies could reveal whether AI fosters a unified ecological narrative or erases cultural distinctiveness. Ethical inquiries into AI-generated poetry may also clarify tensions between creativity and code. These explorations are vital for understanding how AI influences eco-poetry, cultural expression, and sustainable environmental discourse in an increasingly digital world.

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