



From *Frankenstein* to Algorithms: Extending Biesta's Educational Domains Through a Romantic Lens for AI-Integrated Higher Education

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Abstract

This paper argues that Romanticism in general and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) in particular offer a precise and relevant lens through which one can examine today's anxieties towards AI. Two centuries ago, before ChatGPT, Romantic thinkers were already warning that unchecked technological ambition could cause the erosion of human creativity, empathy, and moral judgment. On that, Shelley's novel, long read as a cautionary tale about creation without responsibility, speaks directly to today's debates about AI's role in education as an analogy that gives a clearer image of the challenges academics are facing today. Building on Biesta's three domains of education — qualification, socialization, and subjectification — this paper proposes a Romantic-Humanistic Pedagogical Framework that reframes each domain in light of AI integration. Rather than treating soft skills such as critical thinking, ethical reasoning, creativity, and interpersonal communication as secondary outcomes, this framework positions them as the very foundation of meaningful education in an AI-driven world. The paper closes with practical strategies for educators and academics who wish to embrace AI without letting go of the humanistic mission of higher education, led by the enduring lesson gleaned from *Frankenstein*: that what we create, we must also take responsibility for.

1. Introduction

As it is clearly noticed today, higher education is changing faster than most institutions are prepared to manage and handle. Artificial intelligence has come to stay; it is no longer a distant prospect, a fictitious concept or a subject reserved only for the computer sciences departments. It has entered the classrooms, and already started shaping how students write, research, and think. It has started changing almost all academic and educational comportments. Educators and academics are in a critical position to respond, often without clear guidance, to tools that can generate essays, solve problems, and simulate reasoning with immaculate fluency. The questions this raises about concepts like authorship, creativity, academic integrity, and the very purpose of learning are now urgent, disorienting, and, as this paper will argue, surprisingly familiar to us.

These anxieties have been experienced by humans before. Their history goes back to the Industrial Revolution that spread in Europe over the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The industrial Revolution also promised efficiency and progress while unsettling everything people understood about labour, creativity, human identity, progress and prosperity. The

Romantic Movement then emerged as a philosophical and artistic response to that disruption. Its thinkers and writers of the period reacted against what they saw as the dehumanizing logic of mechanization; in other words, the reduction of human beings to functions, outputs, and productive units. Their critique was not anti-progress; it was rather a defence of what they feared progress might cost (Williams, 1961; Berlin, 1999). No work captures that anxiety more powerfully and precisely than that of Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein* (1818). Written during the height of Romantic resistance to industrialization, the novel's dominant purport precisely sketches the central concern of what happens when creation outpaces responsibility. This concern is exactly what is being experienced again, only digitally. In Mary Shelly's tale, Victor Frankenstein does not fail because he dares to innovate and/or create; he fails because he overlooks the moral weight that his creation carries (Baldick, 1987; Harari, 2016). This refusal and the consequences that follow are manifested, once again, almost exactly in today's anxiety towards AI and its rapid development.

In higher education ignoring the parallels can result in serious consequences. As AI systems are taking on tasks such as analytical writing, problem solving and nuanced feedback that were once considered distinctly and purely human. Scholars have cautioned and raised serious concerns about what students may be quietly losing in this process: the capacity to think critically, to reason ethically, and to communicate with genuine empathy (Biesta, 2015; Selwyn, 2019). These can never be considered peripheral skills. They are, in fact, what education has always been most fundamentally about. This paper argues that revisiting Romantic critiques of mechanization, and reading them alongside Biesta's three domains of education, offers a coherent and timely framework for responding to AI in higher education. Rather than treating soft skills as optional enrichment, this framework positions them as the educational counterweight that the age of AI most urgently demands; not despite technological progress, but because of it.

2. Romanticism, Mechanization, and the Human Question

Before going through the specifics of AI and education is worth pausing to remember that we have been in the same situation before, only in a mechanical way. As mentioned above, The Industrial Revolution did not just change how things were made; it changed how people lived, behaved and understood themselves. It changed people's work and even their place in the world. And not everyone welcomed that change. The Romantic movement, as Löwy and Sayre (2001) compellingly argue, was in many ways a revolt (cultural, intellectual, and deeply personal) against the logic of capitalist modernity and its tendency to reduce human beings to units of productive output. This was not mere sentimentality. It was a philosophical objection taken seriously to a world that started to seem increasingly indifferent to everything that made life worth living naturally.

That objection found its way into some of the most powerful writing of the period. Wordsworth's *The World Is Too Much with Us*, Blake's *The Tyger*, Shelley's *Frankenstein* or *The Modern Prometheus* were not simply literary exercises. They were urgent arguments about what was getting lost when efficiency becomes the organising principle of civilisation (Berlin, 1999; Abrams, 1971). The Romantics insisted that what was getting lost is precisely what cannot be mechanised, and that was the capacity for empathy, for moral reflection, for imaginative engagement with other human beings and with the world. These are the qualities we now rather awkwardly call soft skills a term the Romantics would probably have found both puzzling and telling, given that it implies hardness is somehow the default.

Martha Nussbaum (2010) makes a similar case from a contemporary philosophical standpoint, arguing that empathy and narrative imagination are not peripheral accomplishments but are foundational to ethical citizenship and democratic life. Her argument, though written with the twenty-first century in mind, reads almost like a continuation of the Romantic defence of humanistic education. There is something striking about the fact that two centuries after

Blake was writing about tigers and looms, we are still having essentially the same argument just with different technologies at the centre of it.

And the parallels are hard to ignore. AI today is doing to cognitive labour something like what industrialisation did to manual labour: performing, at scale and speed, tasks that were previously understood as distinctly human. Writing, analysis, interpretation, decision-support these are no longer exclusively human activities, and that shift is happening faster than most educational institutions are equipped to process. Crawford (2021) is right to insist that AI is never a neutral instrument; it encodes particular values and priorities, and its deployment in education is never simply a technical question. The concern (and this is where the Romantic parallel feels most alive) is not just about job displacement or academic dishonesty. It is about what happens to students' inner lives when the intellectual struggle that produces genuine understanding is quietly outsourced to a machine (Williams, 1961; Selwyn, 2019).

Biesta (2010) has written with great clarity about the danger of reducing education to measurable outcomes what he calls the problem of "learnification," where the richness of educational experience gets flattened into performance metrics. His critique feels directly relevant here. If we allow AI to handle the parts of learning that are most easily quantified (information retrieval, text production, pattern recognition) we may find ourselves left with an education system that is impressively efficient and profoundly hollow. The things that matter most in education, as both Biesta and Nussbaum would agree, are precisely the things that resist easy measurement: moral seriousness, imaginative flexibility, the ability to sit with complexity and uncertainty without reaching for a quick algorithmic answer (Biesta, 2015; Nussbaum, 2010).

None of this means AI has no place in education. Luckin et al. (2016) make a thoughtful case for AI as a tool that can genuinely enhance learning, but only when it is deployed within a pedagogical framework that keeps the natural human development, rather than efficiency, as its primary goal. Paul and Elder (2006), on the other hand contend that critical thinking, real critical thinking, not the performance of it requires practice, discomfort, and genuine intellectual engagement with difficult material. That kind of thinking cannot be delegated. Nor can empathy, ethical reasoning, or the capacity to communicate with another human being in a way that actually reaches them. These are the capacities that Floridi et al. (2018) have in mind when they insist that AI systems carry no moral accountability of their own which means that moral accountability must remain, deliberately and vigilantly, with us.

The Romantics knew something about vigilance. They watched a world transform around them and refused to simply adapt without question. That refusal (critical, humanistic, and deeply concerned with what it means to live a fully human life) is not a bad model for educators navigating the age of AI. Revisiting their arguments is not nostalgia. It is, if anything, a reminder that the most important educational questions are also the oldest ones, and that answering them well has never required a faster processor.

3. Frankenstein, Ethical Responsibility, and the Educator's Role in the Age of AI

Most people who invoke Frankenstein in discussions about technology have probably not reread it recently. It gets reduced, fairly quickly, to shorthand, ("playing God" or "things man was not meant to know"), and the actual texture of Shelley's novel gets lost in the process. Regrettable, in a way, because what the novel is really about is not merely creation. It is about what comes after the act of creation, and how things go catastrophically wrong when the person responsible for bringing something into the world simply refuses to deal with the consequences. Victor Frankenstein is not destroyed by his ambition; He is rather undone by his cowardice and his inability to face the creation and assume meaningful responsibility for it (Shelley, 1818; Baldick, 1987). That is the real monster in the story not the creation per se.

This distinction matters more than it might seem on the surface of it, especially when we start thinking about how AI is currently being introduced into higher education. The pattern is not entirely unlike Victor's. A powerful technology becomes available; institutions adopt it

quickly, often driven more by competitive anxiety than by any coherent pedagogical vision; and the harder questions such as, what is this doing to students, to learning, to the relationship between teachers and knowledge, get deferred, or avoided altogether. Selwyn (2022) has noted that the pace of AI adoption in educational settings has consistently outrun the development of any serious ethical framework to guide it, and Luckin (2017) makes the uncomfortable point that AI tools in education are never neutral; they carry embedded assumptions about what learning is, what it is for, and who it serves. These are not technical questions; they are distinctively human ones, and therefore require human answers.

What strikes me about Shelley's novel, reading it with all of this in mind, is how little Victor actually thinks about his creature as a being with an inner life. He thinks about the project, the ambition, the methodology, and the triumph of achievement but never seriously about what it would mean for the thing he creates to exist in the world, to need things, to suffer. Holmes et al. (2022) identify something similar in the way many institutions approach AI integration: a focus on capability and efficiency that crowds out any sustained attention to the human experience of learners navigating these systems. Students are not variables in an optimization problem, though it is easy, in the rush to modernize, to treat them as if they were.

This is where the educator's role becomes so critical and, without a doubt, difficult. Because the honest truth is that most educators were not trained for this. They were not trained to be ethical mediators of artificial intelligence, to help students develop what Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) describe as the capacity for critical algorithmic literacy which is the ability to interrogate AI outputs rather than simply consume them. And yet that is increasingly what the situation demands. When a student submits work co-produced with a generative AI tool, the questions that arise about authorship, about understanding, and about academic integrity are not questions that any AI system can resolve (Eaton, 2023). They require judgment, ethical seriousness, and the kind of nuanced human conversation that no algorithm is capable of having.

Soft skills, in this context, are not a nice supplement to technical AI competence. They are its necessary precondition. Critical thinking is what allows a student to notice that an AI-generated text is fluent but wrong in subtleties, or confident but quietly biased. Empathy is what keeps collaborative learning authentically collaborative rather than mere parallel interactions with a chatbot or a robot. Ethical reasoning is what a student needs when they are trying to understand, in real time, where the line is between using AI as a tool and allowing it to do their thinking for them. Luckin (2017) has argued that AI has genuine potential to support learning but only within pedagogical environments that actively cultivate these human capacities alongside technological fluency. Without that cultivation, the efficiency gains of AI come at a cost that is hard to measure precisely because it shows up not in grades or outputs but in the gradual thinning of students' intellectual and moral lives.

Shelley saw something like this coming, in her own way. The creature's tragedy is not that he is monstrous; it is that he is capable of deep feeling, moral reflection, and genuine connection, and none of that saves him because the world around him, starting with the man who made him, refuses to meet him with equivalent seriousness. In other words, the conundrum is: if the creature can do things for the creator, what responsibility does the creature hold towards the created? Selwyn (2022) writes about a comparable dynamic in AI-driven education which is the risk that institutions become so absorbed in what the technology can offer that they overlook the real needs of students and this is not more information or faster feedback but the experience of being taken seriously as thinking, feeling, and morally developing human beings. Bates et al. (2020) suggest that the most intellectually valuable thing an AI-integrated course can offer is not the AI itself but the structured opportunity for students to reflect critically on what it means to use it such as: discussions, ethical case studies, reflective writing, and collaborative problem-solving that put human judgment at the centre rather than at the margins.

That, ultimately, is the lesson this paper takes from Frankenstein. Not that creation is dangerous, but that creation without responsibility is. Educators who take AI seriously—who neither demonize it nor hand their classrooms over to it uncritically, are doing something genuinely difficult and genuinely important. They are trying to ensure that what gets built in their classrooms, over the course of a semester, is not just competence with a set of tools but something more like wisdom about how to use them. Shelley would have understood that distinction. It is the one Victor never quite managed to grasp.

4. Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education and the Pedagogical Centrality of Soft Skills

Artificial intelligence has not waited for an invitation to enter the realm of Higher Education. It has simply arrived quietly, comprehensively, and with a confidence that institutions are still struggling to match and adapt to. Writing assistants, learning platforms, automated feedback systems, AI-driven assessment tools and much more are no longer experimental practices confined to technology faculties; they have become part of the daily making of academic life for students and educators alike (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; Selwyn, 2022). However, despite the unprecedented speed of this arrival, the deeper pedagogical questions will take an unknown amount of time to be answered. What would happen to the life of the mind when its most demanding tasks are increasingly delegated to a machine? What would become of learning when the natural process that produces authentic understanding is quietly leaving the equation?

These questions might sound rhetorical but they are not. They are, or should be, the central inquiries of anyone who takes education seriously. Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) have shown that students who rely heavily on AI-generated outputs tend to engage less deeply with the analytical and evaluative dimensions of academic work which are the very processes that transform information into knowledge and knowledge into true judgment. This finding should not be ignored; it is not trivial. In fact, it points to the very nuance that the Romantic thinkers understood intuitively: the human mind does not grow by being fed answers, it grows by wrestling questions. Critical thinking, the real critical thinking, of the kind that Paul and Elder (2006) describe as disciplined, self-directed, and intellectually humble cannot be outsourced. It must be practised, struggled with, and earned. Educators who understand this will not seek to ban AI from their classrooms, an ambition as futile as it is misguided, but will instead design learning experiences that teach students to treat AI outputs as starting points for interrogation rather than conclusions to be accepted (Luckin et al., 2016).

The question is never simply what the machine says; it is always whether the machine can be trusted, and on what grounds. Creativity presents a still more fundamental challenge. There are those who argue, with some enthusiasm, that AI systems are themselves creative that a tool capable of generating a sonnet or composing a melody has crossed some meaningful threshold into artistic territory. This argument deserves to be taken seriously, and actually to be firmly and completely rejected. Coleridge, who thought about imagination more carefully than almost anyone before or since, described this faculty as 'the living power and prime agent of all human perception'; a faculty rooted not in recombination but in genuine origination and production, in the capacity to bring into being something that did not previously exist in the world (Coleridge, 1817). What AI does, however impressively, is something categorically different: it arranges, at extraordinary speed and scale, patterns derived from what human beings have already made. It is, in this sense, always in retrospection, always looking backward at the accumulated repository of human creativity, but never forward into the genuinely new. The Educators who understand this distinction are the ones who will be able to design tasks that demand the kind of forward-looking imagination that, in fact, machines can never replicate. For instance, reflective essays that require genuine personal voice, interdisciplinary projects that demand contextual judgment, problem-solving scenarios where the right answer is not already available

in any dataset (Henriksen et al., 2021). These are not extras in an AI-integrated curriculum; they are rather its most essential components.

Ethical reasoning, meanwhile, has moved from the margins of pedagogical concern to its very centre. The questions that AI raises in the classroom (about authorship, about academic integrity, about the opacity of algorithmic systems and the biases they encode) are not technical problems awaiting technical solutions. They are moral problems, and they require moral education (Holmes et al., 2022). Eaton (2023) has documented with considerable thoroughness the ways in which generative AI has complicated traditional understandings of plagiarism and intellectual ownership, and her findings make clear that the institutions best equipped to navigate this complexity are those that have invested in developing students' capacity for ethical reflection rather than simply policing their behaviour. Biesta (2015) would recognize this immediately: what is at stake is not compliance but subjectification the formation of students as genuinely autonomous moral agents, capable of deciding for themselves when and how AI use is appropriate, transparent, and responsible. This is, at its deepest level, a Romantic concern. It is the concern that animated Shelley when she imagined a creator too dazzled by his own achievement to ask what he owed to what he had made.

And then there is empathy perhaps the most irreducibly human of all the capacities that AI threatens to render optional. John Keats understood empathy not as a sentiment but as a cognitive and imaginative act: the ability, as Motion (1997) beautifully describes it, to situate an entire world in a reader's mind through the precise, attentive use of language. This is what great teaching does, too. It does not merely transmit information; it creates the conditions in which another humans can genuinely inhabit an idea, feel its weight, and be changed by the encounter. Goleman (1995) established long ago that emotional intelligence (of which empathy is the cornerstone) is among the strongest predictors of academic and professional success, more reliable in many contexts than the cognitive measures that institutions tend to privilege. More recently, Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) have argued that emotion is not the enemy of rational thought but its very foundation that students who are emotionally disengaged learn, in the deepest sense, almost nothing. Digital tools, however sophisticated, do not resolve this problem. They tend, if anything, to deepen it. The answer lies not in resisting technology but in deliberately preserving the relational, dialogic, emotionally alive dimensions of learning that no algorithm can replicate peer feedback, collaborative inquiry, discussion-based tasks that require students to genuinely listen to one another (Bates et al., 2020).

What all of this points toward is a conception of the educator's role that is both more demanding and more important than the one technology's advocates sometimes imagine. The teacher of today is moving from being a facilitator of access to information to being or becoming, what Crawford (2021) might call a guardian of human judgment; someone who models critical thinking, embodies ethical seriousness, cultivates empathy, and insists, against the grain of algorithmic efficiency. This education is not a process of content delivery but of human formation. This is, in the end, what the Romantics were defending against the steam engines of their age. It is what we must defend, with equal conviction, against the algorithms of ours.

5. **Re-humanising Education: A Pedagogical Framework for Merging AI and Soft**

Skills

Let us understand clearly what rehumanising education does not actually mean. It does not mean shutting the computers down, banning AI bots, or going back to the nostalgia of seeing the university as a place untouched by technological change. That ship has sailed, and pretending otherwise helps no one. What it does mean (and this is the argument this paper has been building toward) is refusing to let technological integration happen on autopilot, without deliberate thought about what we are preserving, what we are risking, and what kind of human beings we are hoping education will help produce. The framework proposed here is not a

rejection of AI. It is an insistence that AI be integrated within a pedagogical vision that keeps human values, and not algorithmic efficiency, at its centre.

That vision rests on four principles, each of which grows naturally out of the Romantic and educational traditions this paper has been drawing on and each of which responds to a specific risk that unreflective AI adoption poses to the life of the mind.

The first principle is critical engagement with AI. This may sound straightforward, but it is worth being precise about its actual requirements. It can never be enough to just instruct students to "think critically" about the outputs of AI; this instruction, without structure and/or practice, produces very little. What needs to be designed are tasks that make critical interrogation an unavoidable reaction. For instance, assignments that require students to place AI-generated content alongside peer-reviewed sources and account for the discrepancies that they can find; exercises that require students to identify the assumptions embedded in an algorithmic response and articulate why those assumptions might be wrong; revision tasks that begin with an AI draft and demand that students do something to it that the AI demonstrably could not do for itself (Paul & Elder, 2006; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). The objective is not to have students who distrust AI reflexively, but to produce students who have developed the intellectual habit or reflex of interrogating any source of knowledge, be it human or machine, before it is taken as reliable. This is in essence what the Romantics were asking of their own readers: not passive reception, but active, questioning engagement with the ideas placed before them (Berlin, 1999).

The second principle concerns ethics and responsibility, and here the shadow of Frankenstein falls most directly. Victor's catastrophe was not intellectual; he was, by any measure, a brilliant man. It was moral. He created but did not consider what his creation would need, what it would endure, or what he owed to it. The lesson for contemporary educators is uncomfortably direct: technical competence without ethical formation is not just incomplete it is dangerous (Holmes et al., 2022). Embedding ethical reflection into AI-integrated pedagogy means doing more than appending a module on academic integrity to an otherwise unchanged curriculum. It means making questions of authorship, transparency, data privacy, and algorithmic bias into genuine objects of intellectual inquiry subjects for case-based discussion, reflective writing, and sustained critical analysis (Eaton, 2023). It means asking students not only what AI can do, but what it should do, and on whose terms, and in whose interests. These are not abstract philosophical questions; they are the questions that students will face, in professional and civic life, with increasing urgency. The classroom is where they should first learn to take them seriously (Biesta, 2015).

The third principle, and perhaps the one most in need of active defence in the current educational climate, is creativity and imagination. There is a version of AI integration in which students increasingly outsource the generative dimensions of intellectual work to their tools, producing outputs that are competent, fluent, and essentially hollow. To repair this anomaly, educators must concentrate on tasks that demand human originality: personal essays that require an authentic voice and a lived experience; interdisciplinary projects that require students to make connections that no training dataset has already made for them; problem-solving scenarios that are genuinely open-ended and admit many possibilities, where the most interesting answer is the one the student finds for themselves rather than the one the algorithm approximates (Henriksen et al., 2021). The conviction of Coleridge that imagination is the living power and prime agent of human perception was not mere Romantic idealism; it was a serious claim about what makes human thought irreplaceable (Coleridge, 1817). Educators who take this claim seriously will be able to design curricula in which students encounter the experience of making something new, and discover that AI, for all its fluency, cannot do it for them.

The fourth principle is human connection and it is, in some ways, the most straightforwardly at risk in an increasingly digital educational landscape. Learning has never been only a cognitive process. It is relational, emotional, and deeply social something that

happens between people as much as inside individual minds. Goleman (1995) documented the centrality of emotional intelligence to academic and professional success decades ago. When students collaborate on a difficult problem, offer genuine feedback to a peer, or sit with the discomfort of a discussion that does not resolve neatly, the students develop capacities that no AI interaction can replicate; capacities for empathy, for intellectual humility, for the kind of listening that actually changes how you think (Bates et al., 2020). Preserving and prioritising these experiences in AI-integrated classrooms is not sentimentality, it is sound and healthy pedagogy, grounded in everything we know about how human beings actually learn.

Critical engagement, ethical responsibility, creativity, and human connection taken together constitute what this paper calls the Romantic-Humanistic Pedagogical Framework. It is a vision of AI-integrated education that is neither technophobic nor naively enthusiastic. It is serious, human-centred, and informed by the longest and richest traditions of thought about what education is meant for. The Romantics watched a world transform around them and refused to accept that efficiency was the same thing as progress. That refusal—principled, urgent, and deeply human is the spirit this preliminary framework hopes to carry forward.

6. Conclusion

The rapid expansion of artificial intelligence in higher education has revived old anxieties about the relationship between technological progress and human values anxieties that, as this paper has argued, are neither new nor accidental. Revisiting the Romantic critiques of mechanization, and reading them through the enduring moral lens of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, reveals something important: the fears that educators are grappling with today are part of a long historical conversation about what gets lost when efficiency becomes civilisation's highest ambition. The roots of these concerns have never lain in technology itself, but in the recurring human temptation to embrace what a tool can do without asking what it should do, and at what cost.

This paper has proposed a response to that temptation in the form of a Romantic-Humanistic Pedagogical Framework, built by extending Biesta's three domains of education (qualification, socialization, and subjectification) through a Romantic lens. Rather than treating AI integration and humanistic education as competing priorities, this framework positions them as necessarily interdependent. Qualification, in this model, means not only developing technical fluency with AI tools but cultivating the critical capacity to interrogate them. Socialization means inheriting and transmitting a humanistic tradition that resists the reduction of education to algorithmic efficiency. And subjectification (perhaps the most urgent domain of all) means ensuring that students emerge from their education as morally serious, imaginatively alive, and genuinely autonomous human beings, not simply competent users of intelligent systems.

The soft skills at the heart of this framework: critical thinking, creativity, ethical reasoning, empathy, and interpersonal communication are not supplementary outcomes to be addressed once the curriculum's technical demands have been met. They never have been and will never be. In the age of AI soft skills are more indispensable than ever. Educators who understand this will design learning experiences that make these capacities central rather than peripheral. The tasks designed shall demand genuine human originality, discussions that require ethical seriousness, collaborative activities that keep learning relational and emotionally alive. In so doing, they will be doing something that Shelley understood two centuries ago and that no algorithm has yet managed to approximate; the understanding of taking responsibility for what they have helped to bring into the world.

There is, however, much work still to be done. This paper has offered a conceptual framework, but conceptual frameworks only prove their worth when they are tested against the complexity of real educational contexts. Several directions for future research present themselves with particular urgency. Pilot studies are needed that implement the Romantic-Humanistic Pedagogical Framework in actual higher education classrooms (across disciplines,

institutional types, and cultural contexts) and document what happens to students' critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and creative capacities over the course of a semester. Longitudinal research is equally important: if the argument of this paper is correct, the benefits of deliberate soft skills cultivation in AI-integrated environments should be traceable not just in immediate learning outcomes but in students' long-term professional and civic lives. Comparative studies across different national and institutional contexts would also be valuable, given that the challenges of AI integration look meaningfully different in a research-intensive university in Europe than in a teaching-focused institution in Morocco or elsewhere in the Global South. And there is a need for work that develops concrete, validated assessment instruments for soft skills in AI-integrated classrooms tools that can measure empathy, ethical reasoning, and creative autonomy in ways that are rigorous without being reductive.

None of this future work will be straightforward. But the difficulty is itself instructive. The things that matter most in education have always resisted easy measurement and quick solutions. what the Romantic tradition offers, and what this paper has tried to carry forward, is not a blueprint but an orientation; a reminder that education is, at its deepest level, a moral practice, and that the arrival of artificial intelligence makes that truth more urgent, not less. The question is not whether AI will continue to reshape higher education; it will, and rapidly. The question is whether educators will meet this transformation with the same seriousness, imagination, and sense of responsibility that the best of their tradition has always demanded of them.

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