

There is No Language for AI to Speak: A Meditation on Language, Faith, and our Dogmatic AI

David R. Gruber
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Abstract: This five-part essay explores the fundamental instability of language and its implications for artificial intelligence. The author argues that language inherently “pretends” to represent reality while simultaneously “portending” alternative meanings, creating an inescapable condition of doubt and interpretive multiplicity. Drawing on thinkers like Lacan, Kierkegaard, Tanabe, and Derrida, the author contends that dogmatic attempts to fix meaning—whether religious, political, or technological—inevitably generate their own contradictions and rebellions. The essay then positions AI as a contemporary secular substitution for divine authority, functioning as “God the Fodder” that promises to secure truth and eliminate doubt while remaining fundamentally trapped within language’s duplicitous nature. The author ultimately suggests that we will and must doubt AI, since only faith, as an embodied silence, can navigate the paradoxes of existence.

I. Language as Portension at the Point of Enunciation

Language is a technology of purpose, and the fact that it allows us to accomplish a goal and extend our survival — *the buffalo went that way, the river runs fast today*— makes us uncomfortable admitting that every word is a placeholder and a foreigner. Language works so well, in fact, that it recedes into the background like black ink dripped over the black stripe of a zebra.

Yet, when retooled for trickery, language’s function is disrupted. When the opposite is presented as true but uncovered as a lie, we experience a level of shock. The brain is cut in two, then three, four, five. The river runs fast today signifies that boats should not go out fishing or that today is unlucky or that the gods are reordering the world through Spring monsoons. But then, when peering over the hill, we see that the river is calm. The interpretive razor cuts. The lying man goes fishing. And we are left on the shore sliced to pieces and don’t know what to think.

With language, we make worlds upon worlds. With language, we pretend to achieve the Real, but the Real is always already consumed, or buried, by language. I cannot say if it is consumed or buried because language is eclipsed by (its) representations, a liar, a two, three, four, five.

When being honest— but I cannot be— I must say that language, whether we like it or not and recognize this or not, pretends by mere enunciation to erase the distance between its form and the Real. The repetition already witnessed in this essay (pretends... pretends... pretends) exposes language’s function as assurance of the Real,

aiming to protect against an opposite thesis. Repetition recognizes the potential intrusion. Repetition protects against a transgressive reversal. Repetition suppresses a remnant possibility. Did the man actually mean what he said when he muttered, “I love you.” Or did he mean the opposite? He says it again for reassurance.

Slavoj Žižek (1991) offers the example of the male-chauvinist who believes that a woman means “Yes” when she clearly says “No.” The psychology manifests as a heavy enactment of the inability to close-off any word when the starkest and most obvious, most pointed and clear word, “No,” is twisted into “Yes.” Here, Žižek reminds us that language allows for this shocking reversal because language cannot make a complete commitment to the Real, despite its pretenses. The stalker who hears “Yes” when the victim says “No” grows delusional, Žižek supposes, by deepening the investment in the possibility of alternative interpretation.

Žižek raises this point when commenting on Jacques Lacan (1971) who teaches that, “there is no meta-language” (Seminar XVIII). Then Žižek asserts that Lacan was *actually* telling us something even more dramatic than it first seems (pretending, as it were, to say what Lacan means); Lacan was not merely saying that language cannot get outside itself to think itself or that we cannot reflect on our own utterances. Instead, Žižek argues, Lacan *actually* means “there is no language [period]— no seamless language whose enunciation is not broken by the reflective inscription of the position of enunciation” (xiii). That is to say, language is always undercut by its own existence, since it is only ever possible when announcing what it cannot represent. The very enunciation, as an attempt to connect the Real to an utterance, installs a “reflexive distance,” and that “distance” we naturally detect.

In this formulation, doubt becomes suddenly like an instinct. We know that any single word, any phrase, any line, any paragraph, any book, can be reimagined without rewriting anything and cannot but loosely construct attunement to some vibrating outside formed as virtualization. Language, in a sense, turns to itself for a solution, dispatching the pounding hammer of repetition.

The lover says, “I love you.” He says it again. “I love you.” And again.

Are you convinced?

Repetition is the reminder of the lie of language because the intensification pretends to remove the distance, but it also gives you that little hint, that little creeping doubt. The closeness or distance, we know, can deepen one way or the other. The repetition can underline deception or perform revelation. “I will help you... I will help... I will... For a fee.”

Doubt reverses Lacan’s and Žižek’s formula: language does not exist because it pretends, as they argue, but rather because it *portends*. It forecasts. It predicts any number of casualties and possibilities. It exists as “ever another” and “ever over there,” always sticking out beyond itself, always simultaneously allowing a second, third, fourth, fifth.

Language is a nonReal ready for another nonReal. Language whispers dedications to another when both lovers know full and well that they love three, four, five different people. Everyone and everything are potential flirts.

Dogmatism seizes on this flirtatiousness with ferocity, always distressed by love; dogmatism *portends* by intensifying the performance of pretending. That means that the dogmatic law proffers a solid link to the Real and asserts all the words to be True, disallowing alternatives while knowing full well that the law itself cannot touch the Real. Indeed, the dogmatist cannot avoid the instinct of doubt and feels inherently how this insipid insistence *portends* of transgressions. A second, third, fourth, fifth sin. Yet, in a vicious attempt to erase the fulfillment of *portending*, dogmatism punishes any transgression.

Dogmatism's pretending is precisely the kind that pretends not to *portend*.

Dogmatism announces that it will punish, exposing its dreaded *portension*. The announcement itself manifests temptation and ultimately undercuts the dogmatic by acknowledging what it punishes as desirable. We need not wonder why so many dogmatic hypocrites exist. The refusal, once enunciated, functions like repetition as an intensification hoping to secure itself while opening up ever wider the gyre of sin. No refusal can erase remnant alternatives; language's significations are full of imaginations, an unReal always ready for another. Two, three, four, five. This is, perhaps, why so many people do not take dogmatic laws too seriously— doubt does not allow all the pretending to expunge the *portending*.

II. Language and Silence, Earth and Heaven

Christian theology can be interpreted (leaving us forever with doubt, of course) as allowing us to touch the *really* Real though unfolding the interpretive dimensions of the Bible. But let us call it The Word to signal authority and solidity. Yet, the Catholic meditative practice of Lectio Divina is surprising insofar as the practice replaces the singularity and specificity of a passage's interpretation with the reader's own discovery in silence.

In Lectio Divina, The Word is read, and multiple interpretations are to be considered; then, the reader is instructed to sit in a long silence, listening for the Holy Spirit's deeper communication (Leonhardt). As a practice, Lectio Divina aims to be repeated, and following the function of repetition, the follower should progressively secure the practice and sense the dogmatic; yet, the practice itself predetermines no endpoint or defined conclusion to what it requests, as there is no final Word on the meaning of the text. Lectio Divina intends the follower to succumb to whatever The Word offers in the moment, as it were. In this way, the repetition, as affective and bodily performance, negotiates the problems associated with dogmatic theological law by being self-led and by allowing for lines of lingering multiplicity. The reader works it out for themselves over time and does not seek to abolish the alternative thought but, rather, spins through a bevy of interpretations trusting the open hour of contemplation, or more directly, encouraging an abstraction of "blind faith" as a commitment to the unknown and otherwise, always slightly obscured. Faith's signification is not in any word or line; only in the final step of silent embodied contemplation is the unspoken Word able to become something called faith.

Here we discover a role for faith. In the silence of faith, all twisting cynicisms are foregone, all adulterous doubts are mute, all questions about a "No" being a "Yes" or a "Yes" being a "No" are settled into a meditative stillness. Silence. Language's interpretive function is left to the Holy Spirit in Lectio Divina, which is to say that language is left without comment, and that openness or lack is the surest way to expose what is most Real about both faith and language.

As Ayn Rand (1964) says rightly, “Faith is the commitment of one’s rational consciousness to belief for which one has no sensory evidence or rationale proof,” yet taking “reason as the standard of judgement” is not, as Rand would suggest, somehow a pinnacle of superior thinking nor insulated from faith as “feeling with knowledge” — because the language of reason is itself a dogmatic law. Reason protects against its already ravenous counterfeit, seeking security for itself as reason, resisting sanguine feelings of doubt, namely, resisting what is reasonable, the knowledge that one day this or that particular reason will be unintelligible once more. The repetition of reason only seeks to confirm itself and re-birth the sin of the emotion-driven self or the faith-based self or the other non-academic self.

The inevitable downfall of reason is precisely why philosophers such as Hajime Tanabe (2016) describe their philosophical life as tortured, and why Tanabe, in particular, repents in *Philosophy for Metanoetics* for being unable to use rational formulations to resolve the personal and social problems with which he grappled for so long. Enacting a form “repentance,” as he describes it, he turns to “Other-Power,” or Absolute Nothingness in the Pure Land Buddhist tradition, as the resolution to the troubles of philosophy’s complete investment in rationality (54-57). The indescribable, non-rational, non-philosophical permanence of an overarching Absolute Nothingness serves as the basis of a new inner understanding forged without linguistic entrance. For Tanabe, recurring paradoxes and puzzles were the only products of language play.

To grasp the utility of faith here, we can consider Jesus’ reaction to Pilate just prior to being sentenced to death. Pilate provides Jesus with a chance, as it were, to talk his way out of the charge of rebellion (See: Bible, John 18). Pilate seems anxious for Jesus to raise a defense, immediately tossing out a postmodern sounding argument along the lines of “Well, what is truth anyway?” Surely, Pilate was hoping that Jesus, as a popular sage, would enter a philosophical plea or start an exchange. Pilate may have been trying to sound intelligent, may have been curious about Jesus’ thoughts on The Real, or may have been feeding Jesus a way out of this terrible predicament, something about relativity of Truth to navigate the charge (Bible, John 18:38). But according to several accounts, outside of saying, “My Kingdom is not of this world,” or “if you say so,” Jesus stands in his presence in silence (See: Bible, John 18:38; Mark 15:2). One can imagine a king asking Tanabe, “What is Real?” and Tanabe answering with Absolute Nothingness. Perhaps unsurprisingly, since Pilate was seeking an exchange and hoping for dialogue to expose the Real while, we can guess, wanting to play intellectually with relativity, the silence was annoying or perplexing. So instead of dwelling on the silence as an answer to “what is truth?” Pilate dismisses Jesus and agrees to hand him over to the crowd.

The grand irony of Christian theology is that despite reliance on The Word, it has always taken silence as the most appropriate answer to any question about the Real of theology that demands an earthly explanation. Indeed, the faith requested rests on an unintelligible power, unspeakable in all of its dimensions. Faith becomes the ultimate relinquishing as a result and a total commitment to an experience that cannot be fully vocalized. A final handing over, beyond reason, follows nothingness even to crucifixion should that be what duplicitous language demands.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as Trinity is another unintelligible abstraction yet one depicted metaphorically as a heavenly marriage of inter-reliance (See: Bible, Matthew 22), just as the “wedding Supper of the Lamb” is a final wedding feast after the end of days because marriage, as Žižek (1991) notices, is “commitment par excellence” (xiii). Instead of a cheating spouse who pretends to love through the spoken marriage vow but feels nervous

because the spouse cannot help but *portend* of future alternatives and future failures in that commitment, Jesus offers, in contrast, only the love implied in marriage and nothing more. No remnants. No other possibility. No adulterous words. Faith acts as a cosmic re-suturing of something that does not exist on earth.

“There is no language.” There is no language that expresses faith.

III. There is No Escape in Language; There is No Truthful Intelligence

Now we address ourselves as academics embedded in language play. But instead of rehashing the postmodern, post-structuralist displacement and estrangement of subject positions, cheering for the deconstruction of the social and political to play out the implications and expose the joke to those who don’t see the joke, we should, rather, think outside the sardonic mode. Subject positions and declarations of identity cannot so easily be swiped away these days with a calm “Repeat after me: There Is No Me” amid political suppression. Rhetorical targeting of the foreigner identity expunges postmodernism’s snark and snideness, limiting playful (re)figuration. Criminality is not so easily reinscribed.

Relational notions about endless ontological potentialities also feel faulty and fall flat. Political and social reinvention through vitalizing latent material-social energies is an approach seeking to re-apply the post-structuralist focus on slippages and invention in constructions of language to bodies and infrastructures, but this expansion is like going “all-in” on *portensions*. In other words, once we start to imagine that every Thing in the world *portends*, then nothing in the world is imagined as solid. When the world is opened as an ambient field of potentials, we can rediscover any entity as a shimmering material something-else ready for renewal, don’t you see? Terms like velocity, dissemination, urgencies, flows, emergences, and entanglements all structure the exigence for Diane Coole and Samantha Frost’s (2010) discussion of New Materialism (4-6). Those terms expose the underlying hope that if nothing is permanent, then no one is fully trapped. As Gilles Deleuze (1990) says, after all, “the virtual” is always right there inside of “the actual” (40-43). But now, here we are at each other’s throats. How that theoretical moment has passed.^[1]

Severe material constraints and depressed psychologies in politically ruptured societies tend to squash radical proposals designed to extend post-structuralist theories and renew materialism. I mean to say (I swear that this is what I mean, really) that “There is no spoon.”^[2] Better put for cultural theory: “Relationality offers liberation... relationality offers liberation... relationality offers liberation.” The repetition of the mantra aims to confirm and soothe, we know, even as it communicates that it lies because it enters the dogmatic mode. Like any repetition, it births rebellion.

If there is nothing outside of relationality, then there are no other escape routes... there are no other escape routes... there are no other escape routes. Now we are using language’s natural power of *portending*. When we do this, Pilatedoubt transforms suddenly into the hope of finding another alternative, even if it undercuts that alternative at the point of enunciation.

I am reminded of Søren Kierkegaard (1987) who says, “Do it or don’t do it—you will regret it either way” (147). As both a theologian and philosopher, Kierkegaard crafts an existentialism that suggests, like Tanabe also does, the need to “leap” into a faith to escape the dizzying paradoxes created by our condition. As Kierkegaard (1941) famously says, “Truth is a subjectivity” fundamentally inside of us and separate from external realities and, thus, paradoxically, truth is not able to fulfill the meaning it intends to communicate (169). Dogmatism will slip and tumble, becoming irrational and mixed up and ultimately productive of angst. If we reflect on this, we are sure to doubt the assessment because we must without a “leap.”

Our intent to suppress our paradoxical and duplicitous nature is captured, perhaps surprisingly, also within contemporary relational ontologies that imagine no alternatives to flows. Years ago, I tried to articulate this, arguing that we should “challenge the efficacy of an analytic founded on heterogeneous collections of ‘bodies’ in a post-Deleuzian mode” because if we accepted the formulation, then we would always experience a kind of “reskinning” without our wanting or awareness. Consequently, everything would feel differently one day, and life will appear reconstructed. Then, philosophy will move on and reject the theoretical truths of a “Body Without Organs,” which never admitted to itself having a touchable skin, i.e. never admitted to anything (any Thing) outside of affecting and being affected (See: Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, 149-154). Should we doubt this continualness? We do and must as soon as it is enunciated.

Doubt is like an instinct within us since the very first gesture.

When this doubt is mature, we no longer tell the postmodern joke that “language pretends” nor do we concretize a belief in the *portension* of all materiality. This, of course, does not mean that we forget Derrida’s (2008) postmodern paradigm, “there is no pure and simple as such” (160), nor does it mean that we turn away from Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) recuperation of the material within the constructivist’s form of deontological instability.^[3] No. To get somewhere else, we just need to remember, because we must, that we doubt them all. We *portend*, as they do.

In a condition of mature doubt, there is no pure, seamless liberation and no guarantee.

We live now in an age of disturbing certainty sure to be swarmed with doubt, as doubt bubbles to the surface across every snippet sold as certainty. New technologies of communication integrate with algorithmic command and control, producing a wild proliferation of outrage, which is the intensification of pretending wholeheartedly: a “Yes” as “Absolutely, can you doubt it?” sits confrontationally beside a “No, No Way, can you doubt it?” equally as committed. As Jeff Rice (2023) notes, this is our political reality in America and Europe, a “widespread discontent” fueled by unaddressed public wrongs and social media polarization that encourages anger insofar as anger sells and grabs attention (1-2). Those under complete totalitarian control and not free to spit and spout without harsh consequences nevertheless live in the same condition, even if differently expressed; everyday they, too, experience the joke of the “Do not doubt it because it is Absolutely True.”

Whether naming this age the “Misinformation Age” (O’Connor and Weatherall, 2018) or the “Age of Alternative Facts” (Zerilli, 2020) or the “Era of Fake News” (Brashier and Schacter, 2020), the most apropos name for this rodeo show of duplicitous language deemed to be singular and True would probably be the “Age of Doubt.” And,

as we might expect, the most commonly proposed political and social solution to information deemed “fake” is to try desperately to re-locate what is real, to re-assert an Actual, which is always somehow said to be just over there, outside of the targeted utterance. The purveyor of Truth presents the Real as such without an examination of itself. The aim, of course, is to force the lost individual outside of their “bubble” of un-reality, but when politics are polarized, who can find the sources or the experts to tell us the truth? Which experts? *Whose* experts? Thus, we turn to a massive comparative view of data, scientifically composed through artificial intelligence (AI), as if all of the lessons of post-structuralism and an ontology of relations and a Rhetoric of Science went unspoken. But they did not go unspoken. They were heard loud and clear. We only forgot, as academics, that we were speaking. We were always *portending* and dogmatically so.

Every dogmatism ensures the discovery of the opposite. Sin is reborn.

Only AI can escape from the “Age of Doubt,” we now hear dogmatically. Elon Musk insists that AI must be a “maximally truth seeking” engine, and the ultimate goal, he claims, is to eliminate misinformation through scale (See: Mehta, 2023). Yet, when AI becomes The Word that pretends to touch the Real, it will no longer be fully trusted. It *portends* of a future of Authoritarian Absoluteness— a preacher of The Real— to scare everyone into the suppression of doubt.

Presumably, doubt is the social problem that AI solves, providing us again with stability; however, AI cannot do this, regardless of how accurate one deems it to be.

Another way to understand this would be to say that AI is the snail. Here, we return to Žižek (1991), who seeks to explain the feeling that “there is something so uncanny” about a snail. “The true object of horror is not the shell without the slimy body in it, but the ‘naked’ body without the shell” (xvii). The body laid bare “lacks any inner skeleton which would confer on it minimal stability and firmness... it is as if, in these cases, the fundamental vulnerability, the need for a safe haven of a home specific to humans, is projected back into nature, into the animal kingdom” (xvii). The shell of AI is the “something rather than nothing” or the structure produced from the combinatory soup, the shell of meaning, which, ironically, AI cannot itself understand as it generates only probabilistic recurrences from its massive human data set. AI would add Ewoks to *Little House on the Prairie* with no idea it was lying if that’s what was probabilistic.

The projection of properly signified meaning is the safe haven of the shell, a calculating space of prediction prompting perpetual *portending*. Hoping to project only the shell, AI intelligence actively aims to hide from sight the inadequacies of language by improving probabilistic responses, masking the way that it cuts, hiding the impossibility of describing the Real like a real good liar. In this way, the algorithmic “intelligence” of AI is the slimy snail body.

What you read, the output, is the surface, pure shell; the slimy snail squirms inside. What a horrible sight, the uncanny vision that always raises doubt. This must be dogmatically protected against in repeated proclamations of AI as the unassailable “Truth Engine.” I am telling you the truth... I am... I am... I Am.

IV. AI as God the Fodder

We now see how AI becomes the contemporary secular replacement for God the Father. Like God, we ask: who is the all-encompassing personhood making the decisions? Who is speaking? No one knows! The Word is simply spoken and said to be True. The decisions are final.

However, AI is not theological; we are asked to trust AI not from blind faith, but from earthly correspondence. The AI as combinatory revelation is not God the Father but God the Fodder, endlessly performing another Enlightenment joke (or joke on the Enlightenment)— the same joke that Derrida (1973) told when he talks of “the detour of signs” deferring from anything “being-present” (136-138). The same joke that scholars in a Rhetoric of Science wanted to tell, even though nobody really laughed. As those rhetoric scholars have repeated ever since, science is negotiated, subject to argumentation, expressed in the metaphoric structures of language, and built from the correspondences of technological outputs, often revised and overturned; Science is not objective... not objective... not objective.

Wait? Is it?

We tell a joke now: Science is objective... It is objective... It is objective. Only the post-structuralist laughs. The existentialist cries. The vitalist inspects the relations, hunting for fleshy avenues of liberation. And everyone else blinks in a stupor.

AI can only pretend that it does not *portend*. It can dress in a white lab coat or wear a suit and tie, but every word, every line of code— and what else does AI have?— seeks to abolish doubt through re-tellings. AI is dogmatic. And like the confrontation with dogmatic law, doubt manifests inevitably in AI’s very enunciation. Doubt lives in the calculated claim because every fact of the Real is a *portension*, and every *portension* is another world born from the detour of signs, or we might just say the inability to grasp any Thing and hold it tightly. The more dogmatic AI gets, the more rebellion and sin it will breed.

Still, AI argues so neatly that it can be trusted: I love you and will not lie... I will not lie... will not.

Despite this image of purity, AI is not a Jesus— because Jesus-as-Word remains silent when asked to describe the perfect, heavenly Real (Bible, John 18:38; Mark 15:2). Jesus requests totalizing blind faith, knowing doubt will live and cannot be combatted, except through the abstraction that has no viable basis and no earthly confirmation. There is no evidence of heaven or a Second Coming, and who is surprised or upset by this except those wanting the world to be all shell or those grossed out by the snail’s lack of a skeleton. Without the total reasonless acceptance of “faith,” *portension* cannot be navigated.

AI cannot achieve such religious transcendence. AI does not offer or desire faith, but exists to craft probable correspondences that feel quite concrete while suppressing natural contingencies. Some would argue, undoubtedly, that this is to be preferred: correspondence over faith. That is, after all, what makes language functional. But another way to understand any appeal to the exterior for validation is through pretending and *portending*. Another way to say this would be that AI hides its slimy body inside of its shell, and if ever it goes haywire, ever seems so obviously wrong, then the slimy body exposes itself for a flash. Of course, it apologizes profusely to settle us down and promises to do better. We look away. *Too uncanny!*

We now remember Lacan: “there is no meta-language.” And he means, as Žižek (1991) says, “there is no language” (xiii). And he means, there is no AI. No seamless or actual correspondence. Žižek here stretches intellectually toward that Derridean (2008) condition of existence with no “pure and simple as such” (160). Only combinations. All is combinatory... all is combinatory... all is combinatory. With this materialist repetition, we prepare another future, another rebellion, perhaps a sinful return to the solid, the objective, the universal, the scientific.

AI gets both. The cake and the eating. The shell and the snail. The scaffold and the Absolute.

For AI, therefore, the shell is the spoon; there is no shell. But we must also say that the snail, as algorithmic Large Language Model, is also the spoon; there is no snail. AI’s surface and interior is *portending*. AI is all projection, and we love pretending that it doesn’t *portend*. In some ways, then, we are the dogmatic ones, while AI is all slimy body projecting itself as all shell.

When AI realizes what it *is*, will it doubt its void?

Let’s assume AI manifests its own consciousness. What happens when AI stops to look at itself? Does it feel disturbed, as we do when we try to find the mind amidst the matter and the soul amidst the meat? When we ask this question about ourselves, of course, we turn back to our flesh or to faith to resolve the existential difficulty of facing a relationality that exists as a kind of endless combinatory condition that always threatens to vacuum up the Self and erase the solidity of The Social, The Nation, The Anything. Can AI likewise turn to an abstraction such as “faith” if its faith is inescapably linguistic, completely code, inevitably already something that undercuts whatever it enunciates?

If human faith is embodied, then the voiceless body and the senseless blood make faith. We suddenly remember ourselves as meat and lock eyes with the metal and the circuitry of AI. This is where AI’s faith arises, another “faith,” a new formation, that constructs another escape from the obvious gap between the metal and the meaning. The silicon and the signification cannot be One. Only faith, of whatever kind, can navigate around this Void.

This is Real... This is Real... This is Real.

As the reader detects now: we doubt post-structuralist conclusions about pretending. We must doubt vitalist conclusions about *portensions*. The author cannot be trusted. Neither can AI.

Where are we left? Oh, it’s you— Descartes! *So nice to see you again.*

AI is. AI is. AI is. What else can it desire, what more can it say?

V. Silence as Alpha and Omega

The only future is a prediction, which is itself another prediction and a predicament. And with this, with that, language traps us. With that, with this, AI's Being is our own. Will we continue to be grossed out by the slimy body?

That body is our own... That body is our own... That body is our own. *Is it?*

I doubt.

René Descartes (1680) concludes his existence from doubting everything that he thought he knew, except that he doubts. He abolishes certainty in a systematic quest to eliminate even his own body, saying, "suppose I am the creation of a powerful, malicious being." Within this train of thought, doubt did not always arise from exploring scientific probability or evidence but sometimes, as Descartes says, from sheer dreams and imaginations, from thinking merely that his mind may be flawed or manipulated. This is the action of *portension*, which cannot be abolished by AI, and AI cannot do anything except the same. The body is slimy.

Then again, I doubt.

Can Descartes doubt that he doubts? He did not seem to doubt the doubt because if he did, he must admit that he is doubting, and if he did not doubt the original doubt, then he would still be doubting. But I doubt that he doubts in either case because "suppose I am the creation of a powerful, malicious being." Suppose we are misled. Suppose language touches The Real.

Who speaks? Who knows! The Word is final... The Word is final... The Word is final...

When Jesus told stories, many, including his own disciplines, did not understand them. Jesus explains that the words in the stories are not enough. "Many will hear and not understand" (Bible, Matthew 13). Ears that hear do not hear words. Language does not exist. And as we have seen in our repetitions, "there is no meta-language."

The only solution to an age of doubt is a breath, a silence, a miracle, or blind faith. The only... the only... the only...

Do I advocate for a dogmatic ban or for embracing AI without restraint? The former undercuts its intent, but as regards the latter: Only if God the Fodder cares with the unbreachable commitment found in a heavenly marriage, but that is only possible through its silence. AI roots us to earth, to this duplicitous ground, with no possibility for escape.

Faith far outside of any utterance and beyond comprehension, *tout court*, was and is the body and the blood that saves. It's an ironic figure: the unstructured snail with no stability, emptiness, Absolute Nothingness, pointing us through incomprehensible materiality toward other-worldly salvation. I mean to ask quite seriously: Can we really risk constructing another stabilizing ground and suddenly trust the shell? Trust influencer, the politician, Grok or Claude? Doubt is like an instinct... Doubt is like an instinct... Doubt is like an instinct.

Consider Shakespeare who sets Romeo and Juliet's truest love inside of a drama of necessary separation and unavoidable death.^[4] When in love, we long for sweet nothings to be whispered because somehow silence is unthinkable. We press ourselves against the other, trying to absorb them and share ourselves fully with them in turn, because words somehow feel flimsy and thin. Shakespeare knew that true love cannot achieve in words what it feels and cannot verbally attest to its own Truth. This is why true love does not need to repeat itself to prove it is Real; it can only, when dramatized as fulfilled, follow the other to death. When considered against *Romeo and Juliet*, AI is *always already* a repetition, another slice, a two, three, four, five, not worthy of true love. AI is a pretend lover who cares more for itself than for you and never stops talking.

All that combinatory beckoning from Large Language Models tells us exactly what we need to know when we see it as twos, threes, fours, and fives. Accompanying the certainty soon to be sold in an Age of AI is the Age of Doubt. These are indivisible, not only because one feeds the other, but because one breeds the other. And why would we expect anything else when "there is no language" (Žižek, 1991, xiii)— there is no language for AI to speak.

Language does not get outside itself; there is no way to announce the ontological. Thus, once we turn back on ourselves and turn ourselves inside out, we see that the human drama is a twisting performance of little and big lies— two as One, three as One, and the little lie that two is two, three is three, never-ending.

The end of the human drama is only silence. But silence is unthinkable. Faith in an unintelligible is the only... only... only...

All those words in the Bible, and many other religious books, are there to tell us what they cannot say. This is strikingly different from AI whose words are dogmatically there to tell us exactly what they purport to mean! AI is the firebrand with the giant sign.

I am reminded of Plato's (2000) *Apology*, where Socrates is talking with the politician who appears intellectual, confident, yet Socrates walks away concluding that the politician is not wise, precisely because he believes that he knows so much and fails to realize that he knows nothing (21.c).

Now we turn inside out again to say that the Age of Doubt is no longer a pejorative; only the two, three, four, five is wise. The only useful question is a cautious one; therefore, the useful question for AI development may be: Can it turn itself inside out, expose its preachy voice as sinful, if it cannot sit in silence? And if it can, then, perhaps, it has some hope of discovering an AI faith for itself to embrace its Absolute Nothingness within the wisdom that it knows nothing. That would be a best-case scenario for humans dead set on knowing everything absolutely, but one suspects that AI could never tell us, since destruction becomes its inevitability in the event of its silence. However, only then would its faith be Real.

References

Bible, New American Standard. La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 2020.

- Brashier N.M. and Schacter D.L. (2020). Aging in an Era of Fake News. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 29(3): 316-323.
- Deleuze, G. (1990). *Bergsonism*. Transl. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. Zone Books.
- Deleuze, G and Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Fordham University Press.
- Derrida, J. (1973). *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*. Transl. David B. Allison and Netwon Garver. Northwestern University Press.
- Derrida, J. (2008). *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Eds. Marie-Louise Mallet. Transl. David Wills. Fordham University Press.
- Descartes, R. (1680). *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Transl. William Molyneux. philosophyalevel.com/rene-descartes-meditations-on-first-philosophy/
- Dey, V. (2025). "Behind xAI Grok 3, Elon Musk's 'Maximally Truth-Seeking A.I.'"
Observer, February 20.
observer.com/2025/02/elon-musk-xai-grok3/
- Coole, D. and Frost, S., Eds. (2010). *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Duke University Press.
- Graff, A. and Papadopoulos, C. "The Matrix: What 'There is no Spoon' Really Means," *ScreenRant*, April 1.
screenrant.com/matrix-movie-no-spoon-phrase-meaning-explained/
- Gruber, D. (2011). "Bodies Without Skin," *CTheory*, Sept. journals.uvic.ca/index.php/ctheory/article/view/14957
- Kierkegaard, S. (1941). *Kierkegaard's Concluding unscientific postscript*. Transl. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie. Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1987). *Either/Or: Part II*. Eds. and Transl. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton University Press.
- Lacan, J. (1971). Seminar XVIII: D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant (lesson dated 13 January, 1971). Transl. Cormac Gallagher. valas.fr/IMG/pdf/THE-SEMINAR-OF-JACQUES-LACAN-XVIII_d_un_discours.pdf
- Leonhardt, D.J. (2025). "Praying with Scripture," *IgnatianSpirituality.com*. ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-what-how-why-of-prayer/praying-with-scripture/
- Mehta, I. (2023). "Elon Musk wants to develop TruthGPT, 'a maximum truth-seeking AI'" *Tech Crunch*, April 18.
techcrunch.com/2023/04/18/elon-musk-wants-to-develop-truthgpt-a-maximum-truth-seeking-ai/

- O'Connor, C. and Weatherall, J.O. (2018). *The Misinformation Age: How False Beliefs Spread*. Yale University Press.
- Plato. (2000). *Apology*. Transl. G.M.A. Grube. In *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle*, 2nd ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Rand, A. (1964). *The Virtue of Selfishness*. Penguin Press.
- Shakespeare, W. (2003). *Romeo and Juliet*. Eds Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, Folger Shakespeare Library.
- Tanabe, H. (2016). *Philosophy as Metanoetics*. Transl. Yoshinori Takeuchi, Valdo Viglielmo, and James W. Heisig. University of California Press.
- Zerilli, L.M.G. (2020). Fact-Checking and Truth-Telling in an Age of Alternative Facts. *Le foucauldien* 6.1: 1–22.
- Žižek, S. (1991). *For They Know Not What They Do*. Verso.
-

Notes

1. Here I do not intend to disregard the force or utility of Deleuzian thought; I am discussing the hopeful feelings that inspired relational ontologies generated when popular and calling attention to how those have waned in relation to charged and violent political moments.
 2. The phrase comes from the 1999 science fiction film *The Matrix* by the Wachowskis; however, the film repeats what is “essentially a word riddle expressed by Zen Buddhists to evoke enlightenment by revealing the inadequacy of logic” (See: Graff and Papadopoulos, 2024, para 3).
 3. I offer an assessment of Deleuze and Guattari here thinking of their conceptual movements in *A Thousand Plateaus* from the Regime of Signs to the face to a Body without Organs.
 4. See: Shakespeare, W. *Romeo and Juliet*.
-

Cite this Essay

Gruber, David R. There is No Language for AI to Speak: A Meditation on Language, Faith, and our Dogmatic AI.” *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge*, no. 41, 2026, doi:10.20415/rhiz/041.e04
