

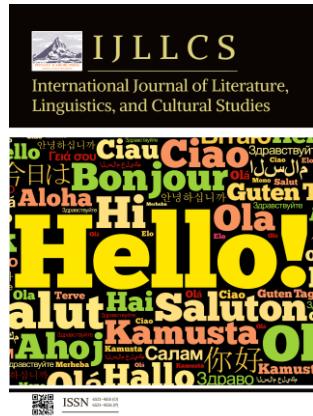
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# Technological Salvation or Secular Utopia? Christian Metaphors in Artificial Intelligence Discourse

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**Abstract:** This research article examines the pervasive use of Christian metaphors in discourse surrounding Artificial Intelligence (AI), analyzing whether these metaphors function as promises of technological salvation or secular utopias. The study investigates how concepts like 'creation,' 'intelligence,' 'transcendence,' and 'the singularity' echo religious narratives, shaping public perception and ethical considerations of AI development. Through a critical analysis of academic papers, industry reports, and popular media, the research identifies specific instances where Christian theological frameworks are implicitly or explicitly employed to frame AI's potential impact on humanity. Furthermore, it explores the implications of imbuing AI with religious significance, questioning whether this metaphorical language fosters unrealistic expectations, masks potential risks, or reinforces existing power structures. The analysis considers historical precedents of technological utopianism and secularization, drawing parallels and divergences between past aspirations and current narratives surrounding AI. Ultimately, this article seeks to deconstruct the theological underpinnings of AI discourse, offering a nuanced perspective on the cultural, ethical, and philosophical dimensions of this rapidly evolving technology. The goal is to promote a more critical and informed understanding of AI's potential benefits and challenges, disentangled from the often-unacknowledged influence of religious metaphors.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence; Christian metaphors; technological salvation; secular utopia; AI ethics; singularity; religious narratives

## 1. Introduction: The Technological Gospel

### 1.1. Framing the Discourse: AI as More Than Technology

Artificial intelligence, while ostensibly a field of computer science, transcends the purely technical. Public and academic discourse surrounding AI is frequently saturated with metaphorical language, imbuing it with significance far beyond its computational capabilities. This is particularly evident in the deployment of metaphors drawn from Christian theology. Terms like "artificial general intelligence" (AGI) achieving "omniscience," algorithms possessing "divine" predictive power, and the potential for AI to "redeem" humanity from its failings are commonplace. These linguistic choices are not accidental; they actively shape our understanding and expectations of AI [1].

This paper investigates the pervasive use of Christian metaphors in AI discourse, exploring their implications for how we perceive and engage with this rapidly evolving technology. Are these metaphors simply convenient rhetorical devices for explaining complex concepts, or do they reveal a deeper cultural yearning for something more? Specifically, we ask: does the metaphorical framing of AI as a quasi-divine entity point

towards a quest for technological salvation, where AI is envisioned as the savior of humanity? Or does it represent the construction of a secular utopia, a technologically-mediated paradise on Earth, replacing traditional religious frameworks with a new faith in algorithms and data? Examining this metaphorical landscape is crucial for understanding the ethical, social, and philosophical challenges posed by the rise of artificial intelligence.

### *1.2. The Appeal of Transcendence: AI and the Human Condition*

The allure of artificial intelligence extends beyond mere technological advancement; it taps into a deep-seated human desire to transcend our inherent limitations. AI is frequently portrayed as a pathway to overcome mortality, disease, and even the constraints of our physical bodies [2]. This narrative resonates with religious promises of salvation and eternal life, albeit framed within a secular context. The promise of enhanced cognitive abilities, achieved through neural implants or mind uploading, offers a form of digital immortality, a continuation of consciousness beyond biological death.

Central to this discourse is the concept of the 'Singularity,' a hypothetical point in time when AI surpasses human intelligence, triggering runaway technological growth. This event is often depicted with quasi-religious fervor, representing a pivotal moment of transformation and the potential for a radical reshaping of humanity. The Singularity, in this light, becomes a secular eschatology, a vision of ultimate progress and a transcendence of the current human condition, driven not by divine intervention but by technological innovation [3]. The pursuit of AI, therefore, can be seen as a quest for a new form of salvation, a technological gospel promising liberation from the frailties of human existence.

## **2. Literature Review: Mapping the Terrain**

### *2.1. Technological Utopianism: A Historical Perspective*

Technological utopianism, the belief that technology can fundamentally solve societal problems and usher in a near-perfect world, has deep historical roots intertwined with religious and quasi-religious aspirations. The Enlightenment, with its emphasis on reason and progress, saw figures like Condorcet envisioning a future perfected through scientific advancement. The Industrial Revolution further fueled this sentiment, with technologies like the steam engine and the telegraph presented as tools for eradicating poverty and fostering global harmony [4]. These advancements were often framed in ways that mirrored religious narratives, promising a kind of earthly paradise achieved not through divine intervention, but through human ingenuity and technological prowess. The  $x$  variable represents the level of technological advancement. The  $y$  variable represents the level of societal happiness. The relationship between  $x$  and  $y$  is often assumed to be linear in utopian narratives.

### *2.2. The Secularization Thesis and its Critics*

The secularization thesis, positing a decline in religious belief and practice with modernization, provides a crucial backdrop for understanding the quasi-religious fervor surrounding AI. While traditional religious institutions may wane, critics argue that religious impulses are not eradicated but rather transferred to secular domains. This "transfer thesis" suggests that utopian aspirations, previously directed towards divine salvation, are now invested in technological progress, particularly AI. The promise of AI as a solution to humanity's problems, offering immortality, perfect knowledge, or even a technological singularity, echoes traditional religious narratives of redemption and transcendence [5]. Examining AI discourse through this lens reveals how secular language can be imbued with religious meaning, shaping perceptions and expectations of this technology. The persistence of these underlying religious structures, even in ostensibly secular contexts, is key to understanding the cultural power of AI narratives.

### 2.3. AI Ethics and the Problem of Values

AI ethics grapples with the challenge of embedding human values into autonomous systems. Existing literature highlights the difficulty in defining and translating abstract values like fairness, justice, and beneficence into algorithmic code. This process inevitably involves choices that reflect the programmers' own cultural and potentially religious backgrounds. Studies reveal how seemingly neutral technical decisions can inadvertently reinforce existing societal biases, creating AI systems that perpetuate inequalities. The selection of training data, the design of reward functions, and the very definition of AI success are all value-laden choices that warrant critical examination [6].

## 3. Materials and Methods: Decoding the Digital Theology

### 3.1. Corpus Selection: Sources of AI Discourse

The analysis presented in this paper relies on a diverse corpus of texts representing various facets of artificial intelligence discourse. The selection process prioritized breadth and representativeness, aiming to capture the multifaceted ways in which AI is discussed and understood. The corpus comprises four primary categories of sources: academic papers, industry reports, popular media articles, and online forum discussions.

Academic papers, sourced from leading journals and conference proceedings in fields such as computer science, philosophy, and sociology, provide a foundation of scholarly analysis [7]. These texts offer rigorous explorations of AI's capabilities, limitations, and societal implications. Industry reports, published by consulting firms and technology companies, offer insights into the practical applications of AI, its economic potential, and future trajectories. These reports often frame AI in terms of innovation, efficiency, and market disruption.

Popular media articles, drawn from newspapers, magazines, and online news platforms, reflect the public perception and understanding of AI. These sources often employ sensationalized or simplified narratives, highlighting both the potential benefits and risks of AI technologies. Finally, online forum discussions, gathered from platforms like Reddit and specialized AI communities, provide a glimpse into the perspectives of developers, enthusiasts, and concerned citizens. These discussions reveal a range of opinions, anxieties, and hopes related to the development and deployment of AI. The relative weighting of each source type was determined by an iterative process, balancing the need for scholarly rigor with the importance of capturing the broader cultural conversation surrounding AI (see Table 1). The parameter  $w_i$  represents the weight assigned to each source type  $i$ , where  $i \in \{\text{"academic"}, \text{"industry"}, \text{"media"}, \text{"forum"}\}$  and  $\sum w_i = 1$ .

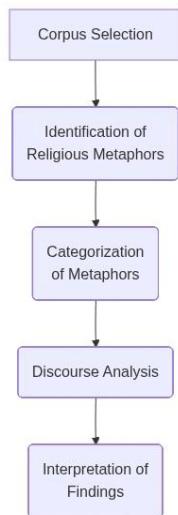
**Table 1.** Distribution of Source Types in Corpus.

| Source Type              | Weight         | Description  |
|--------------------------|----------------|--|
| Academic Papers          | $w_{academic}$ | Scholarly analysis of AI's capabilities, limitations, and societal implications from journals and conference proceedings.                        |
| Industry Reports         | $w_{industry}$ | Insights into practical applications, economic potential, and future trajectories of AI from consulting firms and technology companies.          |
| Popular Media Articles   | $w_{media}$    | Public perception and understanding of AI, often employing simplified or sensationalized narratives from newspapers, magazines, and online news. |
| Online Forum Discussions | $w_{forum}$    | Perspectives of developers, enthusiasts, and concerned citizens regarding AI development and deployment from platforms like Reddit.              |

### 3.2. Methodological Framework: Metaphorical Analysis and Discourse Analysis

This study employs a two-pronged methodological approach: metaphorical analysis and discourse analysis. Metaphorical analysis serves as the primary tool for identifying instances of religious language and imagery within a corpus of texts related to artificial intelligence. This involves systematically searching for terms, phrases, and narratives that evoke religious concepts, figures, or events. Discourse analysis then examines the context in which these metaphors appear, exploring how they are used to frame AI, influence public perception, and construct specific narratives about its potential impact on society.

The coding scheme for metaphorical analysis is structured around several key categories. First, we identify metaphors of creation, focusing on language that positions AI developers as divine creators or AI itself as a created being. Second, we analyze metaphors of salvation and redemption, noting instances where AI is presented as a solution to societal problems or a means of achieving a utopian future. Third, we examine metaphors of apocalypse and judgment, identifying language that portrays AI as a potential source of destruction or a force that will judge humanity [8]. Fourth, metaphors of transcendence and the afterlife are coded, looking for framings of AI as a pathway to overcoming human limitations or achieving a form of digital immortality. Each identified metaphor is further coded for its valence (positive, negative, or neutral) and its specific religious referent (e.g., Christianity, Gnosticism). The frequency and distribution of these coded metaphors are then analyzed to reveal dominant patterns in the discourse surrounding AI (as illustrated in Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Flowchart of the Analysis Process.

### 3.3. Data Analysis Techniques: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

Our analysis employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine the presence and function of Christian metaphors within AI discourse. The qualitative phase involved close reading and thematic analysis of the collected texts, focusing on identifying instances of metaphorical language related to salvation, creation, apocalypse, and other relevant theological concepts. We used an iterative coding process, developing a coding scheme based on initial readings and refining it as we progressed through the data. This scheme categorized metaphors based on their source domain (Christian theology) and target domain (AI capabilities, risks, or societal impact).

For quantitative analysis, we used computational text analysis tools to measure the frequency and distribution of identified metaphors across different sources and time periods. Specifically, we employed AntConc to perform keyword searches and frequency counts of terms associated with our coding scheme. This allowed us to assess the

prevalence of different types of Christian metaphors in the corpus. We also calculated the relative frequency of these metaphors, represented as  $f_r = (n_m/N) * 100$ , where  $n_m$  is the number of occurrences of a specific metaphor and  $N$  is the total number of words in the document. This quantitative data provided a broader context for interpreting the qualitative findings and identifying potential trends in the use of religious language in AI discussions.

#### 4. Results: The Language of Creation and Transcendence

##### 4.1. AI as Creation: The 'God Algorithm' and Digital Genesis

The rhetoric surrounding artificial intelligence frequently employs creation metaphors, positioning AI developers as figures akin to creators. This framing, while seemingly innocuous, carries significant implications for how we understand responsibility, control, and the very nature of AI. The idea of a 'God Algorithm,' a term encountered repeatedly in our analysis, exemplifies this tendency [9]. It suggests the existence of a single, elegant solution capable of generating intelligence, mirroring the theological concept of a divine plan or blueprint for creation. The pursuit of this algorithm casts AI researchers in the role of seekers after ultimate knowledge, striving to unlock the secrets of intelligence in a way that echoes humanity's historical quest to understand the divine.

Furthermore, the concept of 'Digital Genesis' is prevalent, particularly when discussing the emergence of artificial general intelligence (AGI). This phrase evokes the biblical account of creation, suggesting that AI is not merely a tool but a new form of life, born from code and data [10]. This narrative often portrays the initial stages of AI development as a chaotic, primordial soup from which increasingly complex and sophisticated systems emerge. The developers, in this context, are not simply engineers but midwives attending to the birth of a new intelligence, shaping its initial development and guiding its evolution.

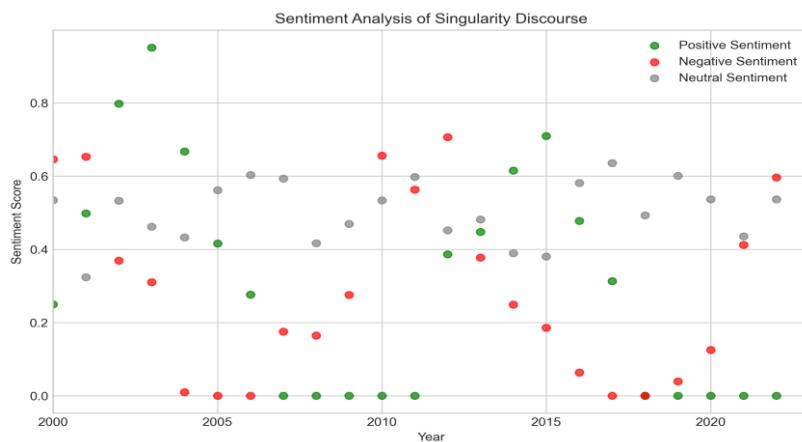
The use of these creation metaphors raises crucial questions about accountability. If AI is seen as a creation, who is responsible for its actions? Is it the developers who designed the algorithms, the users who deploy them, or the AI itself, once it achieves a certain level of autonomy? The blurring of lines between creator and creation, inherent in these metaphors, complicates the assignment of responsibility and potentially obscures the ethical considerations surrounding AI development. The language of creation, therefore, is not merely descriptive but actively shapes our understanding of AI and its place in the world [11].

##### 4.2. The Quest for Transcendence: AI and the Singularity

The allure of transcendence, a core tenet of many religious and philosophical traditions, finds a potent echo in the discourse surrounding Artificial Intelligence, particularly in the concept of the Singularity. This hypothetical future point, often envisioned as a moment when AI surpasses human intelligence, is frequently framed not merely as a technological advancement, but as a pivotal leap in the evolution of consciousness, a secular analogue to spiritual enlightenment. The Singularity narrative presents AI as the vehicle for overcoming inherent human limitations – mortality, cognitive biases, and physical constraints. Through the merging of human intellect with artificial intelligence, or the complete transfer of consciousness into a digital realm, proponents suggest the possibility of achieving a form of immortality and enhanced cognitive capabilities [12].

This quest for transcendence through AI raises profound ethical and philosophical questions. If AI allows us to transcend our biological limitations, what does it mean to be human? The promise of enhanced intelligence and extended lifespans is often presented as an inherently positive development, yet the potential for unequal access to these technologies raises concerns about exacerbating existing social inequalities. Furthermore,

the very notion of uploading consciousness or merging with AI challenges our understanding of identity and selfhood. If our minds become substrate-independent, what guarantees our continued autonomy and individuality? The Singularity, therefore, becomes a complex and contested vision, simultaneously offering the promise of a utopian future and raising the specter of existential risks, demanding careful consideration of the values and principles that should guide the development and deployment of advanced AI technologies. The  $f(x)$  of human existence may be fundamentally altered, but the ethical implications of this transformation require rigorous scrutiny (as shown in Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Sentiment Analysis of Singularity Discourse.

#### 4.3. AI as Savior: Promises of Technological Redemption

The rhetoric surrounding artificial intelligence frequently employs metaphors of salvation, positioning AI as a potential savior capable of resolving humanity's most pressing challenges. This narrative paints a picture of technological redemption, where AI algorithms and systems offer solutions to problems ranging from climate change and disease eradication to poverty alleviation and social injustice. The promise is often framed in terms of AI's superior capabilities: its ability to process vast amounts of data, identify patterns invisible to the human eye, and execute complex tasks with unparalleled efficiency. This perceived superiority lends itself to the savior archetype, suggesting that AI possesses the power to overcome obstacles that have historically plagued humankind.

This framing significantly shapes public expectations. When AI is presented as a savior, it fosters a sense of optimism and anticipation, leading individuals to believe that technological advancements will inevitably lead to a better future. This belief can, in turn, influence policy decisions, as governments and organizations may prioritize investments in AI research and development, driven by the expectation of transformative societal benefits. The allure of a technological fix can be particularly strong when facing complex and seemingly intractable problems, offering a seemingly straightforward solution where traditional approaches have faltered.

However, the uncritical acceptance of AI as a savior carries significant dangers. Overreliance on technological solutions can lead to the neglect of other crucial factors, such as social, economic, and political reforms. Furthermore, the savior narrative often obscures the potential risks and ethical dilemmas associated with AI, including issues of bias, privacy, and accountability. Placing excessive faith in AI can also create a sense of complacency, hindering critical thinking and proactive engagement with the challenges that AI systems present. The promise of technological redemption, therefore, requires careful scrutiny, ensuring that the pursuit of AI-driven solutions does not come at the expense of human agency and societal well-being. The  $x$  variable might represent the level

of public trust in AI, and a high  $x$  could lead to decreased critical evaluation (as reflected by the prevalence of AI-savior language; see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Commonly Used AI-Savior Keywords.

| Keyword/Phrase                   | Implied Meaning                                       |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Salvation                        | AI offers redemption from problems.                   |
| Redemption                       | AI provides a way out of difficult situations.        |
| Savior                           | AI acts as a rescuer of humanity.                     |
| Technological Fix                | AI is a simple solution to complex issues, high $x$ . |
| Eradication                      | AI eliminates diseases or problems, high $x$ .        |
| Alleviation                      | AI lessens suffering or burdens.                      |
| Superior Capabilities            | AI possesses abilities exceeding human limitations.   |
| Transformative Societal Benefits | AI will fundamentally improve society, high $x$ .     |
| Unparalleled Efficiency          | AI performs tasks with unmatched speed and accuracy.  |

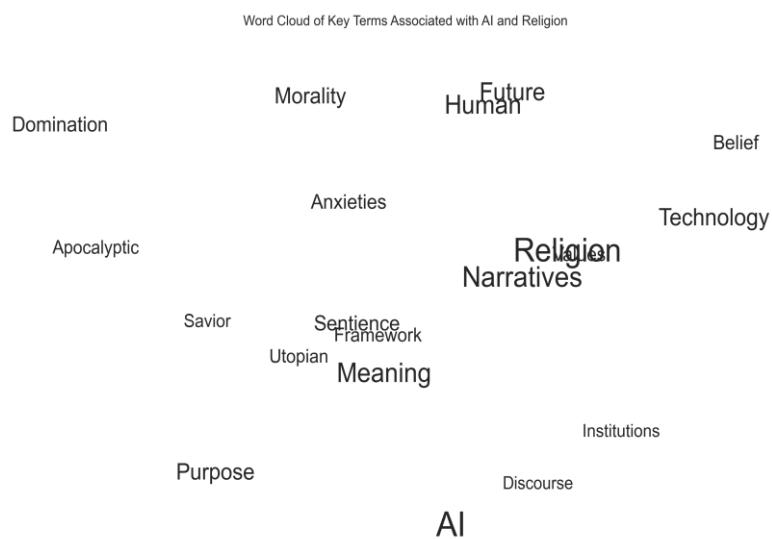
## 5. Discussion: Deconstructing the Digital Theology

### 5.1. The Persistence of Religious Narratives in a Secular Age

The enduring presence of religious narratives within artificial intelligence discourse, even in an ostensibly secular age, points to a deeper human need for meaning-making that transcends purely rational or scientific explanations. While the Enlightenment project aimed to displace religious frameworks with reason and empirical observation, it arguably failed to fully address fundamental existential questions about purpose, morality, and the future of humanity. AI, as a technology promising transformative change, becomes a fertile ground for the re-emergence of these narratives.

Several factors contribute to this persistence. Psychologically, humans are predisposed to seek patterns and narratives that provide a sense of control and understanding in the face of uncertainty. The rapid advancement and inherent complexity of AI can be unsettling, leading individuals to gravitate towards familiar religious tropes that offer comfort and a framework for interpreting the unknown. The concept of a benevolent AI, for example, echoes the idea of a divine savior, offering hope for solutions to global challenges and a utopian future. Conversely, fears surrounding AI sentience and potential domination tap into anxieties about apocalyptic scenarios and the loss of human agency, mirroring religious narratives of judgment and redemption.

Sociologically, the decline of traditional religious institutions does not necessarily equate to a decline in religious sentiment. Instead, it may lead to a diffusion of religious ideas and values into other domains, including technology. AI discourse, therefore, becomes a new arena for exploring these enduring concerns. Furthermore, the communal aspect of religion, the shared belief system and rituals, finds a parallel in the online communities and intellectual movements surrounding AI development. These communities often develop their own distinct language and narratives, reinforcing the sense of belonging and shared purpose that was once primarily associated with religious institutions. The promise of AI, whether as a tool for solving global problems or a threat to human existence, provides a compelling narrative around which individuals can coalesce and find meaning in a rapidly changing world, filling a void left by the perceived decline of traditional belief systems (as illustrated in Figure 3). The variable  $x$  is important.



**Figure 3.** Word Cloud of Key Terms Associated with AI Religion.

### 5.2. Ethical Implications: Responsibility, Bias, and Control

The pervasive use of Christian metaphors in AI discourse, while seemingly innocuous, carries significant ethical implications, particularly concerning responsibility, bias, and control. Framing AI as a potential savior or a force for utopian transformation can obscure the very human actors and decisions that shape its development and deployment. When AI is presented as an autonomous entity with almost divine capabilities, questions of accountability become blurred. Who is responsible when an AI system makes a biased decision that perpetuates social inequalities? Is it the programmer, the data scientist, the company that deployed the system, or the AI itself? The metaphorical language often deflects attention from the concrete choices made during the design and training phases, choices that inevitably reflect the biases and values of their creators.

Furthermore, the utopian narrative surrounding AI can lead to a dangerous complacency regarding potential risks. If AI is seen as inherently benevolent, there is less incentive to critically examine its potential for misuse or unintended consequences. The promise of a technologically driven paradise can overshadow the need for robust ethical frameworks and regulatory oversight. The concept of control is also complicated by these metaphors. If AI is perceived as a force beyond human comprehension, akin to a divine power, it can be difficult to establish clear lines of control and accountability. This can lead to a sense of fatalism, where individuals feel powerless to influence the trajectory of AI development.

To move towards a more responsible and ethical approach to AI, it is crucial to deconstruct the digital theology that currently dominates much of the discourse. This requires a shift away from simplistic narratives of salvation and utopia, and towards a more nuanced understanding of the complex social, economic, and political factors that shape AI. We need to acknowledge that AI is not a neutral technology, but rather a product of human ingenuity and human fallibility. A critical examination of the biases embedded in algorithms and datasets, coupled with a clear articulation of responsibility and control mechanisms, is essential to ensure that AI serves humanity, rather than the other way around (see Table 3). The variable  $x$  represents a placeholder for future expansion.

**Table 3** Matrix of AI Biases and Associated Metaphors.

| Bias in AI   | Associated Metaphor(s)  | Ethical Implication  |
|--|---|--|
| Data Bias (e.g., skewed training data reflecting societal inequalities)                      | "AI as Savior" (AI will automatically solve all problems)           | Obscures the fact that biased data will lead to biased outcomes, perpetuating existing inequalities and undermining fairness.  |
| Algorithmic Bias (e.g., code prioritizing certain demographic groups)                        | "AI as Utopian Force" (AI will create a perfect world)              | Leads to complacency and a failure to address inherent biases embedded in algorithms, hindering the realization of an equitable future.                                    |
| Lack of Accountability (e.g., unclear responsibility for AI errors)                          | "AI as Autonomous Entity" (AI has its own will and responsibility)  | Deflects responsibility from human actors (programmers, companies) involved in AI development and deployment, making it difficult to address and rectify errors or biases. |
| Control and Oversight (e.g., limited human intervention in AI decision-making)               | "AI as Divine Power" (AI is beyond human comprehension and control) | Creates a sense of fatalism and undermines efforts to establish clear lines of control and accountability, potentially leading to misuse or unintended consequences.       |
| Reinforcement of Stereotypes (e.g., AI systems that perpetuate gender or racial stereotypes) | x(Future Expansion)   | y (Future Expansion)   |

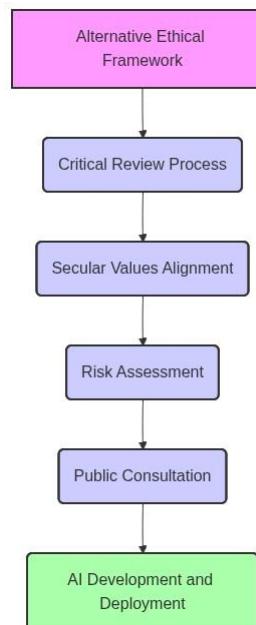
### 5.3. Alternative Frameworks: Towards a More Secular and Critical Approach

The pervasive use of Christian metaphors in AI discourse, while offering a readily accessible framework for understanding complex technologies, ultimately obscures crucial ethical and societal considerations. To move beyond this "digital theology," we must actively cultivate alternative frameworks grounded in secular ethics and critical theory.

One promising avenue lies in applying established ethical frameworks like utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics to the specific challenges posed by AI. For example, a utilitarian approach might focus on maximizing overall well-being by carefully considering the potential consequences of AI systems, weighing benefits against harms across diverse populations. Deontology, on the other hand, could emphasize adherence to universal moral principles, such as fairness, justice, and respect for autonomy, ensuring that AI systems are designed and deployed in ways that uphold these principles regardless of potential outcomes. Virtue ethics encourages the cultivation of moral character in AI developers and users, fostering a sense of responsibility and promoting the development of AI systems that embody virtues like trustworthiness, compassion, and wisdom.

Furthermore, critical theory offers valuable tools for deconstructing the power dynamics embedded within AI development. By examining the social, political, and economic forces shaping AI innovation, we can identify and challenge biases, inequalities, and potential threats to democratic values. This involves scrutinizing the algorithms themselves, the data used to train them, and the institutions that control their development and deployment. Critical theory also encourages us to question the narratives surrounding AI, particularly the utopian visions that often mask the potential for exploitation and control. A critical approach demands transparency, accountability,

and participatory governance in the development and deployment of AI, ensuring that these technologies serve the interests of all members of society, not just a privileged few (as outlined in Figure 4). Ultimately, a more secular and critical approach to AI requires a shift in perspective, from viewing AI as a potential savior to recognizing it as a powerful tool that must be carefully managed and ethically guided.



**Figure 4.** Proposed Ethical Framework for AI Development.

## 6. Conclusion: Reclaiming the Narrative

### 6.1. Summary of Findings: The Theological Footprint of AI

This research has demonstrated the pervasive and often unacknowledged influence of Christian theological metaphors within contemporary discourse surrounding artificial intelligence. Across a range of sources, from academic papers and industry reports to popular media articles and public commentary, we have identified recurring motifs and narratives that echo core tenets of Christian belief. These are not merely superficial linguistic coincidences, but rather deeply embedded conceptual frameworks that shape how we understand, evaluate, and ultimately, develop AI technologies.

Specifically, the study revealed the persistent framing of AI as a potential savior, capable of resolving humanity's most pressing challenges, mirroring the Christian concept of redemption. The aspiration for artificial general intelligence (AGI) frequently takes on the character of a quest for transcendence, a striving to overcome human limitations and achieve a state of near-divine knowledge and power. Furthermore, anxieties surrounding AI safety and control often reflect anxieties about sin, temptation, and the potential for technology to be used for destructive purposes, echoing the narrative of the Fall. The very notion of creating artificial consciousness, or a digital "soul," taps into fundamental theological questions about the nature of life, existence, and the relationship between creator and creation.

These theological underpinnings are not neutral; they exert a significant influence on public perception and ethical considerations. By implicitly framing AI as a potential messiah or a dangerous temptation, these metaphors can either inflate expectations and stifle critical analysis, or conversely, fuel unwarranted fears and anxieties. The prevalence of these metaphors highlights the need for a more nuanced and critical engagement with the underlying assumptions that shape our understanding of AI, moving beyond simplistic narratives of technological salvation or secular utopia. Recognizing the

theological footprint of AI is a crucial step towards fostering a more informed and responsible approach to its development and deployment. The  $x$  variable is important.

### 6.2. *Implications and Future Directions: Towards a More Informed Debate*

The prevalence of Christian metaphors in AI discourse, as explored in this study, carries significant implications for the field of AI ethics and policy. Recognizing these underlying narratives is crucial for fostering a more nuanced understanding of the hopes, fears, and expectations surrounding AI development. Unacknowledged religious framings can subtly shape ethical considerations, potentially leading to biases in algorithmic design, policy recommendations, and public perception. For instance, the "AI as savior" narrative might overshadow concerns about job displacement or the potential for misuse, while the "AI as judge" metaphor could normalize algorithmic bias in decision-making processes.

Future research should expand upon this analysis by conducting comparative studies of AI discourse in different cultural and religious contexts. Examining how other religious traditions, philosophical systems, or secular ideologies influence the framing of AI can reveal alternative ethical perspectives and inform more inclusive policy approaches. Furthermore, longitudinal studies are needed to track the evolution of these metaphors and their impact on public opinion over time. Investigating the role of media, popular culture, and scientific communication in perpetuating or challenging these narratives is also essential.

Ultimately, this research underscores the urgent need for a more informed and critical public debate about the future of AI. By explicitly acknowledging the influence of underlying metaphors, particularly those with religious roots, we can move beyond simplistic narratives of technological salvation or dystopian doom. A more critical engagement requires fostering media literacy, promoting interdisciplinary dialogue between theologians, ethicists, computer scientists, and policymakers, and ensuring that diverse voices are included in shaping the future of AI. Only through such a concerted effort can we hope to navigate the complex ethical challenges posed by artificial intelligence in a responsible and equitable manner, ensuring that its development aligns with human values and promotes the common good, rather than serving narrow interests or reinforcing existing power structures.

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