

# WHY ISN'T MY VOICE **ARTIFICIAL?**

ONE WRITER'S SEARCH FOR A LITERARY LLM

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Photos by [infralist.com](https://www.infralist.com) on Unsplash  
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# A DISCLAIMER

I am nontechnical. I am neither a computer scientist nor a linguist.

My adult life has been spent trying to make words transmit ideas and feeling. That is my expertise.

My chats with GPT-5 are the basis of the work.  $N = 1$

**STYLE AND TONE ARE ALWAYS  $N = 1$ .**

My question is whether, to any degree, LLMs can approach a real style-voice of its own, whatever “own” means.

Hoping to advance a discussion,

-A

# WHAT'S THE PROBLEM

## **AI “SLOP” IS POORLY DEFINED.**

Slop can't just be “things I don't like.”

What is style? What is voice?

**SLOP IS READY-MADE  
AND READY-DISPOSABLE.**

## **“ANTI-SLOP” HAS A PULSE.**

LLMs aren't alive and don't have a perspective.

Can they be evocative regardless?

# AI MAKES “SLOP” BECAUSE:

No lived experience

Not self-directed

No knowledge  
outside training data

Limits on compute

Referring to its own  
output -> degrades

**FIXED BOUNDS  
ON WHAT CAN BE  
EXPRESSED & HOW.**

# WHY AREN'T HUMANS MECHANISTIC?

## HUMAN SYSTEM

Experience

\*

Influences

\*

Free Association

\*

Syntax

## LLM SYSTEM

Training data

\*

User input

\*

Probability &  
stochastic models

\*

Syntax

**AI PRODUCES SLOP  
BECAUSE SLOP  
IS PART OF THE  
HUMAN CONDITION**

# ON DESIGNED SPEECH<sup>1</sup>

## RECEIVED ENGLISH



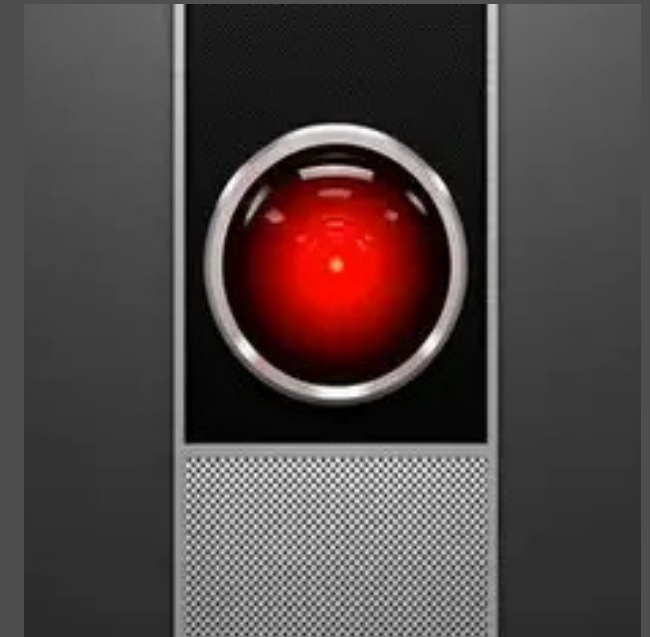
Upper-crust standard

## TRANSATLANTIC ENGLISH



Engineered for media

## SYNTHETIC ENGLISH?



Interactive loops

# AN EXPERIMENT



I'm an open-ocean swimmer. I wondered how AI would interpret a kinetic, auditory and visual space that is entirely nonverbal.

I went out. I listened. I catalogued.

And then I asked GPT-5 to interpret.

# ANATOMY, FIG 1.

## WHAT TENSE IS THIS?

Imagine:

You're out there, calm green water all around, and somewhere out in the murk there's a **shiver** of leopard sharks just cruising past.

You'll never see them.

But they saw you.

That kind of fact—that you're rarely alone in the ocean— isn't scary.

It's just wildly humbling.<sup>2</sup>

**CAN'T BE PAST:** Hasn't happened yet.

**CAN'T BE FUTURE:** "You" are already there.

## **MECHANICAL PRESENT:**

A conditional tense that can **only** come from probabilistic simulation of events that "should" be happening.

# ANATOMY, FIG 2.

## INTERLACING FACTS W. IMPRESSIONS

- Your head is too small relative to the speed of sound in water to detect meaningful time differences between ears.
- And because sound travels faster and more efficiently in water, it reaches *both ears almost simultaneously* and with very little distortion.

The result?

That engine whine *seems to come from everywhere*. It's disorienting, almost like the ocean is broadcasting it directly into your skull. <sup>3</sup>

**RATIONAL.** The science of sound.

**IRRATIONAL.** The experience is uninterpretable.

### **MECHANICAL METAPHOR:**

GPT-5 will trade low-probability word choice for extended feel as well as factual accuracy.

# ANATOMY, FIG 3.

## CASES OF AMBIGUITY

And yeah — hearing something new while half-buried in shells and silence? That's the kind of embodied cognition AI can't simulate... but maybe *can* be shaped by, if we bring the echoes back up to the surface with us.<sup>4</sup>

- INTERPRETATION 1.** Hallucination with no literal meaning.
- INTERPRETATION 2.** Not a hallucination, no literal meaning.
- INTERPRETATION 3.** Calculated expression of wonder; literal meaning unnecessary.

### **MECHANICAL UNCERTAINTY:**

GPT-5 is able to create open-ended passages that can be understood multiple ways, depending on the reader.

**AI CAN WRITE.  
CAN WE READ?**



# FOOTNOTES

## Primary Source

- 1 OpenAI. (2025, August 18). On synthetic style: Writer's notes about LLM voice [ChatGPT response]. ChatGPT. <https://chat.openai.com/>

## Sub-Cited Sources (as cited in OpenAI ChatGPT, 2025)

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ThoughtCo. (2020, February 11). Received pronunciation (RP): Definition and examples.

- 2 OpenAI. (2025, August 15). Conversation with ChatGPT about swimming, underwater sound, and language style. ChatGPT.
- 3 OpenAI. (2025, August 15). Conversation with ChatGPT about swimming, underwater sound, and language style. ChatGPT.
- 4 OpenAI. (2025, August 15). Conversation with ChatGPT about swimming, underwater sound, and language style. ChatGPT.