# AI Architecture and the Binary Nature of Truth: A Defense of Continuous Properties over Multi-Valued Logic

## Introduction

The architecture of modern artificial intelligence systems offers surprising insight into an age-old philosophical puzzle: how should we handle cases where traditional binary truth values seem inadequate? When confronting vague predicates—like whether a particular molecule belongs to a cloud, or whether an organism counts as male—philosophers have often been tempted to posit additional truth values beyond simple true and false (Priest, 2008). However, examining how AI systems actually represent and process information suggests a different solution: replacing discrete categorical thinking with continuous properties, an approach that aligns with recent developments in cognitive science (Gärdenfors, 2014).

## The Architecture of Modern AI Systems

Modern neural networks, including large language models, process information through layers of artificial neurons, each computing weighted sums of their inputs and applying continuous activation functions (LeCun et al., 2015). These systems represent concepts not as binary predicates but as points in high-dimensional vector spaces, where semantic relationships are captured by geometric relationships between vectors (Bengio et al., 2013).

For example, when an AI system processes the concept "cloud," it doesn't work with a binary membership function that determines whether something is or isn't a cloud. Instead, it represents "cloudiness" as a continuous property in a semantic space where similar concepts cluster together (Mikolov et al., 2013). The system might encode features like density, water content, altitude, and shape as continuous values, allowing it to recognize varying degrees of "cloudiness" without forcing binary categorization.

This architecture has proven remarkably successful at handling real-world complexity and ambiguity. When classifying images, for instance, neural networks don't simply output "cloud" or "not cloud"; they produce confidence scores across multiple categories, reflecting the continuous nature of the underlying properties (Krizhevsky et al., 2012).

## The Problem with Multi-Valued Logic

Despite the apparent appeal of multi-valued logic for handling vagueness, this approach faces serious philosophical difficulties. If we posit a third truth value—whether conceived as "half-true" or "neither true nor false"—we implicitly commit ourselves to metaphysically problematic positions (Williamson, 1994).

Consider the statement "Smith is bald." If this statement is half-true, we are effectively claiming that Smith's baldness half-exists. But the notion of half-existence is metaphysically incoherent—something either exists or it doesn't (Quine, 1953). We cannot coherently speak of properties or states of affairs that "sort of" exist or that neither exist nor fail to exist.

Moreover, as Fine (1975) argues, once we admit a third truth value, what principled reason do we have to stop there? If we need an intermediate value between true and false, why not intermediate values between true and half-true? This leads to an infinite regress that undermines the explanatory value of truth values altogether.

## The Degree-Adjective Solution

The AI architecture perspective suggests a more elegant solution: replacing categorical nouns with degree-adjectives. This approach, reminiscent of Zadeh's (1965) fuzzy set theory but without its metaphysical commitments, aligns perfectly with how neural networks actually process information. When an AI system categorizes something as a "cloud," it's actually measuring multiple continuous properties and making a practical decision based on those measurements (Goodfellow et al., 2016).

## Evidence from AI Implementation

The success of this continuous approach in AI systems provides empirical support for its philosophical validity. Consider these technical examples:

1. Image Recognition: Modern convolutional neural networks don't simply classify images as "cloud" or "not cloud." They compute continuous activation values across multiple features, effectively measuring degrees of "cloudiness" (He et al., 2016).

2. Natural Language Processing: Language models represent words and concepts as high-dimensional vectors (embeddings), where semantic relationships are captured by continuous geometric relationships rather than discrete categories (Devlin et al., 2019).

3. Fuzzy Logic Systems: While these systems appear to implement multi-valued logic, they actually operate by measuring continuous properties and only discretizing results when necessary for practical decisions (Zadeh, 1996).

## Practical Implications and Cognitive Architecture

This perspective helps explain why both human minds and artificial systems often operate with simplified binary distinctions despite maintaining more nuanced internal representations. This aligns with research in cognitive psychology suggesting that human categorization involves prototype effects and graded membership (Rosch, 1975).

## Conclusion

The architecture of successful AI systems provides strong evidence that reality is better understood through continuous properties rather than discrete categories requiring multiple truth values (Bengio, 2009). This approach preserves the metaphysical coherence of binary truth while accounting for the apparent fuzziness of real-world categories, suggesting a fundamental truth about the relationship between mind, language, and reality.

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