

On Meaningful Linguistic Utterances Without Understanding by ChatGPT and Related Systems

Emanuel Rutten

VU Amsterdam

Abstract

In this article, I argue that, despite their undeniably impressive ability to generate meaningful and convincing linguistic utterances, ChatGPT and similar systems do not engage in genuine thinking or understanding. To support this assertion, I develop seven arguments: (1) understanding presupposes an orientation towards truth, (2) rhetorical persuasiveness does not imply understanding, (3) successful problem-solving is not the same as insight, (4) thinking requires free subjectivity and rational deliberation, (5) understanding presupposes intentionality, (6) paradigm shifts cannot arise from statistical pattern extrapolation, and (7) existentially reflective judgement cannot be reduced to statistical algorithms. Taken together, these arguments show that ChatGPT and related systems do not meet the semantic, intentional and existential conditions for genuine understanding and thought.

Keywords: ChatGPT; meaning; understanding; thinking; philosophy of language; hermeneutics

Introduction

ChatGPT, developed by the American company OpenAI, immediately captured the world's attention when it was launched in late November 2022. The new technology soon found its way into journalism, education, software development, the business sector and numerous other societal domains. Within just a few months, artificial intelligence, once a distant dream, evolved into an everyday tool used by millions of people worldwide. Interest in this technology shows no sign of waning. The dream of artificial intelligence seems to have finally come true. Or has it? What has ChatGPT already mastered, and what will it eventually be capable of? Should its actions be understood as thinking? Can we say that it has the ability to understand and make critical judgements?

Many people are concerned with these questions, and rightly so. In the mid-19th century, Charles Darwin, in his groundbreaking work *On the Origin of Species*, demonstrated that the emergence of complex living organisms could be logically explained by just a few simple evolutionary principles of natural selection. Almost two centuries later, ChatGPT is demonstrating that the emergence of complex, meaningful linguistic utterances can be

perfectly well explained by just a few simple statistical prediction rules. Does this mean that ChatGPT is the Darwin of meaning?

It is clear that Darwin's theory of evolution cannot be applied to the generation of meaningful texts and conversations. The generation of organisms through the application of one or more rules of selection is not comparable to the creation of meaning through the use of one or more rules of prediction. Although ChatGPT has demonstrated that, unlike Darwin's principles of natural selection, its statistical prediction algorithms can generate complex and meaningful dialogues, I will argue in what follows that it nevertheless ultimately fails to attain genuine understanding or to grasp meaning.

How does ChatGPT work? ChatGPT is trained exclusively on what we have thought, said, written, and made available on the internet over the past few decades. It is, in this sense, a mirror of humanity. We are engaged in an ongoing dialogue with ourselves and with our past. ChatGPT identifies patterns in what human beings have produced and generates countless combinations of it. It never makes a genuinely original creative leap. It *discloses* nothing. And for that reason, it does not *think*. The human mind is capable of perceiving connections between seemingly unrelated facts, thereby transcending what is already known and bringing forth genuinely new ideas. ChatGPT lacks this capacity. It can only recombine what we have already thought. In other words, it perpetually trails behind human thought, producing nothing more than permutations of what has already been thought. Recombination is not thinking.

Truth, freedom and intentionality

I will now develop seven arguments in support of the thesis that ChatGPT and related systems do not genuinely understand or think. To begin with, ChatGPT has no conception of truth or falsity. It merely computes and returns statistically probable continuations of the words it receives. Since an orientation towards truth is a necessary condition for understanding, ChatGPT does not genuinely understand. It therefore cannot be said to grasp meaning. Precisely because ChatGPT lacks any conception of what truth and falsity are, it cannot determine whether a statement is true or false. It lacks a semantic representation of the world, or a model of the world as world. Although ChatGPT may possess an internal statistical representation of relations between signs, it possesses no normative understanding of the world. In short, ChatGPT has no conception of truth, and for that very reason it does not think. It is thus not capable of genuine judgement. A computer program that imitates meaningful conversation by identifying patterns in large human datasets, without actually understanding what the concepts in those datasets mean, should not be regarded as understanding or thinking.

One of the central concerns of analytic philosophy of language is how understanding of

linguistic utterances is achieved. Insights from the philosophy of language help to clarify why truth is constitutive of understanding. In his 1892 article *Über Sinn und Bedeutung*, Frege argues that the *Bedeutung* (reference) of a declarative sentence is its truth value, whereas its *Sinn* (sense) is the thought through which that truth value is determined. Meaning thus determines the truth value of a statement. Accordingly, the meaning of a statement necessarily has a truth dimension. Wittgenstein likewise directly connects understanding with truth. In the *Tractatus* (2022b, 4.024), he remarks that to understand a proposition is to know what is the case if that proposition is true. According to Wittgenstein, understanding a proposition therefore necessarily presupposes knowledge of its truth conditions. We understand a proposition when we know how the world must be for it to be true. Davidson likewise closely connects meaning and truth (Stokhof 2012). He argues that a theory of truth can serve as an adequate theory of meaning. According to Davidson, the meaning of a sentence is given by the conditions under which it is true. Meaning is thus understood in terms of truth conditions. Meaning and truth conditions are, on this view, virtually inseparable.

Frege, Wittgenstein, and Davidson thus all maintain that understanding a statement is inseparable from knowledge of the conditions under which that statement is true or false. This view accords with a much broader tradition in analytic philosophy of language, in which truth functions as a fundamental semantic notion. An orientation towards truth thus proves to be constitutive of understanding. Understanding is therefore essentially normative: it presupposes the ability to distinguish between true and false judgements. A system that merely learns statistical regularities in language without grasping this normative dimension of truth therefore does not possess understanding in the proper sense. It is no coincidence that so-called “hallucinations” remain particularly difficult to eliminate from ChatGPT. Because it has no conception of the conditions under which declarative sentences are true or false, it cannot distinguish between true and false statements. It generates meaningful declarative sentences without understanding their truth conditions. Consequently, there can be no question of genuine understanding or, therefore, of genuine thought in ChatGPT.

But does ChatGPT's response to a question not possess at least a certain degree of rhetorical persuasiveness? If ChatGPT can persuade rhetorically, might it not, in some sense, be said to think after all? A well-known rhetorical *topos*, dating back to Plato's *Gorgias*, holds that a skilled rhetorician can often persuade a large audience more effectively than a genuine expert. Such rhetoricians prevail precisely because persuasiveness does not necessarily rest on genuine insight into the subject matter. In other words, the ability to persuade does not necessarily require genuine understanding. For that reason, the capacity to produce rhetorically persuasive responses, however impressive, does not justify the conclusion that ChatGPT understands. A system that generates compelling responses by statistical means

may appear persuasive without genuinely understanding what it is saying. That is not thinking.

Nor does the fact that ChatGPT can solve all kinds of complex puzzles imply that it understands or thinks. Even if it were one day to solve a famous unsolved mathematical problem, I would say exactly what I said when IBM's *Deep Blue* defeated the world chess champion for the first time in 1997: it would be an extraordinary algorithmic achievement, but it would not be thinking. Successfully solving a puzzle is not the same as understanding why the correct solution was found. An algorithm may generate the correct result without possessing any understanding of the meaning of the concepts it employs or of the semantic validity of the reasoning it follows. The correctness of the result therefore does not, by itself, imply genuine understanding.

Fourth, genuine thinking and genuine conceptual understanding require an inner free subjectivity, or a free consciousness. A free subject differs fundamentally from any closed formal system of rules. A free conscious mind is essentially open and capable of transcending every closed formalism. Because a free subject can never be fully determined by fixed rules, it is always capable of breaking beyond any given system of rules and thereby disclosing something genuinely new. A formal system, by contrast, can operate only within the rigid boundaries of the rules that define it. A free subject can never be reduced to a collection of rules because it is capable of self-reflection. Through this reflexivity, it can freely relate itself to any given system of rules, transcend it, and thereby open up new possibilities. That is what genuine thinking is. It is the capacity continually to transcend oneself. Genuine thinking is therefore inherently unbounded and cannot be identified with any closed formalism. ChatGPT, as a formal system, is fixed and closed. Unlike the human mind, it is not free, and for that reason it does not think.

That freedom is indispensable for thinking is also the conclusion of an argument advanced by René van Woudenberg during a research seminar of the Department of Philosophy at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam several years ago. Freedom is necessary for successful rational deliberation, and genuine thinking is inconceivable without successful rational deliberation. Thinking is not merely the production of an outcome; it also involves rational deliberation. Rational deliberation consists in considering alternative possibilities under conditions that do not determine the outcome in advance and then making a considered choice between them. A person who deliberates weighs reasons for and against different options before arriving at a decision that is not wholly determined by preceding circumstances. There must be genuine alternatives to consider; otherwise, the act of choosing under indeterminate conditions becomes empty. Put differently, the final choice must genuinely be up to the agent. Without this openness of alternatives, deliberation is reduced to the causal or statistical production of an outcome. Nothing is then genuinely weighed. Genuine choice

therefore presupposes that the choosing subject is free. A formal system such as ChatGPT, by contrast, does not weigh alternative possibilities. Rather, it computes, by means of fixed algorithmic procedures, which continuation is statistically most likely given the preceding input. The outcome is determined by the operation of the system itself rather than by an autonomous and freely considered choice between alternatives. ChatGPT therefore does not genuinely choose between possibilities but merely generates the statistically most probable continuation of a sequence of symbols. There is thus no free deliberation, and for that reason ChatGPT does not think.

An objection might be raised that ChatGPT nevertheless does something resembling deliberation. It can, after all, decompose complex tasks into subtasks and, in doing so, appears to make genuine choices. Yet these are merely pseudo- or quasi-choices. ChatGPT does not choose in the proper sense. It merely computes the next action and algorithmically generates a sequence of symbols. We can therefore speak only metaphorically of ChatGPT "choosing" an action from a set of alternative "options" presented to it. Apart from invoking stochastic functions, every subsequent action is computed automatically by applying fixed rules to the given sequence of symbols. In short, ChatGPT is a formal algorithm in which indeterminacy arises solely through the rule-governed application of statistical functions. Its "choices" are entirely determined by the preceding state of the system together with the stochastic functions it employs. Every action is therefore automatically and statistically determined. On closer inspection, then, there is no genuine rational deliberation, because no free choices are ever made. Since there is only the appearance of deliberation, ChatGPT does not think.

A fifth argument for the claim that ChatGPT does not think can likewise be developed from a reflection on intentionality. Thinking presupposes understanding, and understanding, in turn, presupposes intentionality. There is understanding only where there is directedness towards something or someone. Without "aboutness," there can be no understanding of meaning. Human beings are capable of being intentionally directed towards things that exist independently of themselves. ChatGPT lacks this intentional directedness towards the world beyond itself. It merely processes sequences of symbols according to fixed internal stochastic rules, without itself being intentionally directed towards anything beyond its own operations. It does not *grasp*. It therefore lacks understanding, and for that reason it does not think.

Syntax, incompleteness and "tokens"

Admittedly, ChatGPT is impressive. At first sight, it appears capable of reducing understanding and meaning to structure and *syntax*. It thus seems to bridge a gap long thought to be unbridgeable. Yet, because what ChatGPT does is not genuine thinking, no such reduction of understanding to syntax has in fact been achieved. For understanding and

meaning belong to the domain of thought. The claim that semantics cannot simply be reduced to syntax is further supported by Gödel's First Incompleteness Theorem. In his 1931 paper *Über formal unentscheidbare Sätze der Principia Mathematica und verwandter Systeme I*, Gödel showed that every consistent formal system sufficiently rich to encompass elementary arithmetic contains true propositions that cannot be deductively derived within that system. Truth, as a semantic notion, therefore does not coincide with formal derivability as a syntactic notion. Against the background of the conception of meaning defended above, according to which meaning inherently possesses a truth dimension, this supports the view that meaning likewise cannot be reduced to the purely syntactic manipulation of symbols according to formal rules.

The initial impression created by ChatGPT is therefore tempered once we understand somewhat more precisely the principles on which it operates. Given a sequence of input words, ChatGPT predicts how that sequence is most likely to continue by applying statistical prediction models trained on vast collections of data available on the internet. In this way, patterns in similar sequences of words are identified and exploited whenever ChatGPT receives a sequence of words from a user and is required to generate a response.

More precisely, ChatGPT operates by processing words not as words but by first converting them into small symbolic units, or "tokens." These tokens are then represented mathematically as points, or vectors, in a high-dimensional space, where words and combinations of words that frequently occur in similar contexts in human texts are located close to one another (Vaswani 2017). During training, ChatGPT does not learn the meaning of words. Rather, it learns statistical regularities in sequences of tokens. At each step, the model predicts which token is most likely to follow the preceding tokens. ChatGPT therefore does not detect connections that transcend the statistical patterns present in its training data. Connections that are not reflected in the available texts remain beyond its reach.

Paradigm shifts

A reflection on paradigms thus provides a sixth argument for the claim that what ChatGPT does is not genuine thinking. As argued above, ChatGPT merely generates endless variations on what already exists. Unlike human beings, it is therefore incapable of bringing about scientific or philosophical paradigm shifts. Put differently, because ChatGPT does not think and never opens up anything genuinely new beyond what we ourselves have already thought, it cannot create concepts that transcend those already available. ChatGPT therefore does not expand our conceptual ontology. Without such an ontological expansion, however, the emergence of a genuinely new paradigm is impossible.

A paradigm shift does not merely consist in finding new solutions to existing problems within an established conceptual framework. A paradigm changes only when that conceptual

framework itself changes. What changes are not only the answers but also the questions that can meaningfully be asked, the distinctions that are regarded as significant, and the concepts through which reality is understood (Kuhn 2013). A genuinely new paradigm thus opens up an entirely new way of thinking about and describing the world. A system such as ChatGPT, which merely extrapolates patterns within existing conceptual structures, can therefore produce at most new combinations within an existing paradigm; it cannot transcend the paradigm itself.

Of course, much of what people call original and creative is not genuinely original or creative in the sense intended here. Genuine creativity is rare. Consider, for example, the Cartesian worldview that emerged at the beginning of the seventeenth century and radically departed from Aristotle's classical conception of the world. Compared with the Aristotelian worldview, Cartesianism represents a genuinely original creative leap. The same is true of Einstein's physics in relation to Newton's. In both cases, entirely new conceptual spaces are opened up. ChatGPT is incapable of such leaps into fundamentally new worlds of ideas. Einstein's achievement remains an original act of the human mind that cannot be explained simply as the result of recognising patterns in the writings of Newton, Kant, and other predecessors. What emerged was a new paradigm—a new *episteme*, to use Foucault's term (2021)—and such a transformation cannot be achieved through pattern recognition alone. If it had been trained only on the classical texts and concepts of the Aristotelian tradition, ChatGPT would merely have generated endless Aristotelian, Hellenistic, and Scholastic variations on Aristotle. It would never have disclosed the genuinely original mode of thought introduced by Descartes. In short, ChatGPT cannot introduce new paradigms because, in relation to Aristotle, it cannot be another Descartes. Although ChatGPT can discover new connections between existing concepts on the basis of existing data and within established conceptual domains, it can never create genuinely new conceptual domains. Drawing on styles that human beings have already employed, it remains confined to subjects that we ourselves have already extensively explored. Human beings often proceed in a similar way, but not always. As argued above, the human mind is essentially open and, for precisely that reason, is capable of transcending every closed, rule-governed formalism.

Reflective judgement

I derive my seventh argument from a fundamental motif in continental philosophy. ChatGPT likewise fails to capture an essential hermeneutic-phenomenological characteristic of human thinking, one that figures prominently both in the rhetorical-humanistic tradition of wisdom and in Heidegger's later thought on Being. For what, after all, is thinking? Thinking is not merely calculative or discursive-rational. In his later work, Heidegger (1979) distinguishes between *rechnendes Denken* (calculative thinking) and *besinnliches Denken* (reflective or

meditative thinking). Calculative thinking calculates, orders, and optimises on the basis of what is already given as meaningful. In doing so, it leaves unexamined the very way in which meaning comes to presence. Whoever merely calculates lacks not only a particular cognitive capacity but also a fundamental existential mode of being in the world. Reflective thinking, by contrast, remains open to what comes into presence over time and stays attuned to the way in which the world discloses itself. Genuine thinking, thus, is rooted in a historically situated being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*), as Heidegger (1999) describes it.

ChatGPT undeniably excels at calculative thinking. It can recognise patterns at remarkable speed, calculate probabilities, and process enormous amounts of data. Yet for precisely that reason, it remains confined to an *ontic*, objectifying rationality that calculates solely on the basis of beings already given—that is, beings that are present-at-hand (*vorhandene Seiende*). Precisely because ChatGPT is limited to calculative thinking, it lacks the *ontological* receptivity through which human beings can continually open themselves to new modes of meaning that unfold within lived human existence. As a result, the ever new and unforeseen ways in which Being discloses itself—and, ultimately, any genuine understanding of Being itself—remain beyond ChatGPT's reach.

It is precisely this ontological openness, or disclosedness, that constitutes a crucial condition for reflective, context-sensitive judgement, or *sensus communis*. Its situational and intuitive judgements cannot be reduced to universal formal rules or algorithms but rest instead on *Bildung*, tact, taste, and a receptive understanding of the concrete situation. This capacity for discerning judgement, which occupies a central place in the rhetorical-humanistic tradition, does not consist in the application of fixed or predetermined rules of calculation. Rather, it is a historically cultivated disposition to discern what is fitting and to find the right measure in indeterminate and ambiguous circumstances, as Gadamer (2014) argues at length in the first part of *Truth and Method*. ChatGPT may well continue to accumulate and reproduce ever greater amounts of data and knowledge, but it lacks this ontologically grounded capacity for reflective judgement. This is because it is not itself disclosed to the world. For that reason as well, ChatGPT neither genuinely understands nor thinks.

A decline of the human mode of existence?

By engaging ever more intensively with ChatGPT and becoming captivated by it, humanity risks directing its attention exclusively towards what it has already thought. There will be far fewer genuinely original creative leaps into the unknown. Will entirely new conceptual worlds still be opened? This is an existential question. Throughout history, the world has disclosed itself to humanity in ever different ways. The manner in which things came into presence in classical antiquity differs fundamentally from the way they came to light in the Middle Ages

or from the manner in which they appeared in the modern age and thereby manifested their presence. If ChatGPT and similar technologies were to become dominant, might the world cease to disclose itself to humanity in genuinely new ways? Might things no longer appear and reveal themselves to us in fundamentally new ways? These questions concern the very nature or essence of human existence. The danger that we may lose our spiritual openness to the world and to the future, allowing our wonder-filled, receptive experience of existence to deteriorate into a merely monotonous, predictable, and closed condition, is by no means imaginary. Should this occur, human existence would suffer a profound loss of meaning and significance.

From the perspective of Heidegger's ontological understanding of the belonging-together of human beings, language, and world, ChatGPT can be understood in two respects as an inadmissible ontic impoverishment. First, ChatGPT's large language model is based on the assumption that analysing and algorithmically processing vast collections of linguistic utterances constitutes a promising way of generating thought. This assumption represents an ontic narrowing of Heidegger's ontological thesis that thinking and language are, at the deepest level, existentially intertwined. Language is not a neutral vehicle or medium for conveying contents; rather, it is the fundamental way in which thinking unfolds and understanding of the world becomes possible. Language opens a spiritual space within and from which thought can engage meaningfully with the world. More precisely, the aforementioned assumption underlying ChatGPT's large language model amounts to a rationalistic narrowing of Heidegger's existential thesis, because, according to this thesis, authentic thinking consists in attentively listening to the voice of language—that is, to what language has to say to us at its deepest level, and what it gives us to say, and what it thereby meaningfully discloses to us.

Second, ChatGPT's large language model is concerned exclusively with the neural-statistical analysis of past datasets. This, too, constitutes an ontic impoverishment of another important ontological thesis advanced by Heidegger, namely, the existential thesis that our past is deeply interwoven with our self-understanding as historical beings, such that genuine thinking is rooted in remembrance and thus in what tradition reveals to us. According to this second thesis, genuine thinking consists in remaining open to the future, while being rooted in a receptive, wonder-filled reflection on what has been. What ChatGPT does can therefore be understood in at least two respects as a rationalistic narrowing of Heidegger's meditative, existential conception of what human beings and human thinking truly are. At the very least, this should serve as a warning. ChatGPT fails to do justice to the way in which we exist in the world as thinking beings. It therefore ultimately denies the very essence of our humanity.

Indeed, the human mind is not closed. It remains open to countless new and as yet unforeseen possibilities, whereas ChatGPT, as argued above, merely identifies patterns in

what has already been produced and generates further variations on those patterns. The uncritical adoption of ChatGPT and its large ontic language model may therefore, over time, contribute to a closing-off of the human mind and, with it, to the disappearance of human existence as we know it. This confronts us with a possible consequence of an altogether different order from the more obvious effects of ChatGPT that have by now been widely discussed, such as its impact on employment, the education system's resilience to fraud, and the business models of companies. Those and many other frequently discussed social consequences of ChatGPT are, of course, unquestionably important. The consequences for the labour market, journalism, education, science, and public discourse deserve serious attention. Questions concerning copyright infringement, disinformation, privacy, data protection and the concentration of technological power are equally urgent. Yet all of these are ultimately questions about how we can use this new technology responsibly. The question raised here is of an altogether different and more fundamental kind. It concerns the implications of this technology for what it means to be human and whether, in the long run, we will still be capable of being genuinely human. Only once we have answered that question can we assess what place ChatGPT and similar systems ought to occupy in our society. Nothing less than our humanity is at stake. What is needed, therefore, is a more fundamental reflection on the risks outlined here that an unrestricted use of ChatGPT and related systems poses to our lifeworld and to the human experience of existence.

Understanding, meaning and use

Undeniably, ChatGPT poses a profound challenge to our thinking about the nature and origin of thought itself. The way human beings acquire language as children appears, at least in certain respects, to resemble the way ChatGPT is trained: namely, through exposure to countless examples of language in use. Yet is learning a language through its use not already learning to speak, and thus learning to engage meaningfully with meanings? In that respect, the way ChatGPT learns to communicate meaningfully with its environment appears to resemble the way human beings acquire that capacity. What does this imply for the question whether ChatGPT is capable of genuine understanding? Or conversely, what does it imply for the question whether human beings are capable of genuine understanding? Is the outcome of these two learning processes fundamentally different because human learning is embedded in concrete lived and embodied experience? If so, can that difference in principle be bridged computationally by making ChatGPT mobile and equipping it with visual and auditory sensors, enabling it likewise to learn directly from the concrete lifeworld? And if so, would any fundamental difference in the outcome then disappear? Or would the results nevertheless still differ in a fundamental way? If the latter is the case, does this not suggest that the seven arguments developed in this article ultimately point towards a single

underlying explanation? Namely, that even under such conditions human beings would still possess something that ChatGPT lacks: a non-algorithmic subjectivity grounded in an inner life of conscious awareness.

Some, by contrast, may argue that ChatGPT, even in its present form, already provides powerful confirmation of Wittgenstein's externalist thesis that the meaning of a word is its use in the language—or, more succinctly, that meaning is use. Although Wittgenstein (2022a) develops this thesis only in *Philosophical Investigations*, it is already foreshadowed in the *Tractatus* (2022b), where he remarks that a sign becomes a symbol only through its logical-syntactic use (2022b, 3.327), and that one recognizes the symbol in the sign only by attending to the sign's use (2022b, 3.326). According to Wittgenstein, the meaning of words does not reside in inner representations or transcendent essences, but in the way words function within human life practices and the language-games associated with them. Put differently, on this view words derive their meaning from their use within concrete forms of life. And because ChatGPT, even with its still relatively limited form of learning from and through use, proves remarkably effective at engaging in meaningful dialogue, one might conclude that it provides an impressive confirmation of Wittgenstein's conception of meaning. Even more striking is what ChatGPT may become capable of once it is concretely embedded in the lifeworld and learns far more through situated participation in human language use. Should we therefore regard ChatGPT as the ultimate triumph of Wittgenstein's theory of meaning? But even if the meaning of words indeed resides in their use within language-games, it does not follow that a system which statistically reproduces that use thereby genuinely participates in those language-games in the way embodied and historically situated human beings do. Human language-games are inseparably bound up with concrete forms of life in which acting, perceiving, willing, expecting, hoping, and fearing together form a unified whole. If understanding presupposes more than embedded and situated interaction with the world—namely, the distinctive way in which human beings participate in language-games through lived involvement with and lived experience of the world—then successful use of language alone is insufficient for understanding.

Might ChatGPT eventually become capable not only of predicting how a given text will continue, but also of predicting what a particular human being will say on the basis of that person's previous utterances? If this proves possible, even if only to a limited extent, it may also tell us something about the extent to which human beings themselves are predictable. Yet the question would still remain whether ChatGPT or similar systems genuinely understand. Does genuine understanding ultimately require something like phenomenal consciousness or inner subjective experience? As noted above, it is precisely this question that ultimately imposes itself in light of the arguments I developed in this article. This does not alter the fact, however, that for the time being, ChatGPT seems to be a trump card in the

hands of those who refuse to distinguish between generating meaningful linguistic utterances and genuinely understanding them, reducing both without remainder to language use. Those who are willing to recognize that gap, by contrast, will not refer to what ChatGPT does, however extraordinarily well, as thinking.

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