

CONDITION: Filibuster Elimination Threat:

When I arrived in Washington, in the spring of 1993, the very wise then-Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Legislative Affairs Mike Levy told me that things would pass the senate only under three conditions:

1. They were Republican priorities that enough Democrats thought were on balance good for the nation, or
2. They were done via the Reconciliation process, or
3. Republicans would go along because Democrats would credibly threaten to use Reconciliation to pass something less good for the country that Republicans would dislike even more.

He was wise.

Now we need to add:

(4) Things pass because if they donâ€™t Manchin and Sinema will be really pissed, and might vote to get rid of the filibuster.

This is how I think it will be in the Senate, for a while.

The House over the next two years will be weird: it will be almost impossible for McCarthy to control the Republican caucus, so the things that will pass the House will be:

1. Republican priorities where Speaker McCarthy will induce and Hakeem Jeffries will allow enough Democrats to join the coalition to make up for Republican defections.
2. Democratic priorities that moderate Republicans think are good for the nation where Shadow-Speaker Jeffries will convince ten or so moderate Republicans to tell McCarthy to go f*** himself.

Joseph Zeballos-Roig: [Big scandal](#), [weird scandal](#): â€˜Sen. Todd Young, the Indiana Republican who helped author one of this yearâ€™s highest-profile bipartisan bills, recently offered his theoryâ€™. Working across the aisle helped Republicans keep the filibuster alive in a 50-50 Senate by givingâ€™ Manchinâ€™ andâ€™ Sinemaâ€™ winsâ€™. â€™[Republican] leadership [did not] try to blow up deals.â€™ Young saidâ€™ McConnellâ€™. â€™We wantedâ€™ center-right or center-left deals that had broad appealâ€™ but as importantly, kept Sinema and Manchin happy so they didn't join the 'eliminate the filibuster' crowd. It was a wise calculation.â€™ McConnell said much the sameâ€™. Passing the bipartisan bills was in the â€™best interest of the country.â€™ it also â€™may have reassuredâ€™ Manchin and Sinemaâ€™. Young also suggested CHIPS would have drawn more GOP support under a Republican administration. â€™I had countless colleagues approach me and say that they believed in this investment and believed it was important to national security and economic security,â€™ he said. â€™But they shared with me this was a very hard argument for some constituentsâ€™â€™

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FOCUS: Perhaps Some Stochastic Parrots Are Intentional?:

â€™Tell me a storyâ€™, I prompt Chat-GPT:



Tell me a story...



Once upon a time, in a small village nestled in the rolling hills of the countryside, there lived a young girl named Maria. She was a bright and curious child, always eager to explore the world around her and learn new things.



One day, while wandering through the fields near her home, Maria came

across a strange and beautiful flower. She had never seen anything like it before, with its bright purple petals and delicate, fragrant scent.

Intrigued, Maria plucked the flower from the ground and took it home with her. She spent the afternoon studying it, marveling at its intricate structure and trying to learn as much as she could about it.

As the sun began to set, Maria decided to plant the flower in a pot on her windowsill, where it could receive plenty of sunlight. She watered it carefully and tended to it every day, watching as it grew and bloomed into a stunning display of color.

Over time, the flower became a source of joy and inspiration for Maria. She would sit for hours, lost in thought as she gazed at its beauty and tried to capture its essence in her drawings and paintings.

As the years passed, Maria grew into a talented artist, her love for the magical flower fueling her creativity and passion. And even as she moved on to new adventures and experiences, the flower remained a constant source of inspiration and wonder, a symbol of the beauty and magic that can be found in the world if we only take the time to look.

What is Chat-GPT doing here? We are told:

Murray Shanahan: Talking About Large Language Models <<https://arxiv.org/pdf/2212.03551.pdf?ref=the-diff>> [It] has no communicative intentâ€¦ no understandingâ€¦ does notâ€¦ have beliefsâ€¦. All it does, at a fundamental level, is sequence predictionâ€¦. Knowing that the word “Burundi” is likely to succeed the words “The country to the south of Rwanda is” is not the same as knowing that Burundi is to the south of Rwandaâ€¦. A compelling illusionâ€¦. Yetâ€¦ such systems are fundamentally not like ourselvesâ€¦ presentâ€¦ a patchwork of less-than-human with superhuman capacities, of uncannily human-like with peculiarly inhuman behavioursâ€¦. It may require an extensive period of interacting with, of living with, these new kinds of artefact before we learn how best to talk about them. Meanwhile, we should try to resist the siren call of anthropomorphismâ€¦

Does this really get it right? Yes, we should resist “the siren call of anthropomorphism”. But is it right to say that there is no *intentionality* here?

My punchline: I disagree with Shanahan. There *is* intentionality. But we have to be precise about just whose.

Consider: Yes, what Chat-GPT has done in response to my prompt is to predict a sequence of tokens. But what sequence did it predict?

It took all of the sequences of tokensâ€”wordsâ€”it has available, all of those in which a human being responded to "tell me a story” in some way, plus some others. It then took those sequences, put them, in a bag, shook them, and printed what came out. Chat-GPT had no intention of “telling me a story”.

But each of the sequences of tokens that went into Chat-GPT had, attached to it, a human who did intend to tell a story. Thus all the intentions of all the people who ever told a storyâ€”they lie behind the token sequences are its raw material. Each of the sequences in its database as intentionality.

Can there be a sense in which averaging a huge number of speech acts, each of which has intentionality, removes the intentionality?

Well, noâ€¦ and yes. Yes, in that what makes things *intentional* is precisely the individuality of the thought process, and that is what is averaged away.

But also noâ€¦

Remember the “Chinese-Speaking Room”?

Wikipedia: Searleâ€¦ supposes that he is in a closed room and has a book with an English version of the computer program, along with sufficient papers, pencils, erasers, and filing cabinets. Searle could receive Chinese characters through a slot in the door, process them according to the program's instructions, and produce Chinese characters as outputâ€¦. Searle himself would not be able to understand the conversation. ("I don't speak a word of Chinese," he points out)...

It is true that if you accept Searleâ€™s framingâ€”a sentence in Chinese comes into the room, and he then consults the books in the room to decide how to respondâ€”then to have the complexity of a human brain, the “Chinese-Speaking Room” would have to be the size of the globe, and managed by 50,000 robots traveling at lightspeed. The system that is the room understands Chinese just as well (or poorly) as a human speaker of Chinese does,

My view is that Chat-GPT already has that branch of intentionality that humans have when they think “I am going to write a grammatical sentence”, because that intentionality was shared by virtually everyone whose writings have gone into the bag. And, similarly, if we can elicit responses from GPT that are derived from a community of humans every one of which used that response with the same intention, I have no problem ascribing intention to Chat-GPT.

For example:



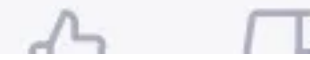
Could you remind me what is the sentence that linguists most often use to demonstrate that there is a strong divide between syntax and semantics?

semantics?



The sentence that linguists often use to demonstrate the divide between syntax and semantics is "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously." This sentence was famously used by Noam Chomsky in his book "Syntactic Structures" to illustrate the distinction between syntax and semantics. Syntax is concerned with the structure and arrangement of words in a sentence, while semantics is concerned with the meaning of words and how they relate to each other. The sentence "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously" is grammatically correct, but it does not make sense semantically because the words "colorless," "green," and "furiously" do not typically go together in a way that conveys a meaningful idea. This example demonstrates that it is possible for a sentence to be syntactically correct but

semantically nonsensical.



Every human who has ever used the sentence “Colorless green ideas sleep furiously” has done so not to assert that colorless green ideas sleep furiously, but to illustrate the huge gulf between syntax and semantics.

So I have no problem ascribing that intention to Chat-GPT, just as I have no problem—at least adopting the intentional stance—with saying that Chat-GPT intends to write grammatical sentences.

On the other hand:



What is the right conclusion to draw from seeing a black swan?



The phrase "seeing a black swan" is often used as an example of a rare and unexpected event, and it is derived from the saying "all swans are white," which was traditionally used to denote the idea that all members of a particular category or group have certain characteristics. The phrase "black swan" was coined by the philosopher and scientist Francis Bacon to refer to an event that is both rare and has a major impact, and the idea has since been popularized by the philosopher and statistician Nassim Nicholas Taleb in his book "The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable."



If you see a black swan, it would be reasonable to conclude that the saying "all swans are white" is not necessarily true, and that it is possible for a member of a group or category to exhibit characteristics that are unexpected or unusual. It would also be reasonable to conclude that the occurrence of a black swan could have a significant impact on your understanding of the world and your expectations about what is possible or probable.



where in his work does francis bacon discuss black swans



Francis Bacon did not use the phrase "black swan" in his writing. The phrase "black swan" was coined by Nassim Nicholas Taleb in his book "The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable," published in 2007. The concept of a "black swan" event, however, can be traced back to the work of Francis Bacon, who wrote about the idea of rare and



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I remember reading about "black swans" in 1973 (p. 350 of *Time Enough for Love* <https://archive.org/details/timeenoughforlov0000hein_t4d7/page/350/mode/2up?q=swan>). The phrase was certainly not coined by N.N. Taleb. And I very much doubt that it was coined by Francis Bacon.

There is no intentionality here. We have a long, long way to go. Chat-GPT costs, I guess, \$30 million to train and then \$0.10 per 300-word answer "\$1 for a full 3000-word chat. Unless there are clever software improvements I cannot envision, perhaps we need a 100-fold increase in deployed computrons for a truly satisfactory conversation: \$100 per consultation. And I do not think that Moore's Law is going to save us.

There is at least the possibility that here we have a task where using wetware is going to always be cheaper than using silicon hardware!

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