

Based on my experience with ChatGPT and Co-Pilot, I am learning some things about I think and comparing that to AI. Right up front I should acknowledge that my epistemology is not a widely held one, and that my ideas about human thought would best be labelled as skeptical. That is, I see how knowledge works as separate from how synapses work, and am much less impressed by human thought than I think people want me to be.

So looking back over my encounters with AI in comparison to my six stages in the Musing labeled Meaning 2, here is what I have noted:

In Step One an AI receives communication from a user. The meteor starts the human's search; the user prompt starts the AI's search.

In analogy to my Step Two, AIs are trained to analyze the communication and integrate its structure and content with what information the AI has access to. The AI has no capacity to reject this demand of its training any more than I can reject my need for meaning.

I have no conviction of the process by which an AI does this. I am no coder or designer – just a plain old human thinker. But for the sake of the conversation, in the back of my mind I see the process as comparable to (not imitative of) my Steps 3, 4, and 5. I think AI follows the paths available to it in seeking to perform its “need” to produce map the structure of the original user communication to the other patterns it has been given or has developed in the past. I understand that some of these paths are more artifacts of initial coding, and some are retained results of prior similar attempts.

Where the similarities and analogies break down is in my Step 6. I do not think AI (so far) has available to it (or even needs) alternatives like those given to a human when the task of finding meaning is a failure. If I grasp it right, AI's analogous efforts to my Steps 3,4, and 5 lead to its best result(s) and it ends there. I don't think I see the equivalent of “failure” in AI processing whatsoever, and I especially do not expect AI to judge that its integration is of such low quality that the AI is driven to violate its own coding – or whatever the equivalent to my neurosis might be.