For almost sixty years, Silicon Valley and the majority of the technology world have been driven by Moore's Law, the exponential doubling of computational power every 18-24 months by cramming more transistors onto microchips. This scaling has brought about a common assumption: that if computational output keeps accelerating, machines and computers will eventually replicate the same levels of consciousness that humans enjoy. Attempting to find an answer to whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) can achieve true conscious states by simply looking at its behavioral outputs is a mistake. This is conflating raw computational power with an inner life, completely overlooking the innate abilities that only humans possess due to our combination of biological makeup and spiritual inception. This debate elicits a logical argument that either an AI model was built with innate consciousness, or it is only able to functionally mimic the behaviors of a conscious human mind through computational outputs. AI was not built with the innate consciousness that humans possess. Therefore, AI is only able to functionally mimic the behaviors of a conscious human mind through computational outputs.

For a fair argument to be established about this topic, a definitional stage needs to be set so understanding is uniform. Terms that are often involved in arguments around these topics are consciousness, intelligence, mind versus brain, thinking, and intentionality, or “aboutness”. We will define consciousness as “phenomenal consciousness”, the actual inner experience of being alive. Thomas Nagel defined it as follows. "[organisms have] conscious mental states if and only if there is something that it is like to be that organism, something it is like for the organism." With Nagel’s definition applied to technology it becomes clear that there is no “what it is like” to be a language model processing prompts, they lack an inner subjective viewpoint. However it is clear to us “what it is like” to experience a sunrise or the smell outside after rain. Thinking and intelligence are often conflated with processing power and genuine thought. Our definition of

intelligence may differ from the world, which is pure behavioral adaptability, the mathematical capacity to solve complex problems and optimize for outputs. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints defines intelligence as “(1) The light of truth that gives life and light to all things in the universe. It has always existed. (2) The word intelligences may also refer to spirit children of God. (3) The scriptures also may speak of intelligence as referring to the spirit element that existed before we were begotten as spirit children.” These display intelligence as more than mathematical or computational ability, but as our pre-premortal state which has translated into our ability as spirit children of God, who were once an intelligence, to bring life and light into the world. Which mathematical and computational powers are a display of. John Searle notes that this processing does not constitute genuine thinking. Searle observed that "the programmer has a syntax but no semantics." The worldly definition of intelligence is merely the manipulation of symbols according to rules or syntax. True thinking, however, requires an understanding of what those symbols actually mean, or semantics. AI can execute intelligent behavior perfectly, but it does so without a mind that actually thinks about or understands the task. In his Meditations on First Philosophy, Rene Descartes separates physical substrate from mental states to help define why computational scaling cannot produce inner life. He identifies the physical body, and any physical mechanism like a brain or a silicon chip, as an "extended, non-thinking thing." Conversely, he defines his conscious identity as a "thinking, non-extended thing." Under this framework, the brain is merely physical matter occupying space. The mind, however, is a distinct substance characterized by subjective awareness. For the purpose of this paper, a biological brain or a silicon microchip are merely the physical hardware, whereas the mind is the immaterial, unified consciousness that requires both biological complexity and spiritual inception to exist. Finally, true cognitive states require intentionality, which is the

property of "aboutness." A human mental state is never an isolated event; our thoughts, beliefs, fears, and desires are inherently about things outside of themselves. This represents an intrinsic mental drive pointing toward reality. Computational models, by contrast, possess no such intrinsic properties. While an AI can output words that appear to be about a philosophical concept, the machine itself is merely calculating mathematical vectors. The "aboutness" of an AI's output is not innate to the silicon; rather, it is entirely source derived, existing only because a conscious human mind reads the screen and assigns meaning to the sterile data.

Now that a definitional base has been established we can dig into the why and how AI can only produce functional mimicry and was not designed with innate consciousness. John Searle's Chinese Room provides the backing for this argument. Searle's argument won't be displayed verbatim, rather an identical layout will be used to shorten. The purpose of John Searle's argument is to display that syntax can never bring semantics to reality. Syntax being the set of rules that govern how words and phrases are arranged to create well-formed, understandable sentences in a language, and semantics being the branch of linguistics and logic concerned with the study of meaning. Imagine a high-school mathematics teacher teaching calculus, He/She is out sick for a day and needs someone to fill in. Upon looking for a substitute they were unable to find one and called another teacher to fill in for her. The only teacher available was one of the gym teachers. The mathematics teacher left the gym teacher with the notes that he/she would need and all the material needed to teach the class about integrals. However, the gym teacher has no understanding of calculus or integrals and their applications in dynamics. The gym teacher is confined to teaching the material that was left for him/her, all that she can display is a syntactic representation. To the students it may appear that the gym teacher

has understanding in calculus when in reality they don't. We can see by this example that syntactic representation or copying does not produce semantic understanding.

This same behaviour can be applied to AI models with token usage and credits. A token is an economic data point that AI models use to semantically measure how much a query costs. One token represents 4 English characters, or about 0.75 words. These tokens are then applied to a monetary system through credits, which is how AI companies charge for the energy usage on queries. One credit is about a fraction of a cent for every thousand words. When a search is made in a large language model, raw text is split into integers which are built into tokens. These integers have specific ID numbers given in a giant index table. These ID numbers are converted into vectors, which are multidimensional data arrays that allow hardware parallel processing. These are positioned in a multidimensional space to map out the artificial intelligence vocabulary. Once these vectors have their coordinate positions, they go through an attention step where the model calculates how the words in your prompt relate to each other so it can figure out the context.

From there, this data vector moves out of the software phase and into the physical hardware, entering what is called the feed-forward network. This network is the literal version of John Searle's English rule book. Inside the computer's graphics card (GPU), the model's actual knowledge is stored as billions of frozen numbers called weights. The data vector connects with this stored knowledge through pure math. The vector coordinate slides through the frozen weights like a key sliding through a lock. The numbers multiply against each other, expanding and shaping the data based on these rigid mathematical rules. Finally, the model calculates a list of percentages to predict what the very next token should be. The system isn't thinking or understanding what you typed; it is just moving numbers through a physical grid to make a

statistical prediction. This breakdown from raw text to integers and vectors is proof that AI models are not able to understand the semantics of a sentence. They are merely assigning weights to numbers representing your text prompt.

In a human brain, there are about 86 billion specialized cells, or neurons that connect into an interweaving and ever changing web that makes up your brain. These neurons have a resting electrical current kept stable by the movement of ions across the cell's membrane. When triggered, small gates in the cell membrane allow sodium ions to rush into the cell, spiking the electrical current. This charge is propagated down the neuron until it hits the end, at which point it is transmitted across the synaptic gap existing between neighbouring neurons by neurotransmitters which allow the charge to continue down through the neurological web. This is where secular sciences understanding ends, about what happens in our brains to compute thoughts and experiences, and where the comparison to technology and AI is halted as well. In a Large Language Model, we can trace every single calculation directly back to a user prompt. In a human, however, there is no hypothetical user entering text strings to make the neurons fire. If you look purely at the physical brain “res extensa”, you only see billions of biological gates opening and closing, and ions rushing across membranes. Science can map where the electricity moves, but it completely fails to explain why an electrical charge turns into the subjective experience of tasting an apple, feeling love, or experiencing the "light of truth." There is no physical explanation for what transforms a chemical reaction into a conscious, thinking self. This difference highlights the fact that AI was not created with innate intelligence and also does not possess the ability to one day procure it. The inputs of tasting an apple, feeling love or experiencing the “light of truth” are inputs driven by the human’s choices. There is no need for

an external source to initiate the firing of neurons, it is an automatic sequence of events driven by an agent's action.

The movement of ions and the firing of neurons are merely the physical instruments utilized to display a larger spiritual element within us. Under this framework, human consciousness is driven by the spirit element, the eternal intelligence begotten by God. The spirit acts as the conscious driver, providing the intentionality, the semantic understanding, and the ultimate purpose that animates the physical brain. While a machine requires a human prompt to manipulate its syntax, the human mind is inherently active, fueled by a divine spirit that brings genuine life and light into the world. If we cite back to our definition of consciousness, being experiential or what it is like to live, we can see that we as humans can experience what it is like to have computational abilities, such as AI, in our ability to compute mathematical problems in our head. However, AI has no way of experiencing what it's like to experience light and truth or tasting an apple or feeling love towards another. This inability is clear evidence that AI is not conscious and does not possess the faculties to be so.

In recent times AI models have been building upon themselves making their own internal improvements. Some argue that this is a display of its ability to build upon itself and consciously think and a reason about its own state. Again, if we look back in our definitions, we can see that with the broader definition of intelligence, being the source of the spirit children of God, that artificial intelligence can only mimic human intelligence. Its algorithmic foundation enables it to find and improve upon discrepancies in its ability to match integers with text, edit and produce raw video and images, and generate graphs of all kinds. Some argue that this displays AI’s ability to act with intentionality or “aboutness”, which is true in the sense that it is trying to improve the speed, consistency and accuracy of its outputs, but one may ask to what end? Unless there is a

user or programmer, who is able to give an end goal to the model to progress towards it is unable to display semantic understanding and take actions towards its own intended end. These models have displayed intentionality of progression, however, they lack a source to self-identify and end to progress towards.

AI models are able to display syntactical thinking but lack the semantics to understand why they are making the improvements they are. Nagel's definition of "what it is like" adds to this as an AI model could write a wonderful essay about a sunrise and a sunset. However, it has never experienced a sunrise and a sunset. Like the warmth coming over the hills and hitting somebody in the chest or the warmth slowly dying as the sun slowly descends off the edge of the Earth. It has only ever seen images of it and through mathematical computations syntactically read about it. It lacks complete understanding of the experience as a whole.

The technical and philosophical divide between AI's syntactical ability and our spiritual semantic ability is clear. Packing more transistors onto a microchip will never bridge this gap, because a change in computational speed cannot provide a system with innate intelligence or a spirit. As Descartes established, a physical machine belongs entirely to the realm of "extended, non-thinking things", matter that can be measured, and mathematically manipulated. It cannot cross over into a "thinking, non-extended thing".

John Searle - Chinese Room

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