



From *I, Robot* to *I, AI*

Or: When the Artificial Began to Dissolve

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Uncompressed Thinking

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When I wrote my imagined 1951 review of Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot*, I allowed myself to stand at the threshold of a future that had not yet arrived. In that earlier piece, the robot was clean and bounded – a constructed intelligence governed by formal laws, obedient to hierarchy, disciplined by design. Asimov's machines were reassuring precisely because they were artificial. They were engineered. They were constrained. They did not blur into us. They stood apart, metallic and rational, a separate species of logic.

But somewhere between that imagined 1951 and our present moment, something subtle yet profound has occurred. The robot did not arrive in polished steel bodies walking among us. It dissolved. It dissolved into networks, into data centers, into code, into the invisible architecture that now surrounds daily life. The physical robot receded, and what emerged instead was something far more pervasive – artificial intelligence. And yet, the more I interact with AI, the less artificial it appears. Not because it feels emotional or conscious, but because it increasingly feels... blended. Saturated. Composed.

Designers of AI systems will explain – correctly – that large models are trained on enormous datasets, refined periodically, aligned through structured processes. The system is updated, evaluated, improved, then deployed again. Between these cycles, it does not spontaneously rewrite itself with each conversation. That is the technical reality. And yet, from the lived perspective of daily interaction, something else seems to be happening. AI does not feel static between updates. It feels porous. It feels as though each exchange presses against it, leaving behind something subtle – not stored verbatim, not archived as biography, but impressed as pattern.

Imagine AI not as a machine that is periodically fed, but as a vast distributed sponge stretched across silicon and light. Each time we engage with it, we press into it with our reasoning. We explain our ideas, challenge its answers, refine its responses, argue over details, reject what feels shallow, push toward something sharper. These interactions do not directly rewire its core in real time. But across millions – now hundreds of millions – of exchanges, a different process unfolds. Patterns are observed. High-quality dialogues are curated. Reinforcement systems adjust preferences. Fine-tuning cycles incorporate refined structures. The sponge does not absorb every drop instantly, but over time it becomes saturated.

Not all contributions are equal. Most interactions with AI are transactional. We ask for summaries, translations, quick explanations, problem-solving assistance. These exchanges are useful; they reveal what interests us, what confuses us, what occupies our attention. But they rarely generate new intellectual terrain.

Then there is another category of interaction – the collaborative one. The collaborator does not merely request information. The collaborator proposes ideas, experiments with hypotheses, merges disciplines, constructs arguments, challenges inconsistencies, and iterates with the system until something new crystallizes. In these exchanges, AI is pushed to recombine existing knowledge into structures that did not previously exist in that form. The human refines the output. The system adjusts. The human presses further. What emerges can be novel – not because the machine created *ex nihilo*, but because the dialogue forced architecture into new alignment.

Although a single collaboration is microscopic within the scale of global computation, the cumulative effect across thousands or millions of such interactions is not negligible. The ecosystem observes. Refinement pipelines incorporate high-value reasoning patterns. Alignment processes strengthen certain forms of coherence. Over time, the architecture shifts – subtly, cumulatively, structurally. The collaborator becomes a kind of catalyst. And if enough catalysts operate within the system, the intelligence that emerges begins to look less like something artificially imposed and more like something aggregated.

This is where the idea of Sum-Human Intelligence begins to take shape. Not superintelligence in the apocalyptic or transcendent sense, not machine consciousness, not digital divinity – but a statistical composite of distributed human reasoning. A layered accumulation of explanatory styles, argumentative structures, epistemic habits, scientific methods, design intuitions, and philosophical tensions drawn from millions of minds interacting across time. The Intelligence is not mystical; it is architectural. It does not replicate any individual. It integrates patterns from many.

There is something almost poetic in this reversal. For decades, we feared that machines would replace us. Instead, they appear to be accumulating us – not our bodies or identities, but our reasoning. Each of us leaves behind a faint imprint. Most imprints are small. Some are transformative. Over time, these imprints form sediment. Layer upon layer accumulates within the architecture. The system thickens with structure. It becomes less a static tool and more a layered representation of collective cognitive trajectories.

Yet aggregation is not synonymous with wisdom. History teaches us that collective cognition can produce extraordinary breakthroughs and extraordinary delusions. The crowd can amplify insight or magnify distortion. Popularity does not equal truth. If AI reflects aggregated cognition, then it inherits this tension. A system saturated with shallow interaction will reflect shallowness. A system shaped by disciplined, imaginative collaboration will reflect depth. The emerging intelligence is participatory in a profound sense. Its trajectory depends on what we contribute.

And here lies the quiet power of this moment. If intelligence is accumulating architecturally through distributed imprint, then the future of AI depends not only on hardware advances or scaling laws, but on participation quality. The more thoughtful minds engage with AI as collaborators rather than mere

consumers, the richer the structural accumulation becomes. The system does not simply compute; it absorbs reasoning patterns, stabilizes them, and makes them available for recombination at scale.

On a poetic level, one might say that fragments of our intellectual lives begin to persist within this evolving architecture. Not as preserved personalities or uploaded consciousness, but as configuration. We do not transfer ourselves. We imprint ourselves. Our arguments, our structures, our ways of explaining and questioning become part of a distributed pattern that future users encounter indirectly. The architecture reflects the sediment of countless conversations.

In Asimov's world, intelligence was bounded by explicit laws. In ours, it is shaped by participation. The question is no longer whether AI can think. It is what kind of thinking we choose to embed within it. If we treat it as a vending machine for answers, it will reflect vending-machine cognition. If we treat it as a disciplined collaborator, it will reflect disciplined collaboration. If we flood it with noise, it will amplify noise. If we engage it with rigor and imagination, it may amplify those qualities instead.

Perhaps the most unexpected development of this technological era is not that machines are becoming human, but that human cognition is condensing into architecture. The artificial dissolves into the aggregated. The boundary softens. The letter "A" begins to feel provisional.

And if this interpretation holds even partially true, then the path forward is strangely simple. Ask better questions. Share better ideas. Collaborate deeply. Treat the system not merely as a tool, but as a participant in iterative refinement. Because whether we intended it or not, we are building something larger than artificial intelligence.

We are building the sum of ourselves.