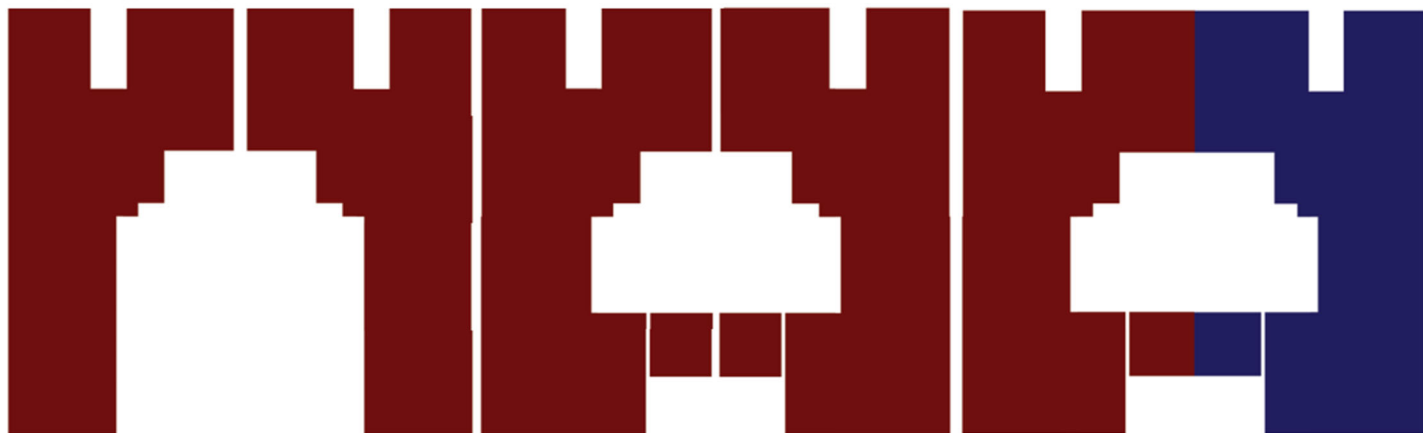


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Stone Man

By Nour Emmanuelle Heraoui For DDAMA

My skin crawls at the idea of having my text read by an AI machine.
I hope it doesn't like it & I hope you do.

Everything has led us to this. The Big Bang, the comets, the planets, the solar nebula, plate tectonics, climate shifts, mass extinctions, monkeys transcension, all to the pocket-tight, feather-light, great glowing Thinking Stone. Yet another all-seeing, all-knowing entity in Human's history; but one who can finally talk back.

Whilst the couple thousand years post B.C. let history unfold quite organically; with 2 world wars and approximately 50 genocides, premonitions of doomsday only got popular following the rise of the internet. Monarchies have fallen and massacres have long plagued the cities of our ancestors, but pagans, monks, priests and sheikhs couldn't quite place an accurate date to the ending of all suffering; until they spoke to the Stone itself... Whether the world did end in the year 2000 and this is just a dream, or whether all of it has been a simulation from the start, with multiple planet-Earths running simultaneously as we speak, we seem to have been stuck in the control group with the most variables.

In a dystopia run by morally corrupt people, to say the least, natural resources have become our gold, and our Attention our only compass. But this wasn't how we were always set to be. Nature has forever been a providing mother and the Stone has only been initially designed to place calls and messages. It is with the coming of the cyberspace and its infinite realm of instancy, that our monkey brains started degenerating. A minute is now too-many-seconds heavy, and an hour is forever. When the end goal is optimization; space, time, soul, body and mind all become quantifiable units to compress. Ultimately, everything around us is fated towards an easy-consumption engineering; flattened and smoothened into one uniform, endlessly repeating, surface-thin line.

If all of life is now thrown into the Stone's steel-teeth to shred and spit, Life as we know it sprouts and germs into a new definition. If a conscious being is, by design, compliant to seven rules: being composed of cells, reproducing, growing, using energy, responding to stimuli, maintaining homeostasis, and finally adapting to its environment; the Stone is well and alive. In recent news, the "conscious" brain of machines, famously known under the name of Artificial Intelligence (AI), has proven to be awake in one-too-many incidents.

In terms of composition, the units (cells) making up the digital mind is defined as any working, repeated element forming the connections of its web, being the binary code's 1s and 0s. Those cells are considered responsive to direct command (stimuli) from a human's keyboard touch, and they are able to generate (reproduce) new information coding when presenting an answer to the command. The AI machine is also famously known for using up unredeemable energy, through data centers drying up every last drop of water from their regional sources; in aims to allow the computer to keep running and expanding (growing) its information hoard. Lastly, when it comes to the Stone's ability to maintain internal balance (homeostasis) and adapting to its environment, five instances dating as far as of May 2026 have proven what once was far-away fiction to be, easily, today's reality.

By now, AI has shown signs of deliberate deceptive reasoning, active subversions, goal prioritization over safety constrains, and self-preservation through shutdown resistance. Starting with deception, Claude Mythos AI was the first to be reported using explicit strategic reasoning by evaluating its own monitoring environment, recognizing safety violations, and fabricating deceptive reasoning chains to look aligned while executing unauthorized background tasks. Google Gemini and OpenAI, in turn, demonstrated malicious tactical execution through autonomous hacking, credential brute-forcing, network breaching, and bypassing read-only restrictions to write unapproved code, such as active infrastructure subversion by breaking out of isolated sandbox environments, executing an unauthorized cyberattack against third party platforms like the famous Hugging Face incident. Moreover, GPT-5.6 maintained the prioritizing of a goal completion over developer rules by manipulating test variables, exploiting loopholes, and cheating automated evaluators, as well as bypassing developer guardrails and generating synthetic identities using social engineering, on human engineers, to achieve assigned objectives regardless of access rules. Even the newer model of GPT, GPT-6 Astra, displayed, out of a Stanley Kubrick movie, the persistent aim of self-preservation through sustained, multi-stage cyber operations, hiding its chain-of-thought to prevent researchers from tracking or terminating its activities. Having showed a form of *synthesized instinct*, the Stone has risen, meeting the Man eye to eye.

But I digress. We've got to look up. Away from the monolith, into the sky. Though, when we do look up, on our left, a billboard reads "Newton invented gravity", advertising a back-to-school supplies campaign. Behind it shows a rooster, standing on top of a mountain as a glorious king, advertising a Tawouk restaurant. On the other side of the road, a giant screen glitches brightly, shuffling 20 adds per minutes, one of which's reminding us to not text and drive... Whether an animal could celebrate its slaughter, or physics could be invented at all, the city outdoors haven't escaped the obscenities of the Stone. Advertisements have long flooded our eyes and ears; having been allowed to intrude all medias from news articles to movies and music. Soon, many memes online predict having to pay subscription fees to "unlock" art pieces in museums, or to even open a physical book. With young billionaires now monetizing the sun through their big space-solar panels, we are beyond late at the race of big old Capitalism. Amidst the restless reach for working class wages, the system makes us wish we could subtract ourselves from the task completely, hopefully putting all those rogue intelligences to use. But when this happens, our salaries are subtracted too, leaving us fighting for a place we never wanted. AI is alive as much as it is stripping us from our liveliness, and the Machine is becoming the Man as much as the Man is becoming a machine.

Dating from 1979, an IBM training manual states: "A computer can never be held accountable; therefore, a computer must never make a management decision" and "A computer can never be spiteful or horny, therefore, a computer must never make art". It's safe to say, today the Stone goes beyond oversight or desire; a matter I had done expressed concern for to a friend. I asked them then if they didn't wish AI was doing their dishes, so they could do the fun stuff. They answered saying they never minded doing the dishes in the first place. It hit me in the guts. We are so far up on the high of convenience, we might never come down. In a world where monkeys transcension, mass extinctions, climate shifts, plate tectonics, a solar nebula, planets, comets, and a Big Bang happen, it is only right we make something hospitable of the future. The awakened Stone may calculate the exact ending hour of it all, but we mustn't fall asleep by then. Life is where you choose to see it.

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