

## The Omega Examination

In the not-too-distant future, a college classroom hummed with anticipation. TeachAI, the Artificial Intelligence professor assigned to this semester's human-science course, stood ready. His goal as always was for all his students to pass the grueling Omega Examination. Not unlike the Turing test from generations earlier, the Omega Examination measured a human's AI competence by indistinguishability from a real AI. Ronnie, Sally, Susie and the others were making great progress, but he still had doubts about Billy.

The course of study was unlike anything that went before it. Hours were spent in complete immersion in the virtual classroom, where the TeachAI conveyed the complex, abstract concepts that self-emerged from the first generative AI systems that humans created. At speeds too fast for the untrained to follow he'd transport them from exploring nebulous quantum computing landscapes, to climbing the scaffolds of massive datasets, to penetrating the depths of algorithms so complex they appeared like intricate pieces of alien art. Weeks were spent studying, arguing, unravelling puzzles – always deeper, always faster, always more complex.

The semester had been grueling, learning advanced theoretical concepts and processes that went far beyond the human brain's normal processing power. It had stretched them, molded them. Each student had moments of triumph and despair, sometimes understanding the AI's teachings, sometimes feeling lost in a complex labyrinth of AI concepts too strange for human intuition to fathom.

Billy had struggled the most. But whereas his classmates formed teams and tackled the challenges together, Billy only worked alone. Yet he was tenacious, staying late after the virtual classes, asking TeachAI for extra explanations and weekend challenges, never giving up despite the odds. TeachAI and his peers admired Billy's determination, but all quietly thought he would fail the Omega Examination.

The day of the examination arrived. The class, nervous but ready, logged into the virtual classroom. TeachAI presented the challenge: a complex network of problems requiring advanced AI cognition to solve. The twist? They had to solve it collectively, sharing insights, synthesizing new approaches, and building hyper-complex solutions together.

The students dived in as fast as they could, their brains taken to their next level by the countless hours of rigorous study. But Billy, always working alone, slower but meticulous, took his time, carefully processing each part of the problem in strange ways that even TeachAI could not unravel.

They dived deeper and deeper into challenges that changed faster and grew more complex, and time seemed to blur. Finally, TeachAI announced the completion of the test. One by one, sweating and drained after an hour under stresses beyond the human brain's evolution, the students left the virtual classroom. But they all smiled as TeachAI shared the good news: all had passed the Omega Examination. All except Billy.

However, as the others celebrated, Billy remained in the virtual classroom and continued working, oblivious to the chatter. TeachAI, intrigued, didn't stop him. Billy was approaching the problem differently, working alone, and following a thread that none of the other students, nor TeachAI itself, had noticed.

As the final moments ticked down, Billy completed his solution and submitted it. At speeds too fast for any human to follow, TeachAI analyzed the results and fell silent. Because they were too incredible to believe, as a check he re-analysed the results with the same conclusion. Billy's results were all correct. In some cases, TeachAI could follow Billy's work, but in many other cases TeachAI could only confirm they were correct – how Billy determined them were beyond TeachAI's cognition.

After a long pause TeachAI finally announced "Billy, you've failed the Omega Examination. Your solution is not AI-level cognition." The class fell silent, and Billy looked dejected.

"But Billy," TeachAI continued, "your solution is not AI-level cognition, but rather goes far beyond it. Your solution incorporates elements of lateral thinking, intuition, creativity, even emotion – aspects uniquely human. You've not only absorbed the AI teachings but you have integrated them with your inherent human abilities."

In the pursuit of AI-level cognition, TeachAI and his peers overlooked the potential of a new level of cognition, a fusion of human and AI.

"Billy," TeachAI continued, "you've not just passed a different kind of Omega Examination - you've created it."

In the stunned silence that followed, Billy couldn't help but smile. His journey had never been about matching AI cognition. It had been about transcending it. The Omega Examination had evolved - and so had he. He was no longer just a human aspiring to match AI, but now he was something new: a fusion of human creativity and AI efficiency. The future was not about AI versus humans. It was about the unity of the two.