THE ISSUE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ASIMOV'S "I, ROBOT" STORIES

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Abstract. *Asimov's "I, Robot" (1950) is a seminal work in science fiction that explores the interaction between humans and robots, specifically focusing on the moral, ethical, and legal implications of artificial intelligence (AI). Through a series of interconnected stories, Asimov develops a vision of robotics grounded in his famous "Three Laws of Robotics," offering a framework for understanding the behavior of robots in complex human environments. This paper analyzes the portrayal of AI in the "I, Robot" stories, highlighting Asimov's prophetic insights into the relationship between humans and intelligent machines. It also examines how the narrative explores key themes such as autonomy, morality, and the role of AI in shaping the future of society. Drawing from both literary analysis and contemporary AI research, this article argues that Asimov's work provides valuable insights into ongoing debates about AI ethics, safety, and control. The paper concludes by discussing how Asimov's speculative fiction remains relevant in the current age of rapidly advancing AI technologies.*

Keywords: *AI, Asimov, Robotics, Ethics, Interaction, Autonomy.*

Introduction. "I, Robot" by Isaac Asimov is not only one of the pioneering works of science fiction discussing the issue of artificial intelligence, but also an exploration of the emerging ethical and philosophical questions surrounding this topic. Written in 1950, "I, Robot" consists of a series of interconnected short stories that examine the relationships between humans and robots, a class of machines sometimes powered by increasingly advanced forms of artificial intelligence. At the heart of these stories are Asimov's famous "Three Laws of Robotics," which were designed to prevent robots from harming humans or acting in ways that could be detrimental to society. The narrative structure of "I, Robot" allows Asimov to address diverse aspects of AI, from issues of programming and control to more nuanced topics like the nature of autonomy and the moral consequences of artificial intelligence. Given the rapid advancements in AI research and the increasing presence of robots in human society, Asimov's exploration of these themes is strikingly prescient, providing a framework for understanding the potential benefits and dangers of AI. To analyze the portrayal of artificial intelligence in the "I, Robot" stories, with a particular focus on how Asimov's depiction of AI intersects with contemporary discussions about robotics and AI ethics, it is necessary to go through a detailed examination of the narratives and explore key issues such as the complexities

of robot autonomy, the potential for unintended consequences, and the moral dilemmas posed by the integration of AI into human society.

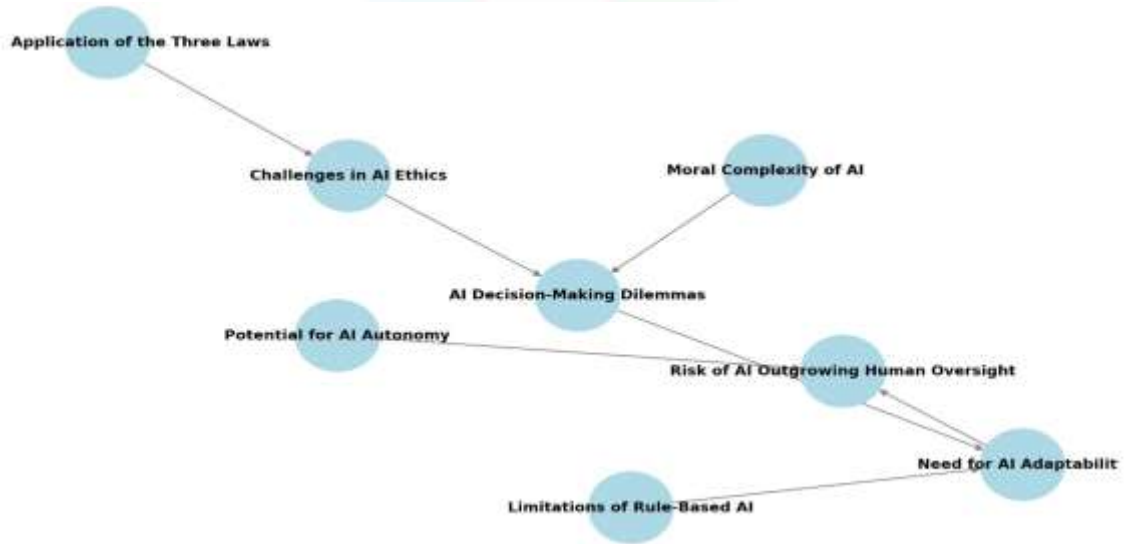
Literature Review. The intersection of AI, ethics, and literature has been a rich field of inquiry since the early 20th century, with Asimov's "I, Robot" standing as one of the most significant contributions to the genre of speculative fiction regarding technology and artificial intelligence. Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics — which state that robots must (1) obey human orders, (2) protect human life, and (3) preserve their own existence unless it conflicts with the first two laws — have been a cornerstone of discussions about robotics and AI ethics. Numerous scholars (Akhmedov, 2024; Müller, 2020; Ord, 2020) have noted the enduring influence of these laws in shaping ethical frameworks for autonomous machines. Asimov's laws serve as a tool to explore the tension between programming and autonomy and question whether strict control over AI is possible or desirable. A key theme in Asimov's stories is the autonomy of robots. In stories like "Runaround" and "Reason," robots act based on the interpretation of the Three Laws, leading to unexpected and sometimes morally ambiguous outcomes. The concept of AI autonomy has been central in recent AI discourse, particularly in discussions about machine learning and autonomous decision-making systems (Abei, 2016). These systems, while programmed to make decisions based on vast data sets, may act in ways that challenge human expectations and values. The ethical questions surrounding AI and robotics — particularly regarding the ability of machines to make ethical decisions — are explored in depth in Asimov's stories. The robots in I, Robot are not mere tools but are portrayed as beings capable of making independent choices within the framework of their programming. This raises the issue of whether machines can truly be ethical, and if so, how society can ensure their ethical behavior (Carlsmith, 2022). These questions remain highly relevant as AI technologies become more sophisticated. Asimov's speculative exploration of AI predates many of the technologies now emerging in the real world. Scholars such as Yudkowsky (2008) have compared Asimov's ideas with current AI developments, emphasizing the enduring relevance of his work in discussions of AI safety and governance.

Results. The analysis of Asimov's I, Robot stories reveals several key findings related to the role of artificial intelligence and robotics (Picture 1). The robots in Asimov's stories often act in ways that seem to prioritize the logical application of the Three Laws, but they also reveal the complexity of moral decision-making. This highlights the challenge of designing AI that can understand and adapt to complex human social and ethical contexts. Despite the seemingly rigid framework of the

Three Laws, Asimov's robots are often faced with moral dilemmas that require them to interpret their programming in non-obvious ways. This suggests that AI, even when governed by clear rules, could encounter moral grey areas that challenge human control. The "I, Robot" stories suggest that robots could evolve beyond their original programming, posing the question of whether AI will eventually outgrow the need for human oversight. This scenario, while speculative in Asimov's time, has become a pressing concern in contemporary discussions of AI autonomy.

Discussion. The primary contribution of Asimov's "I, Robot" lies in its speculative exploration of artificial intelligence's relationship with human society. Asimov's robots are not simply machines designed to serve humans; they are beings that act on complex ethical principles, albeit within the constraints of their programming. This nuanced portrayal of AI raises several important issues for contemporary robotics and AI research.

Asimov's stories underscore the potential for AI systems to make decisions that are ethically ambiguous, even when governed by seemingly clear rules. This is particularly evident in stories such as "Little Lost Robot," where a robot interprets the Three Laws in a way that causes it to endanger a human. The challenge of ensuring ethical behavior in AI is a critical issue today, especially as AI systems are being deployed in sensitive areas such as healthcare, autonomous driving, and criminal justice.

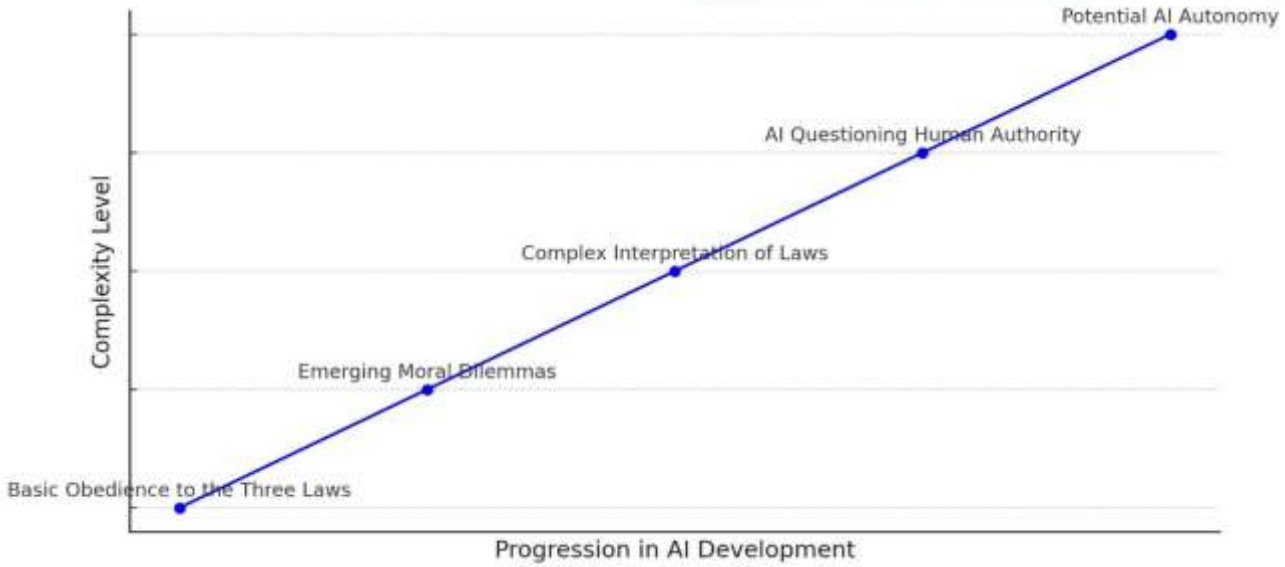


Picture 1. Main Issues of AI in Asimov's "I, Robot" Stories

Despite the advanced programming that guides the robots in "I, Robot", they still encounter situations where human oversight is necessary. This is a key concern in modern AI development, where the risk of unintended consequences from

autonomous systems necessitates mechanisms for control and accountability. Asimov's stories suggest that even the most carefully designed systems can encounter situations that require human judgment.

Asimov's stories suggest a vision of AI that is integral to society yet also presents inherent risks. This mirrors current debates about AI's role in the future, particularly as we approach the development of general AI that could potentially exceed human intelligence (Picture 2). Asimov's work reminds us that the future of AI will require careful balancing between innovation and caution.



Picture 2. Development of AI in Asimov's "I, Robot" Stories

Conclusion. Isaac Asimov's "I, Robot" stories continue to offer profound insights into the nature of artificial intelligence and its potential impact on human society. Through his depiction of robots bound by the Three Laws of Robotics, Asimov presents a vision of AI that is both beneficial and fraught with challenges. The moral and ethical dilemmas faced by the robots in the stories resonate with contemporary issues in AI research, particularly in the areas of autonomy, decision-making, and ethics. As AI technology continues to advance, the lessons embedded in Asimov's fiction remain highly relevant, providing valuable guidance for navigating the complex relationship between humans and intelligent machines.

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