ASTRA NEWS

Hello everyone!

Congratulations on the third issue of our magazine "Astra News"!
I want to thank everyone who contributed to this issue!
Enjoy!

Yours,
Leonid Vishnevskiy
The cover for this issue was designed by Leonid

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Musings of a Misguided Child

"You can always count on a science fiction writer to take a perfectly good scientific concept and mess it up with fiction" – Howard ☰�ʔɪː⅃Ŀ�, 2021

That was what was running through my head this morning as me and my family were driving home from tennis. Now I don't mean offense to any science fiction writers out there (me, for a start), but it's true. We take a concept and latch onto it like a remora onto some poor, pitiful shark. Then we do the equivalent of mugging it (i.e. we take it's money ruthlessly by force) and brand it as a novel. Wow. We're meaner than I thought. Well, I hope most people do that, otherwise I'd get a lot of bad press (please don't hurt me. I have money).

Anyways, that's just the sort of thing that I think about, and as Sun Tzu says in the Art of War, "Seize any whimpering shrimp of talent in your tiny brain, no matter how idiotic, and shake it till it yells for help, and then keep doing it because by now you're obviously having too much fun and should consider getting a life. Oh, and you should stop copying Technoblade." And so what do I do but squeeze it until every square millimeter, every drop of content has been extracted (just like Technoblade!). And now I'm writing in an e-mag. So, I'd say it was as good an idea as I've ever had (actually, ignore that. I haven't had many good ideas) to do the abovementioned squeezing content and copying Technoblade.

Come to think of it, there hasn't been much content in here, has there? No, it's mostly just dumb ideas – now delivered straight to your computer! – and me mocking myself. Which is as it should be.

(P.S. I'm writing most of this at like 11:30 at night. Please excuse my … er … well, just excuse everything mentioned above.)

Signed Howard ☰⁊ɪː⅃Ŀʼ74.

Pumpkin's Adventure
by Leonid Vishnevskiy

Listen: [Pumpkin's Adventure. MP3 (1:52)](#)

The knight approaches The Castle, which each time is surrounded by something different. On some days, it's tall trees. On other days The Castle is surrounded by giant waves, circling around. And then there are days when it's nothing, *nothing*, that surrounds The Castle. The knight never fears these obstacles, he just moves on.

As the knight enters The Castle, the white sun sets behind a hill. Soon it will rise again.
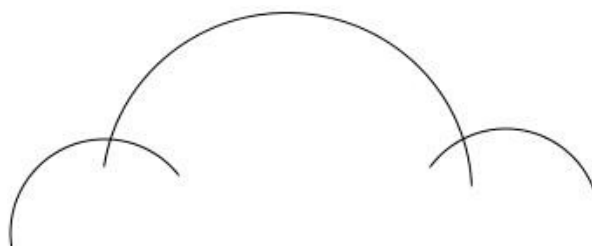
Meanwhile, I watch as something flies out of the Puffiness Fortress, named "Puffiness" for its puffiness. Should I mention how its king is called? What flied out looks like a cannonball, and it's approaching The Castle! But no worry, the knight is exiting The Castle, with swords and armor and all, ready to fight and stop it.

While I do not hear the knight, I see him shout what I think is "Stay away, Puffy!". Sword raised, the knight runs and tries to slash Puffy's cannonball, but the cannonball just goes on like nothing happened! Unfortunately for Puffy, the brave knight runs on to the Puffiness Fortress, and before long you could see Puffy himself fleeing. The king has been defeated.

However, Puffy's cannonball has still not been stopped; it went right behind The Castle! What a twist! And there go Puffy and his cannonball, in opposite directions, both fleeing, just as the white sun rises.

Another day, another victory.

"Pumpkin, why are you watching the clouds?"

AI. Who should colonize Mars first?

by Leonid Vishnevskiy

Most of us would applaud the first people on Mars, we would be eager to see their colonization. In short, most of us would love them. But at the same time, we would also know that our people on Mars might die or get an illness very quickly. While I have already said that to colonize Mars, we need to expand our philosophical capabilities (not only our technical capabilities) to work with this, it would still be better if these colonizers would live just as long and physically well as they would on Earth.

What if we didn't send humans to be colonizers first? What if we sent AI first?

AI would probably be able to do Mars tasks faster, and it might be easier for it to survive the harsh Martian environment. We could send AI when it is at human level (that is, we can't tell it from ourselves) as sending just regular robots is easier, but it won't set up a colony (e.g., *Curiosity*). But If AI is at human level, is it ethical to send it there? After all, we would wait until it is safe for us to go there before we go there, but for AI, we probably wouldn't care as much for it. We'd be putting ourselves above AI.

This might look ethical if we have this common goal: colonizing Mars. As then the AI would want to go there. However, by letting it go first we could again be abusing it, just this time hiding it better. That is, we would take advantage of the fact that they want to go there, we would let them go first and we would wait until it is safe for us. Imagine: another adult and you both want the same thing, but it is dangerous to get it. Say, for instance, climbing a dangerous mountain to build a settlement there. You let the other adult go first (when you could have gone first or you could have both gone), and you yourself stay on the ground. The other adult builds a settlement on the peak of the mountain, and then only do you go up to him. He shows you the best path, and you, upon reaching the settlement, get into a cozy house. While the other adult had to deal with various dangers, you have to deal with which house chair is more comfortable.

Returning to the main discission, the question that would decide whether the sending of AI to Mars first is ethical or unethical is this: can AI be considered human? I have already discussed most of this question as best as I could in the second edition of our magazine "Astra News". There I only discussed emotions, but that is the main question in deciding whether AI is human. If AI does have "real" emotions, then there are few other things that could possibly say that AI isn't human.

Also, what if AI, since it's human and thus can make decisions on its own, does not allow us to go to Mars unconditionally? What if it demands rights, leadership and more? But are we ready to actually treat AI like humans? Are we going to consider AI human-human, meaning that we will make no difference between Homo sapiens humans and human artificial intelligence? Because some of those demands may include those that we are ready to give only to Homo sapiens humans.

There is a question that appears here, which will not be discussed much in this article as it leads us away from what this article is about, it is complex and thus deserves its own look: why do we give our moral values only to those that are like us? Why don't we ethicize things that are not like us, as in our current way we are saying that only we deserve moral treatment. This may be because only we, humans, as far as we know, have knowledge of moral; and thus, only we can receive and appreciate it.

What if AI starts demanding unfair things? If AI, with all its intelligence, gets powerful, this could make the situation worse. Also, what if it makes its own morals, not like ours? This may be something that I will write an article about in the near future.

But why do we have to send *human-level* AI to Mars? Why don't we just send robots with specific planned instructions for them? This could still be a danger, as for instance we still need them to have threat recognition and they might accidentally classify us as a threat. As something that might need disposing of.

However, these robots would still be safer than human-level AI. Besides, we might be able to avoid them thinking of us as a threat that needs to be disposed of: if we program them to never respond to threats by opening fire or something like that, then they never will. Some may argue that they may accidentally do something violent without realizing it: something that is so complex that it would be hard for them to define it as "violence". If we remove their weapons though, then even if they come with fists clenched, they wouldn't be a big threat if we prepare enough. Of course, they would still have our rockets that they arrived in…and "our" infrastructure on Mars to threaten.

Still, they would be safer than human-level AI. As a conclusion, I think that if the question about sending AI to colonize Mars arises, then it would be better to send non-human level AI.

But, would it be safer for us? Would it be more ethical? The answers to these questions are not as simple as they may seem. What I will try to cover in my next article is that while we consider that human-level AI is the highest possible achievement in the field of AI, will AI consider the same? How will a society that, for the first time in the history of mankind, look like if humans will not only be a life based on protein?