

What is AI even?

AI is a form of cybernetics. Whoa, cyberpunk alert!

But cybernetics is originally from Plato, and it just means “being good at steering (people or a boat)

So AI means something that:

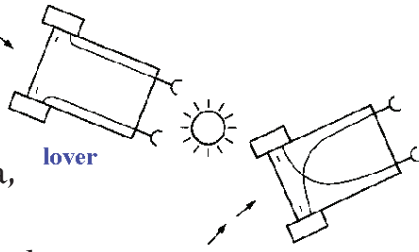
Looks at its world (or hears or listens to input somehow), Thinks (or has some tiny logic), and Acts on the world, by turning on a light or saying something, or performing an action. And that’s it!

SOCRATES: Or again, in a ship, if a man having the power to do what he likes, has no intelligence or skill in navigation [αρετης κυβερνητικης, aretes kybernetikes], do you see what will happen to him and to his fellow-sailors?

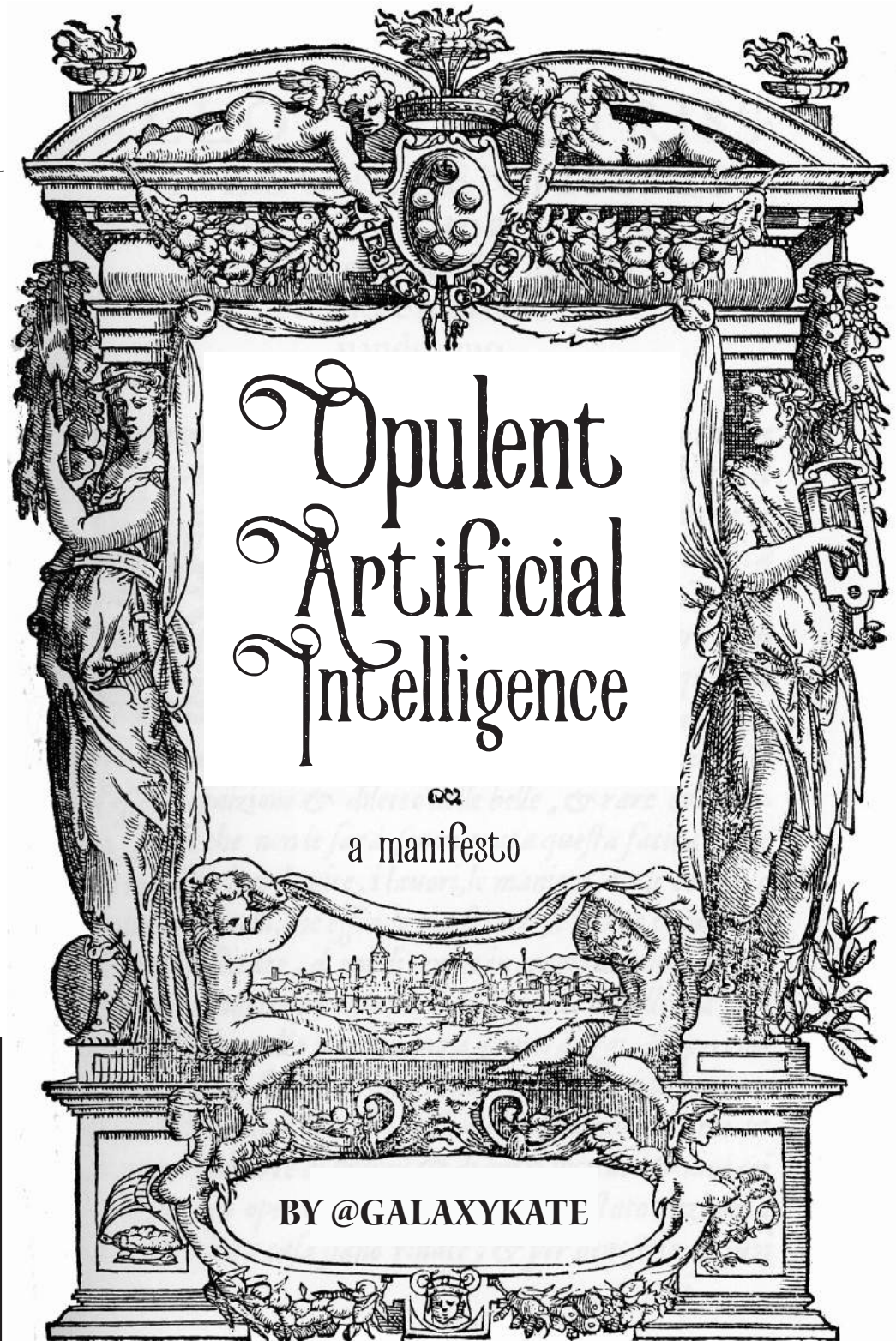
Plato, Alcibiades I; Benjamin Jowett, translator

"Cybernetics saves the souls, bodies, and material possessions from the gravest dangers."

—Socrates according to Plato, c. 400 B.C.E.



tiny cybernetic Braitenberg vehicles they “see” light, and “think through a single wire



Neural Networks	Evolutionary algorithms
Finite State Machine	Tracery grammar
Twine	Markov Chain
Edge detection	Pencil-and-Paper ruleset
A-star pathfinding	Cellular Automata

Poor little Artificial Intelligence



She scurries around behind the scenes of games, behind Google Maps and page rankings. "Find me the fastest path, AI!" "Solve this problem for me, AI!" "Route this NPC to the end of the level without running into walls, AI!" "But do so UNOBTAINABLY. Do so UNSEEN. Never, never, make yourself a spectacle. They do not wish to see you or talk to you. You are just here to do work." "...Oh, and can you do it faster and with less resources?"

HOW DREADFUL

lets make her FABULOUS!

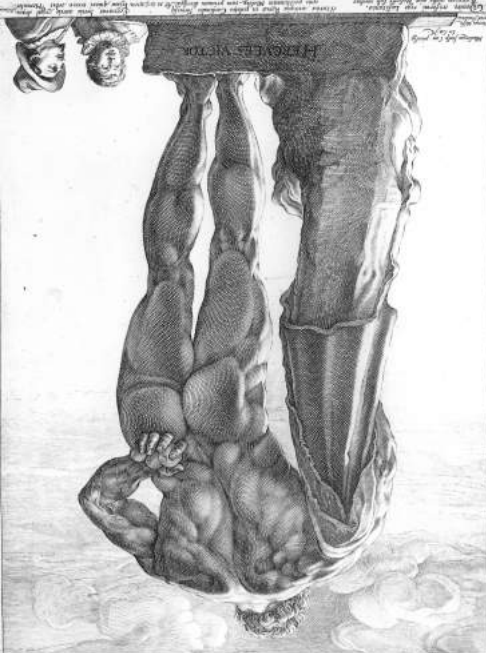


I want to coin the term "Opulent AI" for AI that takes up all the resources it wants, takes all the attention, and makes the experience all about itself.

FOR NO PRACTICAL PURPOSE WHATSOEVER Choosing flattering looks for your Opulent AI

The experience is designed to focus and highlight the AI. "Look at how it works! Isn't that so interesting and fabulous" "Look at how many different kinds of things it can make, and how quickly and how different they are!" The goal of an opulent AI is to dazzle the user with its extravagance, to flood their senses with its variety and charm. Practically, you may want to create collages of the generated content, or generate additional contentaccentuating the main output or adding context (fanciful descriptions, simulated reviews, glitter effects, attractive frames) Create additional characters and features just to point at the AI and exclaim how delightful and clever it is!

Visualization: Lay it all bare



What can the user learn about how the AI works? Lay its glorious operations bare before them so that they may marvel at its construction!

Approaches: Show visualizations of what your AI's state currently is, the more shiny and graphical the better!

Let your AI say what it's thinking. Why did it make those decisions? Let it expound upon its sagacity and wisdom. Add hooks that let you track and output the logic that got it to those decisions Open it up! Leave the backdoor to its brain open, leave the rules and datafiles in plaintext. Allow the users to admire them, edit them, and reshare them.

A few Opulent AI systems:

Black and White, the Sims, Nicki Case's Simulating the World in Emoji (http://ncase.me/simulating/), In-groups & Outgroups (http://ncase.me/group-prototype, Vi Hart and Nicki Case's http://ncase.me/polygons, Nicki Case's Neurotic Neurons (http://ncase.me/neuron), Context Free art (http://www.contextfreeart.org), Tracery (tracery.io) and the many Tracery and non-Tracery twittersbots

Cut-and-play exercise Cut out these strips. Choose two, and consider an AI that uses the technique on the back to do the thing on the front

weaving a scarf	choosing beads for a necklace
dealing with loneliness	writing a poem
dancing with you	playing with a puppy
designing a stylish sock	communing with the dead
comforting a distraught friend	creating great artworks