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Mission Statement: The purpose of An International Journal of Exploratory Meta-Living is to provide a resource for the dissemination of creative works relevant to the subject of meta-living. The journal welcomes both academic and artistic exercises expressed in any medium capable of being transmitted through the physical mechanisms of the journal. Due consideration also will be given to submissions that do not conform to these mechanisms. The journal explicitly forbids the establishment of a regular publication schedule.

Meta-Living: One useful avenue leading toward an understanding of the term meta-living is through analogy, particularly by considering meta-fiction. Wikipedia, the oracle of all contemporary knowledge, defines meta-fiction as “the literary term describing fictional writing that self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in posing questions about the relationship between fiction and reality, usually using irony and self-reflection.”¹ By straight-forward analogy, meta-living is the existential term describing a manner of living that self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in posing questions about the relationship between existence and reality, using irony and self-reflection among other devices. These other devices include, but are not limited to, scientific inquiry, ontology, various theologisms, sophistry, rhetoric, tomfoolery, transcendental perspectivism and, of course, the omnipresent specter of post-existential relativism.

¹<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metafiction>, accessed 2014 April 16.

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A Note on the Font: This font is Dax Compact Regular, designed by the late Hans Reichel, musician, instrument maker and font designer.

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A Wildly Uncompetitive Appeal

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Abstract: A short essay is presented providing an analogy between living under the cloud of mutually assured destruction in the 1970's and 1980's with the current cloud forming due to the unchecked emergence of Artificial Intelligence. The essay is a reflection, triggered by a recent exhortation to fully embrace the technology of AI accompanied by the explicit warning that to act otherwise is to become obsolete.

I sat in the lecture hall for the weekly departmental seminar given by a visiting professor, an accomplished expert in the intersection of materials engineering and artificial intelligence. He wowed the audience with his demonstrated successes at using AI to mine the literature for materials data. During the Q&A that followed, a question from a student provided our speaker with the opportunity to explicitly make a declaration that he had not dared voice during the seminar. He unabashedly announced, "If you are not using these tools, you are wildly uncompetitive."

I am struck by the disconnect between academia and the daily experience of Americans. Closer to reality is that adoption of AI by corporate America is already creating the first swells in a tidal wave that will disrupt the job market. Many more Americans will lose their jobs. To add insult to injury, their monthly utility bills are rising as heating their apartments competes with the voracious appetite of AI for electricity. Our young people feel a dark cloud forming over their heads, as AI threatens their ability to pursue a meaningful life.

Older people recall living under a different cloud, that of mutually assured destruction due to the nuclear arms race between the United States and

the Soviet Union. What prevented a global nuclear holocaust was the evidence provided by the mass human destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There is no Luddite among us who can halt the progress of AI. Its evolution and deployment are inevitable. However, the analogy with nuclear arsenals provides a precedent to make clear that humanity has the capability of developing a technology and not using it to its full disastrous potential. Following this train of thought, I am led to imagine what form a Hiroshima/Nagasaki lesson can take that would prevent a total AI apocalypse.

I suppose, despite popular support, the AI lesson is unlikely to take the form of Skynet, in which a rogue computational agent destroys humanity using its own nuclear arsenal. Rather, the form of the lesson may be presaged by Anthropic's call earlier this month to meet other AI developers in the US prior to the release of a new model, Mythos, due to its ostensible ability to hack every existing methods of cyber cryptology. An event where AI was used to globally erase all electronically-stored financial data could provide the moment where humanity collectively decides to set the worst of AI aside. Zeroing everyone's bank accounts would bring billionaires low, rendering them equal to Americans struggling to make ends meet. Certainly, such an

intolerable indignity would effectively garner the attention of the world's decision makers. In this scenario, the option of following the analogy of nuclear weapons, where AI is stored in underground silos as a deterrent, becomes plausible.

As I contemplate the form of our impending AI Armageddon, I suppose it will not end with a nuclear bang but a financial whimper. One may yet work toward a least harmful outcome. From the prospective of careening toward an uncertain reckoning, the notion of being wildly uncompetitive doesn't sound all that bad.



About The Poison Pie Publishing House

The Poison Pie Publishing House is an independent publisher specializing in post-existential fantasy generated through a non-idiomatic improvisational writing process. In addition to serving as a publishing house, PPPH hosts an arts blog¹ and "An International Journal of Exploratory Meta-Living"².

References

1. *The Poison Pie Publishing House*. accessed Feb. 5, 2015; Available from: <http://www.poisonpie.com/publishing/index.html>.
2. Staff. *An International Journal of Exploratory Meta-Living*. accessed Feb. 5, 2015; Available from: <http://www.poisonpie.com/IJEML/index.html>.