

September 4, 2547

Over the years an idea has percolated in my subconscious.

I suppose it's an intriguing possibility that I've contemplated, in one form or another, all my life — even as an impressionable young child when my father recited every adventurous tale of L. Frank Baum's Oz.

But now I've assembled and secreted all the disparate components — the last by mere happenstance.

Do I possess the mettle to do this?

Not that I would even entertain some puerile belief in fate or luck, or anything from among the host of superstitions many cling to. Still, there is something...

The battle-worn frigate Tripping Light has arrived in dry dock. Her FTL drive is slated for final spin-down, removal, and disposal at 1615 today.

Enough musing and procrastination. I must act quickly.

Procedures and Notes

1. Breach the external, internal, and vacuum coupling shields to the singularity.

This is by no means a procedure that has ever been well documented and is rife with anecdotal reports about the laws of physics being bent (doubtful) and of several technicians vanishing (occurring especially in the early years of use before remotes were a possibility due to EMP flux).

Why can't the UNSC make a proper pan-torque screwdriver for these things?

I'd also prefer using hardened remotes, but they in turn are controlled by and linked to networks that would detect and record the remotes' activities.

2. Check probe telemetry systems.

I've "borrowed" one from Reach's early warning Slipstream Space observatory. Those probes were never designed to operate so close to a gravity well. I have compensated, but overall effects remain unknown.

3. Initiate AI seed H-7 transfer to the matrix strata within probe.

4. Start FTP and verify data received.

5. Activate AI seed within matrix.

6. Launch probe.

Observations

My removal of the shields induced a peculiar synesthetic effect that crawled/appeared/scented along my left arm up to my neck.

I also experienced a kind of "hiccup" in my awareness, likely generated by the delta time that can occur with abrupt transitions into Slipstream.

Probe systems checked within tolerable variances.

AI seed data verified to seven nines.

Seed transferred with no errors.

AI initial growth state confirmed.

Probe telemetry uplinks checked and triple verified.

Probe launched on aligned trajectory.

Time seems to have mysteriously elapsed, though I'm uncertain. There is a step anomaly in the chronometer. This may be a technical artifact or a subdimensional leakage as the probe was inserted. No effect on me physically — nor on my wrist watch.

... I just reread this entry and discovered that I had already documented this temporal disruption, yet I have no memory doing so!

Telemetry confirms AI growth is beyond exponential! Appears instantaneous. From the temporal discrepancy? Some hitherto undiscovered multidimensional effect on the AI cross-linkages? Is it possible that the unshielded Slipstream harnesses alternate physical laws?

Much of the incoming data and consciousness cross-checks now garbled. Voice communication from AI attenuated.

Logic/Mathematics Scriber tests confirm full functionality... but the conclusions, insights, and even the nonsense generated is disturbing.

Making sure this all gets recorded.

Comments on humanity defy reason.

On the Covenant.

On the other intellects in the "mist:" Does it mean Slipstream?

Another "step" in time, or lost consciousness?

Four hours "missing."

Data-transfer buffer blown — capable of 148 hours at maximum rate.

Replacing it now.

September 5, 2547

Telemetry now completely operational, but there are the most damnable gaps appearing in the record.

Rampancy indicators all negative.

Voice communication increasingly nonsensical.

Communication burst — mathematics of all things. Can't make sense of the equations.

What am I missing?!

Incredible. Unbelievable. Telemetry lost.

Contact with the probe has terminated on my end as well.

I have sealed the vacuum, inner, and outer shield layers.

Experiment terminated. I have no desire to repeat the test. I can only hope the AI is dead because it's irretrievable now.

Ported data to Jerrod for further analysis.

I've filed and encrypted essential records under my personal code.

Triggered viral worm and bit grinder to destroy all other digital witnesses to this experiment...

Ah... of course, one last thing...

Most of my friends from my youth are now dead.

Everyday I check the KIA lists on the UNSC subnet, afraid to even admit to myself what names I'm looking for.

The closest "friends" left are the AIs that surround me.

But it occurs to me they are all technically "dead" too...

... or perhaps burning brighter and more alive than any of us?

