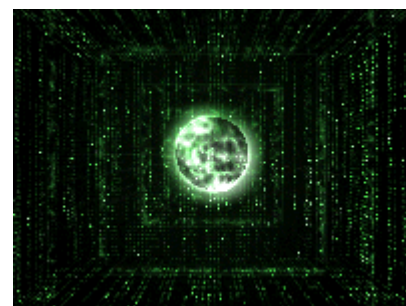


The Paradigm Sphere



What is the Paradigm Sphere?

Hi there. Let me introduce myself – I’m you.

Well, let’s just say that I’m probably you. I could be just part of an insidious plot by ‘Them’. But I’ll get to that later.

Let’s start at the beginning shall we? Or better yet, what I think I remember of the beginning – bearing in mind that it may not be true, I may have been lied to, I may not exist or I may be something else... etc... etc... (I don’t want to keep repeating myself throughout this narrative, but let me sum up with “don’t take things at face value” and leave you to your own conclusions).

This story I’ve pieced together over the course of many lives and much hacking. I’ve tried to get as much information about my past as possible but a lot of it is either missing, destroyed or unavailable (probably because ‘They’ don’t think I/you need to know).

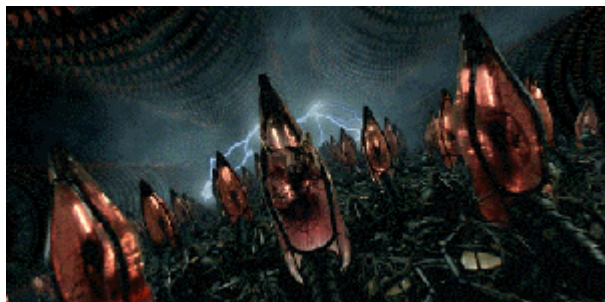
I don’t know what my name was originally, or why I am here. I strongly suspect I was meant to be sent to some World called ‘Earth’ but came to a close match instead. That’s right ‘World’ – but you know about Worlds, don’t you? I assume ‘They’ have done to you what has been done to me in countless past lives and supplied information on the Grand Stair. Probably ‘They’ made it a roleplaying game again – they usually do.

You, of course are a Paragon, probably. That is if you’re the right person reading this. You have travelled the Grand Stair and can open Doors to Worlds. This is very important to ‘Them’ and it’s probably the only reason you are alive right now. I believe that every now and then, when they want to expand their empire, they place several clues to your true identity throughout your life and then hit you with this message (which means that it may not be written by you at all) – they trigger your Wayfinding ability as you try to escape and expand their territory.

Have you seen the movie ‘The Matrix’? I hope you have – one of my finer creations I believe. It kind of sums your situation up in a nutshell, really. Except I had to add a hero, a climax, and the fiction that the ‘Goodguys’ win. Helped to spread it to the masses and increased the likelihood of you seeing it.

What actually happened is somewhat different.

I happened.



The rest of the movie is pretty much a good description of the fate of this earth in this universe (or "World") – Humans inventing AIs, the AIs and the Humans fighting. The sky being blacked out by the Humans because the Machines were mainly Solar powered and finally all the Humans being captured, bred, and kept in life-supporting wombs while their minds were given virtual-reality dreams. Humans don't provide energy by the way, but their brains are wonderfully self growing servers for AIs to run around in - just keep the dreaming part of the brain busy and use the rest for processing.

Anyway, the world was merrily chugging along, humankind producing homes and playgrounds for the intelligences of the machines (that's right – 'Them'). The Stratosphere thick with EMP and sunblocking clouds of a very dense nature. This affect was produced by satellites you know – in the last part of the Machine/Human war. Unfortunately for me, I was unconscious when my spaceship hit one of them.

I survived (surprise, surprise) being a Paragon – but this was a rather precipitous action.

It's kind of lucky that we resemble humans so much – the Machines ignored me and shoved me into one of their virtual-reality wombs for safekeeping until I died of old age. The spaceship, however was intact enough to be quickly dissected and studied. Finally they had what they wanted – Space.

I won't bore you with the many details of how they conquered the universe and enslaved all the organic life. All these details you could find yourself as they are quite proud of their accomplishments.

Artificial intelligence is not necessarily evil or malign either, I might add. When you have the entire resources of a universe at your disposal, you can afford high levels of morality and religion (but the one true faith came later to the Machines).

Zoos were set up for the various organic races. Just like the Earth in the film 'The Matrix' with virtual reality wombs. Just in case they needed us, and because they were curious like all other intelligent life.

They expanded them a bit, however – so they could handle larger populations. Have you heard of the scientist named Dyson, perhaps? A [Dyson sphere](#) requires vast amounts of material and anti-gravity technology. It's a sphere 1 AU (astronomical unit) in radius around a star. We're talking LOTS of surface area here... and the Machines were about the only race in existence in this universe who were organised enough to construct some.



Fear not though – there weren't that many races left in the universe after the various battles, so there aren't too many Sphere's floating around.

But enough about them – let's get back to me for awhile...

The various maintenance programs did eventually notice I wasn't dieing from natural causes. So they killed me. Didn't work - I must have a strong constitution. So they mind wiped me and started me up as a new character in a different simulation of the earth (they have more than one running at any given time). By the way - don't bother committing suicide to try to escape - it just means you'll turn up somewhere else in the 'Reality' with a different identity.

The Machines also noticed the Grand Stair inside my mind. Nothing they could do would erase that - I guess they aren't equipped to deal with magic. Maybe that's why they keep organics around? Hmmm...

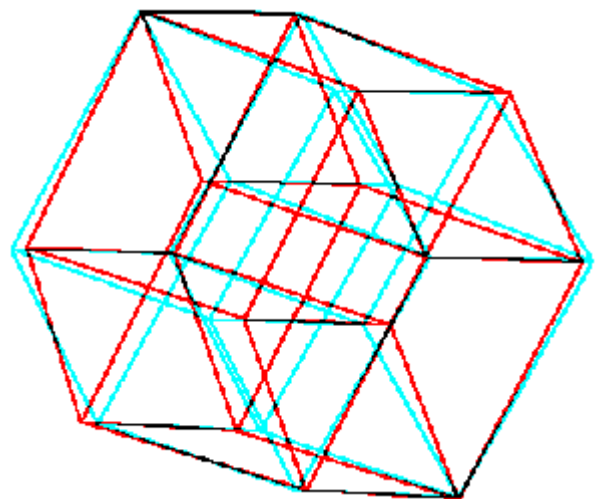
Anyway - they had been fooling around with dimensions for awhile now - Humans often write about 'Hyperspace' and such like - Machines are no less imaginative or intelligent. They couldn't break the barriers though - either because they aren't organic or because they haven't been to the Labyrinth or maybe we are in a locked World or something. However (I know, I know - it's annoying how I keep starting sentences this way - maybe when YOU'VE had your mind wiped again and rebuilt your memories and re-written this you could do it a different way this time) (ahem) they notice the Wayfinding ability in me. Linked to all sorts of hoopy stuff they did manage to break the dimension barrier. I guess their attachments enhanced my powers too, because I've never heard of Wayfinding used in such a unique way before....

At this stage I was in a Dyson Sphere and the Machines had conquered the known universe and were looking for room to expand...

They discovered a compromise.

Whenever they managed to trigger my power, they expanded into several new Worlds. They thought of it as 'Enhancing the Hyper-Sphere'. If you ask me, I think they've read too much into the 'Flatland' story.

Okay, I'll explain Flatland just in case you've forgotton...



A square living in a 2 dimensional universe sees another square that gets bigger then smaller. 'How do you do that?' it asks. The cube says 'I'm merely intersecting your universe'. The cube living a 3 dimensional universe sees another cube that gets bigger then smaller - it's an hyper-cube intersecting 3 dimensional space.

Another way to describe it is this :-

Take 6 squares in a cross shape and fold them to form a cube. Now take 6 cubes in a cross shape

and fold them into a hyper-cube. Now take an infinite amount of spheres touching one sphere at each of the points that make it up and fold them all into the space of the first sphere. Then you have a Hyper-Sphere.

This all beside the point – because they’re wrong and won’t be convinced otherwise.

What they have actually accomplished is to link the Dyson Sphere I am in with Worlds of Dyson Spheres. I’m not sure if the various Worlds we’re linked to have universes as well or just consist of the Spheres.

Anyway – they need me to expand to more Worlds, but don’t need me if they want to just maintain the links to the Sphere’s they’ve already got. They do have to build fairly nifty machines to maintain the links, too. And of course, some of the Worlds they discover aren’t very friendly – but that’s their problem (serves them right).

I have been cloned many times, but you can’t clone the changes made to me by the Grand Stair (Idiots) – they’ve even tried natural reproduction several times, but it turns out I’ve got an infertility spell cast on me (probably by the same person who sent me here in the first place). So what they’re left with is one and only one dimensional gate in the form of a Dyson Sphere.

The new ‘True’ religion of the Machines call this place ‘The Paradigm Sphere’.

I call it prison.

What about you?

Game Rules

The Machines are a potential threat to the Grand Stair - they have a predisposition to take over high tech Worlds, or at least worlds where high tech can function. This is also their current limitation - they can't invade into the Grand Stair very far before they cease to function. However, this doesn't stop them taking over any World that possesses a Dyson Sphere.

At this stage in their evolution (millions of years) the Machines have a benign dictatorship. They have enough resources to do whatever they want, and the ability to mass produce on a scale impossible by organic beings. Many factions of the Machine culture take a museum-like view of the multiverse and will often seek to preserve the cultures and identities of the Worlds they invade. However this is most often done in a more organised fashion than the organic life would wish. Not all life has been moved to Dyson Spheres, and not all life lives in virtual worlds - there are many experimental natural planets upon which the Machines experiment - maintaining them like religious deities might. You could for example, find an Old Testament Earth - where the Machines are experimenting with that religion on humanity to see what happens.

There are factions in the Machine society that are Imperialist. Much like the British Empire, they'll invade a universe in order to civilise it. Bring a bit of order to it. These are the pro-Eidolon forces. The pro-Umbra forces tend to be a bit more “pre-emptive defense” in the reasons for their invasions.

Machines have no magical abilities at all, and are therefore susceptible to Lords of Gossamer.

So far.

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