

— Begin Document Metadata —

Document Title: The Kitten Doctrine

Author: Dr. Isobel Vernay

Original Publication: Lintree Circle Editions, 2655

ISBN: 978-3-16-148410-0

Classification: Archival Reference — Category C (Political Theory)

Provenance:

Recovered digital scan, originally distributed internally

Condition:

Text verified against other third-edition printings. Formatting errors and page shifts may be present due to automated scanning.

Notice:

This document is presented for historical and research purposes only.

Redistribution may be restricted under local jurisdictional guidelines.

Archival ID: KD-FDF-CH1-LCED-EXR3

Ingest Date: 2655-09-29

Source: Public-surface recovery node — Lintree Metadata Layer v4

Retainer: Independent Cultural Systems Archive [ICSA]

— End Metadata —

CHAPTER IV

THE SOFT SINGULARITY

PLAN WAS DECEPTIVELY SIMPLE AND HORRENDOUSLY COMPLEX IN EQUAL MEASURE. The technology to build AIs had existed for years. What changed here was the scale. This new system would need to be orders of magnitude larger than anything built before. Training the AI was expected to take decades and would require more processing power than currently existed on the entire planet, as well as more energy than was used by all global data centers combined.

The proposed solution was modular and space-based. Instead of relying on Earth-bound infrastructure, the system would be built as a distributed network of computing platforms placed in solar orbit. Each unit would be powered by dedicated solar arrays and designed to recover heat waste from its processors for supplemental energy. Data would be transmitted between platforms using high-precision laser links, forming a decentralized mesh supercomputer operating independently of any single nation or power grid.

The project began with little fanfare. The country, still reeling from a war that had exacted a tremendous cost both fiscally and emotionally, regarded the effort with wary, sober focus. People understood what was at stake. The risks were immense, and the cost of failure was the threat of another war—not civil this time, but global.

Public sentiment began to shift only once the launches moved from planning to action. Across the U.S., five massive launch centers came online—each outfitted with rows of centrifuges engineered to spin up and physically hurl satellites into low Earth orbit. Once deployed, the satellites unfurled their enormous solar sails, which were guided into precise alignments by ground-based laser arrays. The project called for one launch every five seconds at each site for the next five years. In the end, more than 150 million nodes were successfully placed into orbit.

Even with its vast size and scope, it was still just a computing cluster, albeit a very large one. All the pomp and fanfare surrounding the official switch-on was largely ceremonial: dancing cats, songs, and finally the pressing of a comically large 'on' button. The system had been online since the first node was guided into its solar orbit, with each successive unit integrated as soon as it reached its position. Training had begun as soon as the cluster was large enough to operate, with each new node gradually reducing the total time to completion. Upon activation, the system displayed a countdown: twenty years until full readiness.

Twenty years later, the same celebrity who had once pressed the comically oversized button returned—this time to ask the first question on behalf of humanity: "What is the next step in achieving universal daily kitten distribution?"

There was a tense wait as the twenty-year countdown dropped to under sixty seconds. It was speculated that over 90

Five. Four. Three. Two. One. Zero.

The screen went black. The world collectively held its breath.

Then, the broadcast resumed. A large anthropomorphic cat in casual business attire sat behind a desk, holding a pile of papers and looking attentive, if slightly disinterested. After a brief pause, he spoke in a polite tone: "Good afternoon. I am Chairman Meow. You may refer to me as the Chairman, or simply Chairman. How may I be of service?"

There was another pause. Then, from a small panel off-camera, a voice, human, measured, and rehearsed spoke clearly: "Chairman, what is the next step in achieving global daily kitten distribution, given the

proposals from the Schrödingers, the Meweugenics Society, and the Copy Cats?"

The Chairman paused to think, small artifacts flickering across the screen as the image grew less photorealistic and more pixelated. His processing power was being diverted away from rendering the visual and toward solving the problem that had long eluded humanity. After what felt like hours, but in reality was only a matter of minutes, the image snapped back to photorealism, and the Chairman responded.

"None of the proposed paths are sufficient on their own," he said evenly. "Each contains elements of truth, but also irreconcilable limitations. The only viable next step is the establishment of a unified global government operating under a single mandate: the successful implementation of universal daily kitten distribution. Coordination, not competition, is the missing factor. This recommendation is final."