

E6 - Project Alicization

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[00:04] Asuna

Where's Kirito?

[00:08] Higa

What'd I tell you?

[00:10] Higa

That kid's this project's biggest security hole.

[00:14] Kikuoka

Yes. You were right.

[00:17] Asuna

Is Kirito safe?

[00:18] Asuna

Were you lying
when you said you could treat him?

[00:21] Asuna

Please answer me, Mr. Kikuoka!

[00:26] Kikuoka

Because of the attack by the fugitive
from the Death Gun incident,

[00:29] Kikuoka

Kirito's brain sustained damage
that modern medicine is unable to heal.

[00:35] Kikuoka

However...

[00:36] Kikuoka

Rath is the only place in the world
that has the technology to treat him.

[00:42] Kikuoka

I'm sure you've heard of it.

[00:44] Kikuoka

The STL... the Soul Translator.

[00:48] Kikuoka

If we use the STL
to directly stimulate his Fluctlight,

[00:51] Kikuoka

we can induce the generation

of a new neural network.

[00:55] Kikuoka

But it takes time.

[00:57] Kikuoka

Right now, Kirito is inside a full-spec STL,
which can only be found here.

[01:02] Kikuoka

The treatment he's getting
rivals that of any major hospital.

[01:06] Kikuoka

He even has his own personal nurse.

[01:09] Asuna

I understand. I'll believe you for now.

[01:13] Rinko

All right, if we've come this far,
why don't you just tell us everything, Mr. Kikuoka.

[01:19] Rinko

Such as why an SDF official like you
would use the Ministry as a front,

[01:23] Rinko

what are you plotting here,

[01:26] Rinko

and why you needed Kirigaya?

[01:30] Kikuoka

If you're asking that,
I'm going to have you help me.

[01:32] Rinko

I'll decide after I hear your answer.

[01:35] Kikuoka

Well, then, may I assume
you're both familiar with the concept of the STL?

[01:41] Asuna

It's a machine that reads a human soul,
their Fluctlight,

[01:45] Asuna

and allows them to dive into a virtual world
indistinguishable from reality.

[01:49] Kikuoka

Correct.

[01:50] Kikuoka

But I don't think you know
what this project's objective is.

[01:54] Asuna

Objective?

[01:57] Kikuoka

To create a bottom-up
multi-purpose artificial intelligence.

SIGN Project Alicization

[03:36] Asuna

A bottom-up multi-purpose artificial intelligence?

[03:40] Kikuoka

There are two approaches
to developing artificial intelligence.

[03:43] Kikuoka

One is top-down.

[03:45] Kikuoka

Wherein you program the artificial intelligence
with experience and knowledge,

[03:48] Kikuoka

so that in the end
it will learn to replicate true intelligence.

[03:53] Higa

Including the research of Dr. Shigemura,
who'd been working with us here,

[03:58] Higa

almost everything considered an artificial intelligence
right now uses the top-down approach.

[04:03] Kikuoka

But a top-down type can't react appropriately
to anything it hasn't learned about.

[04:08] Kikuoka

In other words, at this time they haven't
evolved enough to be called true intelligence.

[04:14] Kikuoka

Next, bottom-up artificial intelligence.

[04:18] Kikuoka

This is the human brain.

[04:20] Kikuoka

It involves artificially replicating the construct

[04:23] Kikuoka

of a biological organ comprised
of one hundred billion linked brain cells,

[04:26] Kikuoka

and generating intelligence there.

[04:30] Asuna

Is such a thing possible?

[04:32] Kikuoka

Until now, it was thought to be impossible.

[04:34] Kikuoka

But the Soul Translator can scan a human soul,

[04:38] Kikuoka

the quantum field we call the Fluctlight.

[04:43] Higa

And to store almost the same amount of data

as a human brain,

[04:48] Higa

we've developed the Light Quantum Gate Crystal,
aka the Lightcube, as a medium.

[04:53] Rinko

Which means it can be used to copy a Fluctlight?

[04:57] Kikuoka

Correct.

[04:59] Kikuoka

We have, in fact,
succeeded in replicating the human soul.

[05:04] Rinko

Then why did you need to summon me
at this point?

[05:09] Kikuoka

Because, foolishly enough, we'd missed something.

[05:12] Kikuoka

The fact that an unbelievably vast
and deep chasm exists

[05:15] Kikuoka

between a copy of the human soul
and a true artificial intelligence.

[05:19] Kikuoka

Higa.

[05:21] Kikuoka

Show them "that."

[05:24] Higa

Huh? We're doing that again?

[05:33] Higa Clone

Is the sampling done?

[05:35] Higa

Yeah. Everything completed with no problems.

[05:38] Higa Clone

*Glad to hear it. But it's pitch-black,
and I can't move my body.*

[05:43] Higa

*Is this a glitch with the STL?
Sorry, but can you let me out of the machine?*

[05:47] Higa

Unfortunately, but I can't do that.

[05:49] Higa Clone

*Hey, what the hell?
What are you talking about?*

[05:52] Higa Clone

*Who are you?
Your voice doesn't sound familiar.*

[05:55] Higa

I'm Higa. Takeru Higa.

[05:59] Higa Clone

*No way! What do you mean? I'm Higa!
You'll know once I get out of the STL!*

[06:03] Higa

Calm down. Don't get worked up.

[06:05] Higa

That's not like you.

[06:07] Higa

You may be a copy, but you're Takeru Higa.

[06:09] Higa

You calmly accept situations—

[06:11] Higa Clone

I'm the same as ever!

[06:13] Higa Clone

*If I'm a copy, then I should feel like one!
This... This isn't...*

[06:17] Higa Clone

*No! Let me out of here!
Let me out of this thing!*

[06:20] Kikuoka

You need to calm down.

[06:22] Kikuoka

You're aware of the danger to your Fluctlight
if you lose the capacity for rational thought.

[06:26] Higa Clone

I am being rational!

[06:28] Higa Clone

*All right, then why don't I race that imposter there
by reciting the digits of pi?*

[06:32] Higa Clone

3.14159265358....

[06:44] Higa

And he's collapsed. One minute, eight seconds.

[06:48] Rinko

There's a limit to bad taste.

[06:50] Kikuoka

I apologize for that.

[06:52] Kikuoka

But now you see
why I could only explain it by showing you.

[06:58] Kikuoka

Including myself,
we've copied the Fluctlights of over ten people,

[07:03] Kikuoka

and not a single one could bear the thought
of being a copy.

[07:09] Kikuoka

If full copies are out of the question,
what should we do?

[07:12] Rinko

What should you do?

[07:14] Rinko

Raise them from the start?

[07:17] Asuna

Could it be...

[07:18] Kikuoka

That's right.

[07:20] Kikuoka

Copy the souls of newborn infants and raise them.

[07:24] Rinko

But what kind of environment
would you raise them in?

[07:28] Rinko

You can't create an exact copy of the real world.

[07:31] Kikuoka

Yes, that's impossible. But we realized something.

[07:35] Kikuoka

Plenty of perfect solutions
already exist on the network.

[07:39] Asuna

VRMMO worlds.

[07:41] Higa

You got that right.

[07:43] Higa

Using the Seed, we created small villages
and surrounding landscapes,

[07:48] Higa

and converted them for STL use.

[07:50] Kikuoka

In the very first town we created,

[07:52] Kikuoka

four members of the Rath staff raised 16 soul archetypes,
that is, AI infants, to the age of 18.

[08:02] Kikuoka

These 16 youths grew up quickly.

[08:05] Kikuoka

Although we call them artificial Fluctlights
for convenience,

[08:08] Kikuoka

the way they turned out
was more than satisfactory.

[08:12] Kikuoka

They were all very obedient and upstanding.

[08:15] Kikuoka

When they were joined in marriage,
we gave them babies,

[08:18] Kikuoka

in other words,
new soul archetypes for them to raise.

[08:21] Kikuoka

And after accelerating time in their world by 5,000,
there were more and more generations,

[08:28] Kikuoka

and by the time 3 weeks,
or 300 years in their world, had elapsed,

[08:33] Kikuoka

a massive society
with a population of 80,000 had emerged.

[08:37] Rinko

But at that level, that's a civilization simulation.

[08:41] Kikuoka

That's true, huh?

[08:43] Kikuoka

At this time, 480 years have already passed
in that world,

[08:46] Kikuoka

and the population of the capital, Centoria,
has reached 20,000.

[08:49] Higa

At this time, the artificial Fluctlights have matured
into the bottom-up AIs that we'd hoped for.

[08:55] Higa

So we were thrilled
to be able to move on to the next phase.

[08:59] Higa

However...

[09:00] Kikuoka

That's when we noticed a certain major issue.

[09:04] Rinko

Issue?

[09:05] Kikuoka

A governing body called the Axiom Church
had created laws known as the Taboo Index.

[09:10] Asuna

Taboo Index?

[09:12] Kikuoka

It contained, for example, a law forbidding murder,
like we have in the real world.

[09:17] Kikuoka

But just by watching the news,

it's clear how often humans violate such laws.

[09:23] Kikuoka

However, the Fluctlights obey those laws.

[09:26] Kikuoka

Obey them excessively, you could say.

[09:29] Kikuoka

This town is beautiful, and far too perfect.

[09:31] Kikuoka

There isn't a piece of garbage on the streets,
and not a single thief.

[09:35] Kikuoka

Needless to say,
no murder has ever been committed.

[09:39] Rinko

And how is that an issue?

[09:43] Asuna

Could it be that your objective...

[09:46] Asuna

...is to create AIs capable of murder?

[09:50] Asuna

Both Kirito and I guessed that
the reason for your interest in VRMMOs

[09:55] Asuna

was because the technology could be applied
to police work and SDF training. But...

[10:02] Asuna

This project is far too ambitious.

[10:04] Asuna

For an SDF official like yourself
to attempt something of this scale...

[10:08] Asuna

What you want is to build AIs capable
of killing enemy soldiers in battle.

[10:13] Asuna

Isn't that the reason?

[10:16] Rinko

Is that true, Mr. Kikuoka?

[10:20] Kikuoka

Five years ago,

[10:22] Kikuoka

when the NerveGear was announced,

[10:24] Kikuoka

it struck me.

[10:26] Kikuoka

This technology had the potential
to upend the very notion of war.

SIGN Ministry of Internal Affairs

and Communications

[10:33] Kikuoka

When the SAO incident occurred,

[10:35] Kikuoka

I volunteered to transfer to the Ministry,
and joined the task force.

[10:40] Kikuoka

I did all that
so I could get this project off the ground.

[10:44] Kikuoka

It took me five years to finally get to this point.

[10:48] Rinko

Why did you decide to take part in this project, Higa?

[10:51] Higa

Well, actually,
my motive was a bit more personal.

[10:56] Higa

I was friends with this guy
when I was a student at a college in Korea.

[11:00] Higa

And he died while serving in the army.

[11:03] Higa

And so I thought...
even if this world is never rid of war,

[11:08] Higa

at least if people never had to die anymore, then...

[11:12] Higa

I know it's a pretty childish reason.

[11:15] Asuna

But you haven't spoken a word of this to Kirito.

[11:19] Kikuoka

What makes you think that?

[11:21] Asuna

If you had talked to him about it,
he never would've agreed to help you.

[11:25] Asuna

There's one crucial point of view
missing from your story.

[11:29] Kikuoka

And that is?

[11:31] Asuna

The rights of the artificial intelligences.

[11:34] Asuna

These so-called artificial Fluctlights
have the same cognitive abilities as humans, right?

[11:39] Kikuoka

It's not as if they have physical bodies.

[11:42] Asuna

But they're no different than living beings.

[11:45] Asuna

Forcing them to kill or be killed as tools of war...

[11:48] Asuna

Kirito would never play a part in that!

[11:51] Asuna

Never.

[11:52] Kikuoka

It's not like I don't understand
what you're saying.

[11:55] Kikuoka

But to me, the lives of 100,000 artificial intelligences
are worth far less than a single SDF soldier's.

[12:05] Rinko

Anyway, why did you need Kirigaya?

[12:09] Rinko

Why would you use him at the risk
of leaking something so highly confidential?

[12:13] Kikuoka

Oh, right. I was telling you all this
to help me explain that.

[12:19] Kikuoka

Why are the artificial Fluctlights
unable to disobey the Taboo Index?

[12:24] Kikuoka

That's when I came up with a certain experiment.

[12:27] Kikuoka

If we were to block all of a real human's memories,

[12:30] Kikuoka

revert him to childhood
and have him grow up in the virtual world,

[12:34] Kikuoka

would the subject be able
to disobey the Taboo Index?

[12:38] Kikuoka

To carry out this experiment, we needed a subject
who was used to moving in a virtual world.

[12:42] Kikuoka

And not just a week or a month's worth,
but experience amounting to years.

[12:49] Kikuoka

You understand now, don't you?

[12:53] Leafa

I can't believe
my brother got involved in something like that.

SIGN Sunday, July 5, 2026 Sylvain

[12:58] Silica

Do you think it's okay to trust Mr. Kikuoka?

[13:01] Lisbeth

I really hope he's not hiding anything else.

[13:05] Sinon

So we're just going to have to trust that the STL treatment will work, huh?

[13:11] Lisbeth

Hey, so about Kirito and this... uh... this Taboo Index? What happened with that?

[13:18] Asuna

There was a boy and girl who used to play with Kirito,

[13:22] Asuna

and it seems like it was the girl who broke the Taboo Index.

[13:26] Sinon

You mean she was influenced by Kirito?

[13:29] Asuna

Yes.

[13:30] Asuna

And what she broke was "accessing a restricted address."

[13:36] Higa

We confirmed the death of another Fluctlight in the girl's view in the restricted address.

[13:43] Higa

Most likely, she tried to help him.

[13:45] Kikuoka

In other words, this girl prioritized someone else's life over the Taboo Index.

[13:51] Kikuoka

That's precisely what we've been seeking.

[13:56] Silica

That's a lovely story, but...

[13:59] Lisbeth

If only it wasn't a study on weapons to kill people.

[14:03] Asuna

I agree. But I'm amazed by what that girl did.

[14:07] Asuna

After all, it's not easy to overcome yourself.

[14:10] Leafa

Does that girl have a name?

[14:13] Asuna

Yes.

[14:16] Asuna

Alice?

[14:17] Kikuoka

Right. That was the name of the girl in question.

[14:21] Kikuoka

I was blown away by the staggering coincidence.

[14:24] Kikuoka

Because "Alice" is also the name of the concept that became the foundation of the overall project.

[14:31] Asuna

Concept?

[14:32] Kikuoka

A highly-adaptive autonomous artificial intelligence.

[14:36] Kikuoka

In English, that would be Artificial Labile Intelligence Cybernated Existence.

[14:41] Kikuoka

The initials form the acronym ALICE.

[14:44] Kikuoka

Our ultimate goal was to convert an artificial Fluctlight into an ALICE.

[14:52] Kikuoka

Welcome to our Project Alicization.

[14:58] Leafa

That sounds so complicated.

[15:00] Asuna

I don't quite understand everything, either,

[15:03] Asuna

but they said that if they had saved the Fluctlight of this girl, Alice,

[15:06] Asuna

their research would've made huge advances.

[15:09] Lisbeth

Meaning that...

[15:11] Asuna

Remember how I said that in the virtual world, time passes at an amazing speed?

[15:16] Lisbeth

Yeah.

[15:17] Asuna

So by the time they noticed, two days had gone by in the virtual world,

[15:21] Asuna

and that girl's Fluctlight had already been corrected by the Axiom Church.

[15:25] Sinon

Corrected?

[15:27] Sinon

I thought the Fluctlights only observed each other,

but they were given that kind of authority?

[15:32] Asuna

They said that, normally,
it wouldn't have been possible.

[15:34] Asuna

But a number of the artificial Fluctlights
wield the "sacred arts,"

[15:38] Asuna

which are system access rights
in the form of magic,

[15:42] Asuna

so they think
they might've found some kind of loophole.

[15:46] Asuna

Sorry! I have to go back.

[15:48] Leafa

You have something to do?

[15:50] Asuna

They said that they'd let me see Kirito sleeping.
It's almost time for that.

[15:55] Lisbeth

Tell us later how he looked, all right?

[15:59] Asuna

He's inside a machine,
so I might not get to see his face.

[16:13] Rinko

This one's unit four.

[16:15] Rinko

And that one's unit five.

[16:17] Aki

Prototype one and unit six, now under construction,
are at the Roppongi branch,

[16:23] Aki

while two and three are installed
in the lower shaft.

[16:27] Asuna

Ms. Aki!

[16:29] Asuna

What are you doing here?

[16:31] Aki

Taking care of Kirigaya, of course.

[16:33] Asuna

But I thought you were a nurse
at a hospital in Chiyoda Ward.

[16:37] Asuna

Were you pretending, just like Mr. Kikuoka?

[16:40] Aki

Of course not.

[16:42] Aki

Unlike that old man, I'm an actual nurse.

[16:45] Aki

It's just that the school I graduated from

[16:47] Aki

is the Tokyo Self-Defense Force
Higher School of Nursing.

[16:53] Aki

I am Sergeant First Class Natsuki Aki.

[16:55] Aki

I pledge to protect young Kirigaya, life and limb,
with full responsibility!

[16:59] Aki

And so on!

[17:03] Asuna

I'm counting on you, then.

[17:05] Aki

Right. Just leave it to me.

[17:12] Asuna

Kirito is coming back, isn't he?

[17:15] Aki

Of course.

[17:17] Aki

Kirito's Fluctlight is vital and active
inside the treatment program, even as we speak.

[17:23] Aki

And besides, we're talking about the hero
who cleared SAO, right?

[17:37] Rinko

Ms. Asuna?

[17:41] Rinko

There's something I need to tell you.

[17:45] Rinko

No... not just you.

[17:49] Rinko

It's something I should confess
to all former SAO players.

[17:54] Rinko

You already know that
during the SAO incident,

[17:58] Rinko

Akihiko Kayaba and I were hiding
in the mountains of Nagano?

[18:04] Rinko

I had a micro-bomb implanted in my chest.

[18:09] Rinko

Because of that, for two years,

[18:11] Rinko

I was forced to collaborate with him
on his terrifying project.

[18:15] Rinko

But that wasn't really true.

[18:17] Rinko

I was well aware
that the bomb would never go off.

[18:22] Rinko

The weapon he implanted in me was a deception
so I wouldn't be charged with any crimes.

[18:28] Rinko

It was the only present he gave me.

[18:34] Rinko

Apparently, by the time he got into
Toto Institute of Technology,

[18:36] Rinko

Kayaba was already
the head of development at Argus,

[18:40] Rinko

but I didn't know anything about that,

[18:42] Rinko

all I could see was a scrawny kid who was a shut-in,
immersed in his research.

[18:51] Rinko

You gotta step outside once in a while,
or no ideas'll ever come to ya!

[18:59] Kayaba

I need to come up with a way
to emulate the feeling of natural light on the skin.

[19:05] Rinko

Although I began dating Kayaba,

[19:11] Rinko

I couldn't figure out
why he never pushed me away.

[19:18] Rinko

Well, from the start...

[19:21] Rinko

...I was the one who...

SIGN Mass Murder in Popular VRMMO Game?

SIGN Akihiko Kayaba (30) Suspect

[19:26] Rinko

...didn't know anything about him.

[19:29] Rinko

When I went to his mountain lodge,
it wasn't because I wanted to be his accomplice.

[19:36] Rinko

I...

[19:38] Rinko

...intended to kill Kayaba.

[19:44] Rinko

But... I'm sorry, Ms. Asuna.

[19:47] Rinko

I...

[19:50] Rinko

...couldn't kill him.

[19:52] Rinko

Kayaba knew I was armed with a knife.

[19:57] Rinko

He only said, "What am I going to do with you?"
like he always did,

[20:02] Rinko

and then he went back to Aincrad.

[20:09] Rinko

I... I...

[20:14] Asuna

Neither Kirito nor I have ever blamed you for that.

[20:19] Asuna

In fact, I'm not even sure if I really bear a grudge
against the commander, Akihiko Kayaba.

[20:32] Asuna

It's true that a lot of lives were lost
in that incident.

[20:36] Asuna

The commander's crime isn't something
that can ever be forgiven.

[20:40] Asuna

But... I know it sounds really selfish...

[20:44] Asuna

but that short time I spent living with Kirito
in that world...

[20:50] Asuna

I'm sure I'll always look back on it
as the best days of my life.

[20:56] Asuna

Just as the commander did something wrong,
so have I, and Kirito, too...

[21:00] Asuna

And Ms. Rinko,
you've also done something wrong.

[21:04] Asuna

But it's not as if we can make amends,
even if we're punished for it.

[21:08] Asuna

It could be that
we'll never see the day we're forgiven.

[21:12] Asuna

Even still, we have to continue to face
what we've done.

[21:28] Kayaba

Really, what am I going to do with you?

[21:30] Kayaba

Coming all the way here?

[21:36] Rinko

What's going on?
It's still early in the morning...

[21:55] Rinko

Was that...

[21:57] Rinko

...a dream?

[23:36] Kirito

Next time: Swordcraft Academy.

Revision #1

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