

Stone Ring Island AtlantyChronicle

Year 4, nr 2, 08/02/2020, daily newspaper published by Asociația Culturală Adsum
Virtual Island date: **Sunday, +2.31**

Leading Article

Performance, Education, Posture!

I thought that, after 14 years of sports (athletics and rugby), I know a lot about performance and what sport means for an individual life. Well, by watching the Conference - Performance as a standard of life, held by Carmen Tocală, Radu Dop, Pierre de Hillerin and moderated by Sorin Repanovici, that there is still much to learn. Nothing new in this, since "as long as you live you learn", but the way the four speakers were presenting and analyzing the performance and the problems or the satisfaction, generates a handful of thoughts!

I will not make an analysis of the conference but I will only mark some ideas that will arouse your interest to follow the recording published by the leader of the technical team, Mihai Gabriel Oprea, on the Atlantykrone facebook page.

The discussion started in English, the official communication language for this virtual edition of the Atlantykrone, but in about 18 minutes, Sorin Repanovici - as the audience was mainly formed from Romanian speakers, proposed to use for the rest of the session the mother tongue of the large majority.

Of course, the Atlantykrone's second level troll - and here I refer to Alin Laicu - marks, in his unmistakable style, this moment on page #2 of our newspaper.

After everyone has "warmed up" and entered the discussion, Radu Dop develops a revolutionary idea through its simplicity: when giving birth, mothers should receive a user manual on how to handle their baby for a correct and natural development. I agree with you that this is a problem that the parents of young defendants should solve, but according to Radu Dop: "a washing machine or a shampoo has more detailed usage instructions than a mother at her first childbirth".

...(to be continued in page #3)



Compass — The Interview of the Day

Ahoy, U.E.SH.* Atlantykrone

For 31 years, from the very beginning, Atlantykrone has had behind a "strong hand", a man who knows everything, solves everything, is ready for anything unforeseen. His name is Sorin Repanovici. If we consider the Atlantykrone as a space ship exploring the Universe, Sorin Repanovici would be the captain of this ship. Therefore we present below the first interview - since the U.E.SH. Atlantykrone took off in the virtual space - with its Captain:

Sorin "The Shark" Repanovici



The Atlantykrone ship successfully took off from the Stone Ring Island. Commander Sorin Repanovici can place the command post. Captain, what is the mission of the Atlantykrone shuttle now? Can we consider 2020 another 1989 (a new beginning)?

At this time the shuttle crew are on a mission to find a New Horizons. The year 2020 is rather a leap forward, 1989 was just the beginning of the EPIC.

Here on the first day of the Opening Ceremony and the Round Table we had a direct continent and five countries. New workshops have appeared, but the technical workshops are disappearing: robotics, first aid, amateur radio, mask modeling, creative writing workshops, etc. Will online succeed in compensating for the loss of skill workshops, in creating opportunities for young Atlantikronians left without courses?

The virtual world (online) will never be able to compensate for what the real world can offer. The spirit cannot be fed virtually, love, touch, caressing, what

*U.E.SH = Univers Exploration Ship

(to be continued in page #2)

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Reporter from the far side tent - Alin Laicu (2nd level troll)

**

OMG!!! France McCloskey allowed us to see all 16 participants and, for a few minutes, even the chat was open. Despite the fact that everyone was shocked by this, some questions were eventually asked and secretly France promised herself to start memorizing Romanian names. By the end of next week, after finishing the Romanian Phone Book, she'll definitely continue with words declension. Somehow, I get the feeling that her practice will start with small nonsense sentences like "Valley Cov Ski", ... :) The fact that there were also other real people on the participants side, it will certainly remain in my memory for a long time. I indeed was start thinking that, somehow, I might have been the only real human on the Island of Everyone-Else-Being-Virtual participants and this grew up in me a strange feeling of ... but wait!!! Did I say memory? Wow!!, we all just experienced first hand a memorizing technique that was ingeniously passing to us in a subliminal way. I'm also positive that someone from the High Council of the Administrators Bord will certainly look into the issue of allowing three participants on the same Zoom Screen. We already knew from the Opening Ceremony that two participants of different ages are allow.

Great day for the animal lovers and particularly for the cat lovers. General speaking, the animals should be loved not chew. Unfortunately the conference was short, so we didn't have the chance to learn how to take care of other felines, such as leopards, panthers or lions. This made little sad everyone born in this period of the year.

Breaking News!!! Day 2, not long time after 18:00 UTC hour: "Vă propun să trecem pe limba română, pentru a câștiga fluiditate în comunicarea dintre noi și pentru că, oricum, majoritatea participanților sunt români."

For non romanian speakers, kindly use the on-line Google Translate or please consider learning this beatiful Danubian language... 🍷🍷🍷🍷 (did I mention that I just win a bet that I made to myself a couple of days before?



Atlantykronecdotes

My Happiness

Honey, where's my happiness? I ask, rummaging through the drawers. How do I know, she replies, pulling on her dress. I didn't touch it. Alas, this statement of his seemed to sting me in the heart. Maybe that's why I can't find it, because she hasn't touched my happiness since I can't remember. But do you keep your happiness in the drawer? You're not very organized, darling, she tells me. You know, that's how some women are. Damn criticism. She finds a reason to comment on everything.. But where do you keep it? Damn me to ask, I felt like arguing. Me? she said, and was about to say something stupid when she realized she had seen me on the prowl. Well, my happiness is you, my dear. Yeah sure. Seriously? I ask her with enough irony in my voice that even a woman without a sense of humor can understand. Where do you keep me? Where do you store me? I ask her again, touching her sensitive cord. You know, this kind of women are critical, but they are very organized. Never go to bed until, for example, the papers on the desk are parallel to its edge. How where do I keep you? In my heart, darling. You're always there. I give up, I don't insist. That kind of women, as critical and orderly as they are, they are at least loving. I imagine her heart organized in sectors where I also have a place, parallel to the left aorta. Okay, I am cleared about her happiness. However, where the hell is my happiness ?!

by Marilena Dumitrescu

(Ahoy, U.E.Sh. Atlantykron - continued from page #1)

the human being has more precious. Obviously the virtual world can be a very important tool for the upcoming times in education, considering the huge amount of information and how it is managed and easily accessed and used. But there is nothing that can replace the teacher, the mentor, nothing: the craftsmen cannot be replaced, compensated.

What's missing to you right now on the island?

The spirit of the island, nature, human interaction.

If you were to compare, what is the biggest difference between online and offline organization?

Teamwork, in the field, in the middle of the waters, of the nature, shaking hands, a glass of wine in the evening after the program, a moonrise, a sunset, the smile of a child, the gratitude of an adult

Where do you see Atlantykron Academy in 5 years from now?

The Atlantykron Academy will follow the aspirations of its free spirit... In the FUTURE.

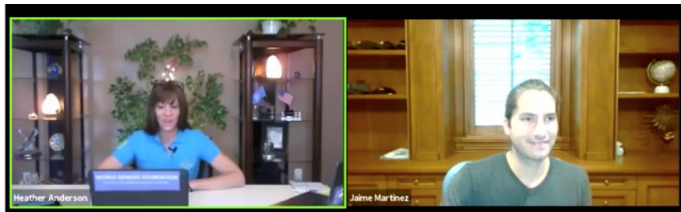
AthlantyChronical redactional team



August, 1st - Energy and Evolution conference with Jaime Martinez

In case you missed it, we picked for you some ideas:

- every time when a new source of energy was discovered there was a shift in mankind evolution
- renewable energies are all coming from the Sun





Aurel Cărașel - a literary factotum on an island

With Aurel Cărașel, in the list of collaborators you can publish any publication popularizing science, historical-geographical curiosities and enigmas, ufology, entertainment and humor, and, last but not least, science fiction, fantasy and police. In fact, Aurel Cărașel could very well be alone on that list of collaborators, through the simple volume of text he can produce, at a standard well above average - as demonstrated, for example in *revistanautilus.ro*, by pious remembrance. Aurel Cărașel is approaching to round off four decades of activism and literary creation in Romanian fantasy; he is one of the fans of science fiction who chose, in the 80s of the last century, a philological career, then, becoming a teacher and journalist, he continued year after year, at the Atlantykrone Summer Academy, to share with the youngest than him, something significant for everyone and, especially, something to bring them to the SF literature. Aurel Cărașel is one of those who made the transition from fan to author with aplomb, and then, with a total investment of labor power, he became the fiction and non-fiction writer with the most diverse work, without being divergent, from the 80th generation of our fantasy. Aurel Cărașel is at least one head taller than most of those who listen to him, and by the height of his writings he is the "gentle giant" from the imaginary center of genre literature, a center with two foci, in terms of Craiova and Cernavoda. About the multiple dimensions and directions of Aurel Cărașel's writings, about the transition from compilation to synthesis, from short prose to the river novel, from sf to fairy tale, and, again, about the transition from spoken word to written word and back, is a story for many more pages than this one. But because an example must be given, let's stop at the Imaginarium. A thematic history of SF literature, a volume published by Pavcon, in the Science-Fiction Collection, with serial number 81, with which Aurel Cărașel won the prize for non-fiction at this year's Romcon, in Timișoara. Although only one chapter corresponds to the ambitious title on the cover, Cărașel's Imaginarium is a very robust theoretical construction for understanding SF literature at any level. From the definitions of the genre, to subtle and balanced observations of specific rhetoric and ideology, Aurel Cărașel not only reviews everything that is significant in the study of science fiction, but also has synthetic sparkles, memorable rhetorical artifices. Far above the compiler level reached by Mircea Naidin's encyclopedia, the most recent similar work by a member of the Romanian fandom, Aurel Cărașel's book can be a good landmark for any novice who wants to confirm his intuitions given by the pleasure of reading in SF. Just as his fiction announces it, by drawing and then coloring paintings into galactic-sized paintings, Imaginarium is their equivalent in non-fiction.

by Cătălin Badea-Gheracostea

**"The true meaning of life is to plant trees,
under whose shade you do not expect to sit."**

Nelson Henderson

(Performance, Education, Posture! - continued from page #1)

AND, beware, if at the beginning of human development, when the average life was somewhere at 30-35 years, the appearance of the first pair of "grandparents" who stayed with children while young and strong parents were hunting or picking fruits, was a step forward in prolonging family life, as grandparents helped the child to discover the world, now that many grandparents are overwhelmed in the ability to work with the computer or smartphone of their grandchildren 5-7 years, the idea of a set of instructions for the new mother who has no possibilities seems to me a brilliant idea. Mr. Radu Dop: hats off!

Pierre de Hillerin gives an example that again seems practical and applicable: children between 10 and 16 years old to benefit from financial and human support to follow three modules of two years each in sports. The first way to be an individual sportsman in which to learn self-discipline and perseverance, to recognize himself as an opponent - we all fight procrastination from time to time, don't we? - and to find the best methods to self-discipline. -educate, self-motivate and self-overcome.

The second module should be a one-on-one competition sport: tennis, fencing, athletics, boxing, martial arts, etc. and the purpose of this module is to learn to know your opponent and to establish a strategy that will bring you victory.

And the last module should be a team sport to develop the capacity for empathy with the group you belong to and to diminish individualistic beginnings.

Indeed, such an approach taken at national or global level would bring indisputable benefits. First of all, we would have a triple collaboration (jointly-work as prof. Florin Munteanu says) on each child: that of the teacher, that of the parent and that of the coach, a joint work for the formation of the young person's psyche and body.

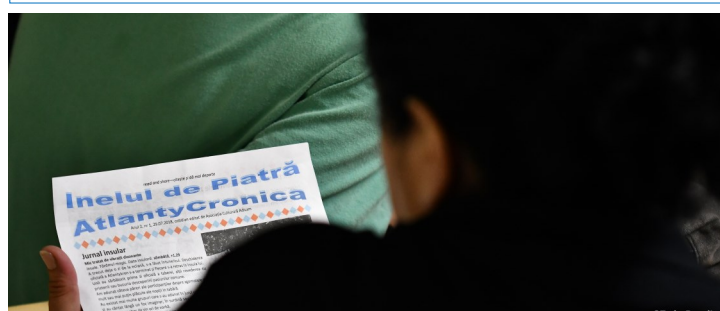
Then, as Radu Dop said, the posture, the way the student stands, vertically, on his feet, would be corrected. Dr. Dop emphasizes: "The Posture is our relationship with the Universe! Standing is an art, it is a gift. The great problems of future generations must be known and understood in order to be solved. Time and its management are very important, and daily movement is mandatory, given that the circadian rhythm dictates the biology and physiology of the human body. Curiosity and the need to harmoniously development are elements without which maturation would be incomplete. "

The multidisciplinary knowledge, whose fruits are already beginning to appear builds another perspective of the development of the human being and now it is our turn to get actively involved in the reconstruction of the way future generations will grow. Physical and mental education for performance can be essential in the context of new and multiple discoveries that create and improve our daily comfort and that make our bed more attractive and harder to leave.

We witnessed a constructive, reasoned discussion, full of real and achievable examples, a discussion held by people who are indisputable values and models of the present moment! I invite you to watch this conference - if you haven't already - on the Atlantykrone's facebook page, and, until tomorrow, I send you the greetings of today's explorers: AHOY!

PS. If you haven't noticed yet: today's Atlantychronicle also has a Cultural Addendum! Enjoy!

Lupișor



Notions of Semiotics and Biosemiotics; From Sign to Meaning



We have IT&C ... do we have a better Understanding?

Messages vs. meanings



Dr. Florin Munteanu, using his lively and engaging style, took the audience in an interesting journey, revealing objectives to be set and possible directions to be followed by humankind on its evolution. If you want to find more, don't forget to register to his next conference on fractals for Tuesday, August 4th.

In time

**Against all ponderable odds
the sky is blue today,
a blue as deep as that of God's
forgotten depths of heaven,
one could say.**

**You look at me, I look at you
and none of us does speak –
the morning silence (nothing new)
allows a smile to blossom
and to sneak**

**into the middle of our thoughts,
and suddenly we blink,
and three imponderable dots
of colour and of meaning
let us sink**

**in memories of youth and lo!
the years have never passed.
We're young again, though old, and so
the blue above has never
been so vast.**

Liliana Negoii

Some theoretical considerations regarding physical dimensions.

Or things to discuss at a beer with the friends

Do you agree with me that any dimension, no matter how small it is, you can theoretically split in 2? For an infinite amount of times? Even if our current technology cannot see more than a few angstroms?

Good!

Now, if you take a quark (one of the building blocks of protons and neutrons) and you zoom it, to reach the dimensions of the known Universe, is it possible that in the inside of this vast space to have a form of matter/energy organizing that at some point to generate life (in the algorithmically definition of life)? Obviously, not life as we know it, based on known atomic elements, but one unknown to us, at that sub-sub-sub atomic level, much smaller than quantic level.

Well, I'd say it is possible. Probable? Hard to compute. But it is possible.

Good!.

But what if you make another $10^{98278129387981237918237}$ zoom outs from the quark level to Universe levels? What we will see there? White space? Background noise? Or we will discover new and new structures, in a splendid infinite-fractal-like never-ending space? I bet on the second variant.

We are just like the Matrioska dolls, only just infinite. Matrioska fractals. :)

So, if at micro level there will be an infinity of divisions, an infinity of minuscule worlds, why we could not theoretize that our whole observable Universe is found in a gargantuan neutrino from a different superior metric dimensions. Just like we can make zoom in in the micro-cosmos, just like that we can zoom-out in the macro-cosmos.

So, all our known Universe and our law of physics, just like we know them, can be a small sub-atomic thing in the tail of a space dog, that doesn't even care that in its tail is the greatness of a world with 7.8 biped biologically creatures. And, just like that, if we zoom-out even more, all that can be a part of a nose of a space flee from a different dimension. :)

Do you remember when in school we learned the atom model just like a small solar system, with the electrons spinning wildly on closer/not orbits around the nucleus? We had to discover the concept of super-position from quantic mechanics to better understand the functionality of a simple atom. The knowledge evolves. Humanity evolves.

Now look at your pinkie. Yes, your little finger. How do you feel being aware that in that finger you can have entire civilizations, unknown to us, invisible to us due their small dimensions?

Maybe you've heard of parallel universes, parallel realities. Scientists tried for many times to theoretize what is happening beyond our subjective reality. Erwin Schrödinger was one of them. Brian Greene, Paul Dirac (Quantum Field Theory), Richard Feynman, Werner Heisenberg, Max Born, Pascual Jordan, Enrico Fermi, Niels Bohr, Max Tegmark and many others.

It's an interesting thought to know that in any part of your body, in the air that you inhale and in the cornea you're using to read these lines can be a multitude of Universes. The joy of knowing. It makes you feel humble.

And when you take a break from the daily routine, like invoices, bread, butter, day-2-day stress, than you can admire the infinite dimensions at macro and micro level. That is exactly the type of discussion you can have with your friends over a beer at Atlantykron.

Constantin Ferseta



Island Vocabulary - words of the day

**Disruptive Technology
Autopoiesis
Allopoiesis**

(from the conference *Notions of Semiotics and Biosemiotics;
Fron Sign to meaning*)

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Cultural Addendum

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Virtual Island date: **Sunday, +2.31**

SF Cinema

When the movie runs faster than reality (1/3)

Science fiction does not aim to predict the future, but only, at most, to explore possible futures. But precisely because they are possible, some of these futures, or fragments of them, such as elements of technology, become reality. It has been happening in literature since the time of Jules Verne and, with the advent of cinema, it is also happening in the seventh art. We have gathered here some of the moments when the filmmakers showed good documentation and a lot of intuition.

1902: *Le voyage dans la lune* (The journey to the moon) Sure, the idea belongs to Jules Verne, but it is the first time that viewers can see on a screen a space travel, and especially one to the moon. In addition, Georges Méliès, truly the first great visionary of the newborn art form, gives us here a first hint of what would once become the SF movie.



1966: *Star Trek*. A screen device, which is written with a stylus. Slightly thicker than a current tablet, but quite convincing. A thinner one appears on the big



screen after two years, in the famous *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which also seems to predict the way we don't take our eyes off the screen even at the table... And all

In *Star Trek*, the communicator of the original series looks suspiciously much like a clamshell phone today. Any resemblance is not accidental at all. In



1979, in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, the communicator

became a bracelet and thus announced today's smartwatch. I sus-



pect that a badge communicator will appear long before the 24th century ...



1968: *2001: A Space Odyssey*. We talked about the tablet, and here are other gadgets that have made their way to reality. But perhaps the most vision-



ary idea was that of space tourism, which has begun to be talked about nowadays. Of course, we still have hotels in orbit from the movie...

by Cristina Ghidoveanu

SF Serial Prose - by Liliana Negoii

Carbon (part 1/3)

Splendid. Absolutely brilliant.

Maude looked at the reactor in front of her with an exasperated air. It was the umpteenth time when the coils found at its basis had parasitic deposits.

And I used that stupid spray for so long... too much publicity for such an inefficient trash... She couldn't understand how and from where those flea-like things stinking of electrostatic charge kept appearing, but the caustic scent they spread, combined with the typical smell of the chemical reactions in that room (the professor had told her at some point that, according to all the features, that specific odour appeared to be a much denser version of the long gone Titan Arum's perfume) was enough to make her tears spring almost instantaneously when she felt it. Lucky for her, the working glasses isolated her eyes perfectly - the salt in her tear ducts was the last thing lacking from there, to mix with the vapours of sulphur and samisium and to allow all the technicians to know her true "inner colour". That had been the exact expression of the chemical lector, trying to joke, with an idiotic smile, when he had explained to her and others about the extremely fast exothermal reactions that could take place between the various elements in that area. Bad joke.

Sighing resigned, Maude opened slowly her toolbox, placing with care every tool on the stand, as if stalling while arranging all the brushes, clamps, pinches and other things with millimetric precision, as if preparing for meditation instead of a technical intervention the bloody reactor.

That's it, nothing to do about it. And I bet Darj saw the deposits too, but pretended to ignore the flood until his watch ended, damn him...

The flood. The word turned her thoughts suddenly towards the Earth rains. She missed feeling the angry drops of a summer rain weeping her. Here it never rained. The small amounts of water from the atmosphere got back on its surface in the form of some dense mists, first becoming a sort of milky goo spreading everywhere, then being absorbed into the soil and only afterwards refilling, through God knew what subterranean ducts, the few natural reservoirs from which humans took in with parsimony their rations.

Too long had passed since she had willingly accepted the exile on Rhessus in exchange for the conditioned release of her brother. Many had said that Serge wasn't worth her sacrifice, but what nobody knew actually was that Maude barely waited for a pretext to permanently leave the Earth, unable to find her place anywhere after...

Like a silent alarm, her pulse suddenly accelerated, and the woman made some serious efforts to not continue her thought. Now she needed to focus on the coils and to clean them of those damn fleas that became more and more resistant to all the sprays and compounds used for sterilization. Those tears of nostalgia were not indicated. Not now. Not here. Not for anything else, but her desire to leave the Earth had been too strong to mess things up like that now.

Tuck. Clip. Retractor. Deionizer. Tuck. Brush.

Dad would be proud. Or something like that. He wanted so badly a surgeon in the family - scalpel, resector, all the same. Bloody parasites...

- Come on, Maude, I need to turn the reactor back on, heard the woman in the earphones her shift mate's voice gurgling like a fountain.

Smiling askew towards the window upstairs, she raised the tip of the resector to her temple, in some sort of a taunting salute, then she continued to work, saying between her clenched teeth:

- You'll turn on the reactor when I'm absolutely sure that I took even the last particle off the coils, Zeq. Not one second earlier.

(to be continued in C.A. page#2)

Then she giggled when Ezequiel's unsatisfied grunt sank in her ear. She knew that he grumbled only for the sake of appearances, so far nobody had managed to clean those coils faster than her, and she also knew that the bets about surpassing all sorts of records on that far-away territory made no delay in appearing - Ezequiel had probably wagered again a large number of credits on her and now he was simply scooting the horse. Or, in order to respect the gender, the mare.

Not long after that, Maude managed to finish the pernicky job and, judging by the sound of satisfaction following the command of recoupling the circuits, she could tell that she had probably beat her old record.

- Say, Zeq, do I deserve my lump of sugar? she teased her "jockey" with a slight tenderness.

Looking askance at her (mostly because of the uncorrected strabismus), Zeq simply shook his shoulders and answered:

- Feel free to laugh all you want, Maude. Credits are credits, and anyway, it's not like one can have too much fun here. Back home, on Earth, I had snail races. But here..., he sighed, and Maude couldn't help a burst of laughter, suddenly imagining poor Ezequiel verbally lashing a snail.

- Yes, well, she managed to slur after laughing. I promise to not let you down... too soon, anyway. And now, since I know that you don't need me in order to restart the reactor, I'll leave you alone, this old mare needs a shower to get rid of the stench of those damn fleas, grinned the woman towards him, throwing the toolbox in the sterilizing drawer and leaving the room without a rush, moving slowly her generous hips. She had never seen herself as much of a beauty, but it was enough for any man to watch her walking in order to realize that she knew bloody well what to do in bed.

Ezequiel stared after her and sighed once more, swallowing the lump in his throat, imagining how it would have felt to literally ride her, then returned to the dashboard with resignation. He would never learn the pleasure of such a ride, and not because of being fat or squinting or because Maude might have had someone else in her life (relationships on Rhessus were anyway highly volatile), but simply because mother nature had made him a eunuch and, in a painful twist of irony, incompatible with the methods of correcting this situation. Maude knew that and teased him friendly sometimes, when there were only the two of them, but she had never ridiculed him, compared to others, and he was grateful for this more than words could say. Because of that (and also because his account of credits kept growing fatter after the bets won by her technical abilities) the forty-eight year old man wouldn't have changed his colleague for anything in the world.

The woman headed towards the service showers, anticipating the pleasure of the water flowing along her skin and enhancing it with the slowness with which she removed the overall literally stinking of all kinds of things. Her sweat, compared to these, seemed like a rose perfume. When, eventually, she turned on the tap and felt the trickles of water on her body, the shiver she experienced was so powerful that she needed to cling to the steel bar next to her in order not to fall. The only thing she enjoyed more than showers was chocolate, but that one was much harder to get here. So now, with a wide smile on her face, she leaned her head backwards and looked at the sky through the transparent ceiling, while ignoring all the rules of water economy. Anyway, all rules here seemed to exist only to be ignored. Starting with the very place where they were.

Rhessus was a planet with two suns. So far nothing unusual. But Rhessus followed an ample 8-shaped orbit, unnaturally precise between the two suns, and that was where all the fun began. According to standard physics studied in the Academy, what happened in this system had no logic, no matter if you thought of Lagrange points or any other rules and laws. And not only the orbit had been something to perplex the researchers, but also the incredible stability of this entire assembly, starting with the distances and physical dimensions of the suns and the planet and ending with the chemical structure of the environment, allowing the existence of this planet where almost half the time it was daylight no matter where you might have been. From the physics point of view, this system could not exist. It was impossible. And yet it existed, and humans had started to dissect it, hoping to learn what "wheels" made it function. Many people said that this was actually a matter of statistics and an exception postulate. In the entire universe THERE HAD TO BE such a model, inconsistent with the rudimentary knowledge of physics of earthlings. But for the human mind, statistics and exceptions have never been enough.

The assembly here was rather simple - to big enough stars, physically and chemically identical, at an ideal distance one from the other, and one planet seeming to have found the exact edge of balance allowing it to orbit them alternatively, uniformly and constantly, using, aside the individual gravity of each star, god knew what other force still undiscovered by people. Analyzing the orbit pattern, one could say that the two stars played tennis,

taking turns at throwing the ball from one another, with an indistinguishable lag when crossing the barrier between the two gravities, while the planet remained in a constant and painfully fragile balance, which the presence of humans, come here as explorers and colonizers, hadn't managed to disturb. Or not yet, at least.

Spreading with a dreamy air the disinfecting foam on her body, Maude admired the iridescence of the glass roof under the beams of Saya, one of the two suns. Rhessus was on the brink of changing the orbit, and in this time the mixed light of the two stars, abnormally close despite their sizes, seemed to force the human eye to see more colours than believed possible. Saya and Roya. She had no idea who had named those suns, but somehow the woman's ear approved of their sonority. Saya and Roya. And Rhessus. Ménagement à trois.

Maude began to rinse herself, sighing on one side with the satisfaction given by the feeling of being clean and on the other side with resignation because of what she had to do next. She had to find out, once and for all, what caused those fleas to keep appearing. Otherwise, the rest of her life on this planet would resume to technical shifts and parasite resections from those stupid coils. She had no idea how to find the primary reason, but in this matter, her first physics teacher had said a brilliant thing at some point. When you don't know what causes a certain phenomenon, follow its tread up to its beginnings. Up to hydrogen and Euglena Viridis. Up to the reasons for which a god, any god, decided at some point that bloody carbon could birth both diamond and graphite. And, above all, life.

Hm. Cheap philosophy again.

One thing was certain. She couldn't count on the help of Darj (his complete name was Darjeeling, but even he agreed that his parents couldn't have had a worse idea of a name, so everybody used that shortening). Maude had had the chance to understand what monument of intelligence the man was back when they had been transplanted with the entire colony's nucleus on Rhessus, and although at first he had seemed to be a charming person, some later events brought him in the position of persona non-grata not just for her, but for many others.

Plus, despite his wide knowledge, the idiot was of an unquantifiable laziness, and when someone told him anything about that, he simply looked at that person in a superior way, above the gold frame glasses (Darj still wore old-fashioned glasses, refusing stubbornly to undergo surgery or to move to contact lenses, like all those with eye problems had, under the pretext that the old junk better highlighted his face) and replied "Do you understand the concept of efficient management of limited resources? Do you think there's any other resource more limited than life?! You get only one, *mon cher*".

The French he splashed his interlocutors with provided him with a somewhat pedantic air, and three quarters of the colonists would have gladly strangled him only to not hear him anymore striving to pronounce the words with the proper accent. The rest, including Maude, had resigned with his presence, just trying to do their best not to be around him more than absolutely necessary. And, somehow, Maude knew that she wasn't going to turn the study of parasites a case of utmost necessary presence of Darj near her.

Relaxed by the outrageously long shower (she was aware that her account would further be relieved of a stinging amount of credits as a penalty for that, but to hell with them, that much of a pleasure she had on this planet and they could penalize it as much as they wanted) Maude took from the locker a clean, odourless overall, sprayed a little perfume between her breasts and then headed towards the lab. She knew that the neutralized parasites had been carefully taken by the system, as usual, and then transferred there for study, at her request - some said that it was wasted time, but Maude was quite determined to learn what generated those fleas.

The good part was that, once neutralized, their specific stench vanished, so she didn't have to resist any olfactory attack from them. However, opening the lab door Maude found herself in the position of resisting a nervous attack - Darj was already there, comfortably placed in front of a monitor, with his feet on a chair and a cup of coffee in his hand.

Unwilling to appear rude, the woman mumbled some sort of a hello to which he didn't answer, seeming to ignore her, absorbed by a list of data flowing quickly on the display in front of him. Annoyed even more by his lack of reaction, Maude put on a mask and some gloves and wanted to go to her working area, when the man, suddenly aware of her presence, pulled himself out of his thoughts and turned around. Maude, shocked to see the black rings around his eyes, forgot entirely about her nerves and asked him highly worried:

- Are you OK? Is anything wrong?

After several seconds of silence, Darj looked back at the monitor and said in a neutral voice:

- Rhessus has modified the length of its orbit around Roya by a micron.

*(to be continued tomorrow, in **AtlantyChronicle** #3/2020 - Cultural Addendum)*