



Rothilda von Rotortod:

# OVERTURNED

*How the aliens tried to conquer the earth with wind turbines*

## Part I. In the sights of the aliens

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*Rothilda von Rotortod's novel Overturned captures the feeling of alienation from nature, which results from the progressive disappearance of landscape behind wind turbines, in the image of mankind being overwhelmed by extraterrestrials (cf. [interview with the author](#)).*

*The starting point of the plot are problems arising from the invention of a rejuvenating pill on the planet Kadohan: In the foreseeable future, space and resources are in danger of becoming scarce. The only way out: the search for a replacement planet.*

*The choice falls on the planet "Earth". Unfortunately, intelligent life already exists there ...*

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## 1. The rejuvenation pill

### Search for a replacement planet



When the rejuvenation pill was launched on the planet Kadohan, it was foreseeable that resources would no longer be sufficient for everyone in the near future. Admittedly, a law regulating reproduction was passed immediately and procreation was completely switched over to artificial insemination. Nevertheless, it was clear that in the years to come – if reproduction

was not to be completely abolished – a replacement planet for the coming generations would have to be found.

As a result of extensive cosmic explorations, the choice finally fell on the planet Earth. Firstly, it was relatively easy to reach for the Kadohanian spaceships. And secondly, the planet had interesting raw material deposits and also offered ideal conditions for permanent settlement.

The only problem was: Planet Earth was already populated. If the Kadohanians wanted to use it for their own population, they either had to reach an agreement with the dominant species there or displace them.

As a result of a reconnaissance mission that was conducted undercover on Earth, the first alternative was classified as unrealistic. The Earthlings, the members of the exploration team unanimously reported, were an extremely aggressive species that would rather destroy their own planet than share it with others. In addition, the Earthlings themselves were said to be quickly-multiplying and to overstress the colonisation capacities of their planet, too.

So for the Kadohanians exactly that became a problem, which made the earth attractive for them. Just because the planet offered ideal living conditions for them, the dominant species there was very similar to them in constitution and temperament. Living together and sharing resources proved to be difficult or even impossible.

In the end, therefore, only the second, invasive approach remained. This, however, was associated with logistical problems that could not easily be solved either. As the fact-finding mission had shown, the Earthlings had an extremely effective arsenal of destructive weapons at their disposal. Even if the Kadohanians' own protective shield was supposed to neutralise this deadly potential, there was still the danger that the Earthlings would be driven to the extreme by the attack and make the planet permanently unusable with their weapons.

The only way to stop the Earthlings from this self-destructive act was to prepare the invasion long in advance and then implement it so quickly and effectively that the attacked would have no time to fight back. However, the Kadohanian fleet of spacecraft could hardly pass unnoticed through the radar screen that the exploratory mission had detected around Earth. The stealth mode, which worked tolerably for a single small space glider, reached its limits here. At the latest during the landing approach, the existence of the spaceships could no longer be concealed – and would then provoke the feared counterattack.

To make matters worse, the spaceships had to land in very specific, strategically favourable places to nip the Earthlings' resistance in the bud – namely in the vicinity of the more densely populated areas where the landing manoeuvre was particularly difficult to manage. Therefore the landing sites had to be marked accordingly. Thus towers with an altitude of at least 100 meters were needed, in order to indicate the landing sites by strong flashing signals.

In addition, at the upper end of the towers, huge propellers should ideally be turning. The reconnaissance mission had also led to the realisation that the engines of the large transport spaceships would heat up excessively on entering the Earth's atmosphere. In order to minimise the risk of explosion during the landing process, it was decided to cool the engines beforehand. The winds generated by the propellers were to serve this purpose. Moreover, they were expected to have an antiiconographic function: they were supposed to change the image of the spaceships so that from Earth they would look like a swarm of meteorites.

## Cover stories

The crucial question now was how this preliminary work could be carried out without arousing the mistrust of the Earthlings. In the Future Commission, where all issues essential to the planet were debated, it was quickly agreed that this would only be possible with the help of infiltrated pseudo-Earthlings who would conceal the true purpose of the construction sites. But with what story should the actual function of the concrete towers be disguised?

The first to speak was the commissioner for the inner dynamics of cosmic events. His skull, which was bald as with all Kadohanians, was decorated with blue shimmering concentric circles. "What would it be like," he asked, "if we were to openly take up the mysterious, incomprehensible aspects of the buildings? What if we declare the concrete pillars to be sacred buildings?"

"I hardly think that would be a good idea," replied a Kadohanian woman who herself had taken part in the exploratory mission on Earth. Her dainty body

almost seemed to sink into the puffy robe that was common on Kadohan. "Firstly, we need far more landing pillars than there are sacred buildings on Earth. And secondly, our reconnaissance mission has just shown that the importance of such buildings among Earthlings tends to decline. Additional sacred buildings would be very difficult to communicate to them."

"What if we label the landing towers as residential buildings?" pondered one who had been appointed to the Future Commission as a member of the construction team. His browless eyes gleamed full of energy.

"This is not a very realistic scenario either," replied the Kadohanian woman with the delicate figure. "The Earthlings live either all by themselves or in apartment blocks very close to one another. Single standing residential towers in the landscape would contradict their everyday habits. And besides, how would we then explain the rotor blades we want to mount on the towers?"

"Exactly!" another commissioner agreed with her. "Landing towers as residential buildings – that wouldn't work. We would then be inviting the Earthlings to the landing sites ourselves, so to speak. In this case we wouldn't have to go through all the trouble of disguising ourselves!"

"We could explain the whole thing to the Earthlings as a power generation project," one of them finally suggested. "Energy seems to be a scarce resource for Earthlings, too."

"Let's just work it out with the simulator," suggested another. "Then we'll see whether the label has enough persuasive power."

So the simulator in the corner of the meeting room was fed with the data that would support the fiction "power generation by rotor blades at high altitude". The result was extremely sobering: high energy expenditure in the manufacturing of the turbines, uncertain, fluctuating energy generation, high costs for the later cumbersome disposal of the material, plus follow-up costs due to infrasound-induced health damage as well as soil compaction and the loss of green spaces. The story therefore hardly seemed to be suitable as a justification scheme for covering entire tracts of land with gigantic concrete towers.

"Too bad – that was probably the wrong idea," even the person who had introduced the idea had to admit.

At this point the head of the fact-finding mission, who had previously stayed out of the discussion, joined in the conversation. "Now, wait a minute. I don't think the proposal is completely far-fetched," he contradicted the general assessment. On his skull there was a window-like rectangle – perhaps a symbol for the view into distant worlds.

Everyone looked at him in astonishment. The expedition leader seemed to enjoy their amazement. He had a youthful appearance, but this was mainly due to the fact that he had only recently taken a rejuvenation pill. In truth, he was

one of the most experienced experts in the group. After all, he had been head of the extrastellar exploration department for over 100 years.

"But even small children don't fall for this fairy tale," disagreed a Kadohanian woman with a particularly wide robe. It was waving like a stormy sea when she gesticulated mockingly.

"Maybe not on our planet," admitted the expedition leader. "We must not forget, however, that although we resemble Earthlings on the outside, we differ greatly from them in our brain structure. While in our case the processing of emotions and analytical operations take place in two independent brains, the Earthlings have only one organ for both. Therefore, the thought processes can directly be influenced by strong emotions."

"Very interesting," interferred another commissioner. "But how can we benefit from that?"

The expedition leader smiled mischievously – with the left side of his face, the one where his emotional brain was located. "Well," he explained, "all we have to do is stage a catastrophe that demonstrates to Earthlings the lack of reliability of another source of energy that is important to them. The resulting feelings of fear will automatically increase the willingness to believe in our wind power story."

### **The Earthling's brain**

The others still looked at him sceptically. "And what kind of catastrophe could this be?" a colleague sitting across from him asked.

"Well, I was thinking of an accident in a nuclear power station," replied the expedition leader.

"But nuclear power is completely harmless," someone objected.

"For us it is," the expedition leader admitted. "We are immune to the radiation it produces. But for the Earthlings, it poses a deadly threat. And because this threat is invisible and, moreover, persists for centuries after the use of the required material, there is something very sinister about it. So all we have to do is activate and intensify an already existing sense of threat in order to achieve our goals."

The colleague opposite him shook her head. "Wait, I don't understand. Why should the earthlings approve of an ineffective form of energy production just because they have recognised another form as harmful to them? After all, we rejected the model by taking a quick look at our simulator."

"The Earthlings don't have real simulators at their disposal," the expedition leader taught them. "Instead, they make complicated model calculations, which often lead to contradictory results and are easy to manipulate. In

addition, the Earthlings find thinking tiring – their brains are simply not as far developed as ours. Therefore, they prefer to adopt the opinions of others rather than drawing their own conclusions from the facts. This suits us insofar as we only have to get the most important opinion leaders on our side to steer the Earthlings in the direction we want them to take."

"Do you already have a clear idea of who these opinion leaders are?" one asked.

The expedition leader nodded: "I think we should mainly get the representatives of the environmental movement on our side."

As he saw the uncomprehending looks of the others, he added: "The Earthlings do not see themselves as part of a whole, but as something that is opposed to the rest of what exists on their planet. Therefore they call everything they do not feel as an immediate part of their own world – the Earthling world in the narrower sense – 'environment', which means 'surrounding world'. This part of their world has primarily a serving function for the Earthlings and is exploited by them to satisfy their needs. Those who see themselves as 'environmentalists' advocate a more careful treatment of the environment – either because they consider it to have an intrinsic value, or because they fear health risks for their own species. If we succeed in finding supporters for our fictional project in this group, we will give it a clean, 'green' appearance and thus generally increase its credibility potential."

"And how is this to be done?" asked a commissioner who had been frowning all along. "I thought our simulator predicted negative effects on what Earthlings call the 'environment', especially on creatures that move through the air."

"As already mentioned – the thinking of the Earthlings is not independent of their feelings," the expedition leader reminded. "If the catastrophe I spoke of is strong enough to release the desired emotions, it will remove all doubts about our wind power story."

## Magic Numbers

"But that won't last forever," another critic said. "Eventually, the negative effects of the power generation fiction will become obvious."

The expedition leader showed his half smile again. "That may well be – which is why we must use the initial fears to set in motion a self-reinforcing process. The original, primary interests in the new form of power generation will thus be supplemented by other, secondary interests".

"And which ones are these?" the critic wanted to know.

"Well, I primarily thought of financial interests," explained the expedition leader. "As the Earthlings say: 'Money makes the world go round'."

The others looked at him irritated. "Money?" someone finally asked. "What's that?"

The expedition leader smiled, which means: The right corner of his mouth, the side where his thinking brain was located, twitched slightly. "Well, how can I explain this? In the end it is a kind of magic numbers. They exist in both material form – as tiny metal plates or paper notes – and immaterial form. In the latter case, they are no more than columns of numbers on a monitor. Everyone needs a minimum of them to satisfy their basic needs. Anything beyond that can be used to fulfill your dreams."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed the commissioner who had just expressed his scepticism. "Everyone knows that it is the very nature of dreams that they can't be fulfilled!"

"That's right," admitted the expedition leader. "But for the Earthlings it doesn't matter at all whether they really try to fulfill their dreams with the money or only dream of the fulfilment of their dreams – the numbers have an electrifying effect on them either way. They are really crazy about them. Therefore, if we link the emotions associated with them to our wind power story, we will be able to stop critical enquiries for a long time. Even those who see themselves as 'environmentalists' might, under these circumstances, see what is harmful to the environment as beneficial to it. Maybe this could even be a way to make the Earthlings see our landing pillars as sacred buildings in the end. This would make our narrative practically unassailable."

Even now, scepticism still prevailed in the commission. The customs of the Earthlings simply seemed too strange to most of the members. However, for lack of alternatives, it was decided to implement the project. Perhaps things would turn out to be easier than they seemed at the moment.



## 2. A therapy session



Mrs Andrews, an experienced therapist, looked attentively at her client. Her consulting room looked a little like a cave from childhood. Ceiling floodlights produced a subdued light that was only weakly reflected by the terracotta-coloured walls. The ochre-coloured

carpet swallowed every superfluous noise, so that the sound of the voice could spread undisturbed.

The best conditions for a journey of the soul were also offered by the seats, which were distributed throughout the room. Besides a computer table with guest chairs and a classic Sigmund Freud couch, there was also a seating group with blue armchairs. These were so soft that they surrounded the lost and searching souls like a mother holding a crying child in her arms. Those who sank into them got a physical impression of what was in store for their soul: the sinking into their own self.

After initial hesitation, Alfons Heimenross had made himself comfortable on the Sigmund Freud couch. The main reason for this choice was that, as he had been doing for several weeks, he felt infinitely tired again that morning. Furthermore, he hated soft armchairs. They always reminded him of a very unpleasant experience from his childhood, when he once almost drowned in a swamp – and he didn't want to start the journey of the soul right at the beginning of his earliest traumas.

What made things worse was that he had never been to a therapist before. He never thought he would see one either. But the events of the last few weeks had worried him so much that he just couldn't help himself any more.

After his first words Heimenross had fallen into a sullen silence. It almost seemed as if he was half asleep. So the therapist asked in a lullaby voice: "You said you have the impression of being a stranger to yourself?"

Heimenross flinched abruptly. It startled him to hear what he had said about himself from another mouth. "I know ... it ... it sounds kind of ridiculous. Maybe I'm expressing myself wrong – I'm not very good at this kind of conversation."

The therapist smiled indulgently. With her rimless glasses and the notepad in her hand, she looked more like a teacher taking notes for the next report card. This was another reason why Heimenross avoided looking her in the face. Yet the woman, all psychologist, did everything she could to facilitate his confession.

"There is nothing ridiculous or wrong here," she encouraged her client. "Just give free rein to your feelings and thoughts. Think of a dream journey:



Everything comes as it comes, nothing is forbidden. Every feeling is allowed to find a picture."

Since Heimenross nevertheless remained stubbornly silent, the therapist built him another bridge: "Just describe a situation in which you are haunted by these feelings of strangeness."

Heimenross' eyelids twitched. He explained haltingly: "Well ... For example in the morning, in front of the mirror, when I look into my face ... I often have the feeling that I am not the one looking at myself from the mirror. Those pale lips, the unkempt hair, the deep rings under my eyes ... It's not like me at all."

The therapist smiled. "These feelings sound quite familiar to me ..."

A slight redness shimmered on Heimenross' cheeks. "See what I mean? That all sounds kind of stupid. Midlife crisis, you could say, the hair is not so strong anymore, I could cut it back, half-length is not ideal for a politician anyway. And the rings under the eyes: not enough sleep, the typical problem of all workaholics. Take a break, Heimenross, I could say to myself, just go to the seaside for two weeks, then you can start off again."

The therapist scribbled something in her notebook. "Wouldn't that be a good idea? Why don't you simply give in to this desire?"

"That's exactly the problem!" Heimenross exclaimed, almost like in one of his parliamentary speeches. "I've already tried to take more time for myself. I've been to the sauna again and have chilled out with friends in the evening, like I used to when I didn't have so many obligations. But none of that helps. I just can't get rid of this damned feeling of not being myself anymore! I'm already feeling all fidgety about it."

The therapist looked up from her notepad and asked: "Could it be that you are suffering from insomnia?"

"I can't rule it out," Heimenross admitted. "But the opposite can be true as well. In any case, I rather have the feeling of sleeping too soundly. Lately I've been having very intense dreams that I can remember very clearly in the morning. I almost have the impression that the dreams are real."

The therapist bent over slightly. Carefully, as if she didn't want to endanger the precious confession, she asked: "And what kind of dreams are these?"

Heimenross sighed. "Above all, there is one dream that keeps coming back. A certain image that I just can't get rid of: I wake up in the morning – I mean: I dream that I wake up – and the whole world is covered with huge reinforced concrete towers. I walk through an endless forest of concrete trees, I run and run and run, ever further I run, I run and run ..."

The therapist's ballpoint pen scurried busily over the pages of her notebook. "And in the morning, do you feel shattered by these nightmares?"

Heimenross shook his head violently. "That's just what is so strange about it!" he clarified. "The dreams are no nightmares to me at all. That's what I mean

when I say: I am becoming a stranger to myself. The walks through the concrete forest are pleasant for me. I enjoy stroking with my hand over the smooth steel trunks that are not threatened by decay. I have even caught myself stopping in front of highway bridges and admiring their powerful concrete pillars. And in the past I used to chain myself to every tree that should be chopped down for a road!"

The therapist threw a worried look at Heimenross. Hectic spots glowed on his face, the corners of his mouth twitched uncontrollably. In an emphatically calm tone she suggested: "Try to admit your feelings! Steel and concrete are the building materials of our time. Perhaps you should simply not resist to that fact and acknowledge it instead."

Heimenross frowned. For a while he fell back into a brooding silence. "If it were only these dreams ... these silly dreams," he murmured monotonously, as if he was talking to himself. "What worries me most is ... I have the impression of being a stranger to myself, even when dealing with others ..."

The therapist adjusted her glasses. "And what does this manifest itself in?" she asked, lowering her voice sensitively.

Heimenross scratched first his right ear, then his left. Restlessly he slid around on the couch. "Well," he explained, "for example, I have had a constant craving for pizza for some time now. Every evening I order one from the pizza service around the corner – but the next morning I can't remember the taste of the pizza or the face of the pizza delivery boy. It's like someone else ordered the pizza."

Thoughtfully, the therapist stroked her chin. "Are you sure you're not dreaming up this pizza order?"

Heimenross laughed bitterly. "I only have to look at the empty pizza box – and at my stomach girth. No, the pizza consumption is real. Only the memory of it is suspended."

"Do you perhaps drink too much red wine with that?" asked the therapist, half joking.

Another shake of the head was the answer: "I would not call one or two glasses too much. And besides, if my frequent blackouts were due to the wine, I wouldn't have my psyche examined, but my liver."

"Well," summed up the therapist as she closed her notepad. "This does indeed seem to be a rather special case with you. It would be best if you wrote down everything that preys on your mind over the next days. I, for one, will take a close look at my notes and think it all over again until the next session. Then hopefully we'll see more clearly."

Fatigued, Heimenross rose from the couch. He felt as if he had just had a failed operation.

### 3. StarWind

#### The Earthlings, God and the universe



The business premises of the *StarWind* Company, which promised its customers comprehensive support in the area of "Energy Consulting", appeared bright and friendly. Located on the tenth floor of a modern office complex, the company's headquarters offered an eagle-like view over the city.

Behind a broad window front, which took up almost the entire outer wall, were individual, generously proportioned offices grouped around a showroom located in the middle. The office furniture shimmered in transparent plexiglass, which in the light-flooded rooms seemed to float in the air. Thus everything emanated the promising message of a new era: Transparency! Purity! Clarity! Future!

The name "StarWind" had initially caused laughter on Kadohan. The expedition leader – who was now sitting as office manager in the *StarWind* premises – could still remember the reactions of his co-deciders in the future commission. Most of them had taken his proposal as a joke. Was this not too obvious an allusion to the real objectives associated with the alleged energy supply? Wouldn't even the most stupid Earthling realise that *StarWind* was a Trojan horse?

But the expedition leader did not get unsettled by the laughter of the others. "I can understand that you find the name funny. But try to put yourself in the Earthlings' shoes. Remember what I told you about their spaceships? By our standards, they are rather bouncing than flying. The Earthlings cannot even fly to their neighboring planet! They are already proud when they manage the jump to their moon without any problems. So how could they assume that beings from a light-years away planet are among them?"

The expedition leader tapped his eyebrows – which on Kadohan was an expression of contempt for others. After the laughter had died down completely, he added: "Please do not forget: For the Earthlings, the universe is not a space for locomotion. They see other galaxies only from a distance. Therefore, the cosmos appears to them as one big mystery. And because their thinking constantly mixes with their feelings, they see the infinity of space as a kind of symbol for what they call 'God'."

"God?" a Kadohanian woman asked in astonishment. "What is this?" It was a younger participant who had been appointed to the expert panel for the first time.

The expedition leader sighed. "This is really hard to explain ... God is basically a synonym for everything that the Earthlings are not able to understand. It stands for everything that goes beyond their limited imagination, be it the intrinsic link between things in their world or the relationship between their own world and others."

"And why should it be of any use to allude to space with the name of our company?" the new commission member wanted to know. "Won't that unsettle the Earthlings?"

"In fact, quite the opposite will be the case," the expedition leader contradicted. "Precisely because they do not understand the universe, they are magically drawn to everything that is linked to it. They even invent their own stories about space travel, in which they dream up what they cannot achieve. And 'star' is also a term they use for people who stand out from everyday life, for beings they look up to like to the stars. So alluding to distant stars and the secret power that emanates from them makes our company even more attractive to Earthlings."

## Hairy Earthlings

While the expedition leader was able to assert himself on this issue, he had to give in to the concerns expressed on another point. His proposal to transfer the management of the company exclusively to disguised Kadohanians was rejected in the end. To most members of the expert panel, such an approach seemed too risky. What if the Earthlings should have a sensorium for extraterrestrial intelligence after all? Or if, despite all immunological precautions, harmful germs were transmitted to the infiltrated Kadohanians? What if, conversely, they could be identified as transmitters of diseases to the Earthlings?

No, these risks seemed almost impossible to control. So in the end it was decided that only the basic staff of *StarWind* should consist of Kadohanians. Even then, the measures that had to be taken for anti-microbe defense and camouflage proved to be quite extensive. Some of the problems only became apparent when the concrete planning began.

There was the hair issue, for example. On Kadohan, hair had been stopped from growing for a long time. It was considered as a superfluous breeding ground for undesirable microorganisms. Those who had not participated in the

fact-finding mission could not believe at first that this was different with the Earthlings.

"And the Earthlings are really still walking around hairy?" asked a member of the expert panel. "Don't they have any depilatories?"

"Of course they have," the expedition leader made clear. "But they don't use them everywhere. Especially the head hair has an almost cultic meaning for them. There are even certain magic remedies that are said to make hair grow again when it has fallen out."

The questioner shook his head in amazement: "This seems rather absurd to me ..."

The left corner of the expedition leader's mouth twitched slightly upwards – his emotional brain had been activated. "You must not forget that Earthlings are not a particularly highly developed form of intelligence," he explained. "They are still noticeably embedded in the more primitive forms of life from which they evolved. This also explains their attachment to their scalp hair. It shows us how powerful the primitive still is in them."

"I still don't understand it," confessed one of the present. "Why do they let their fur grow precisely on their head – just above the brain? Are they ashamed of their intelligence? Or is their intelligence so limited that they don't even notice it?"

The expedition leader stroked his forehead with his hand. "I don't think we should judge the Earthlings so much by ourselves," he said. "On our planet artificial insemination has been standard practice for a very long time. The Earthlings know it too, but they only use it if there is no other way. In general, reproduction is still a very animalistic matter for them. Therefore they also need animalistic stimuli. This could be a reason for their clinging to the head hair."

"So it's a conscious commitment to savagery?" the questioner asked.

"No," clarified the expedition leader, "not at all. Most of the Earthlings tame their hair regularly, there are even some very artistic fur forms. For many of them hair is also an expression of their personality, just like the patterns we paint on our scalps. But it all has a relation to reproduction at the same time. Even the clothing is more physical on Earth, quite different from our planet, where everyone walks around in wide capes."

"It will take some time to get used to this," remarked one who was scheduled to participate in the next mission.

The expedition leader nodded. "True, there's no denying that. Artificial hair is fortunately very easy to obtain on earth, as are Earthlings' clothes, of course. But that doesn't tell us how to move around in these clothes. We'll have to practice this intensively in order not to appear as foreign objects."

"Or to be recognised as foreign subjects," one of them joked.

General whispering and laughter, then another one spoke up: "Well, that's cleared up. Much more important to me is another question: What criteria do we use to select suitable Earthlings for our program? And how do we ensure that they exhibit the desired behavior? Will the Earthlings respond accordingly to the instruments at our disposal?"

### Undercover operation on planet Earth

The expedition leader – who was now at the time acting as office manager of the *StarWind* Company – had to smile when he thought back to these discussions. Involuntarily he even pulled both corners of his mouth upwards. He had trained himself to do so especially for the new Earth mission, so as not to attract attention with his extraterrestrial way of smiling.

How long ago might the discussions on Kadohan have been? A few weeks? Or did the discussions even take place several months ago? The expedition leader could not say for sure. With the rejuvenation pill, even longer periods shrank to short moments for him. Time was just something very relative.

"Shall I begin my presentation now?"

The expedition leader turned to Mrs Black, his assistant. He still couldn't get used to her new appearance. Especially strange to him was the dark wig that now covered her head. Even though she had chosen a short haircut it seemed quite animalistic to him. No less irritating he found the glued-on eyebrows and the earthly costume, which the assistant already wore with an impressive matter-of-course manner.

He himself found it much harder to get accustomed to the uniform that the Earthlings' dress code required for business people like him. He felt the suit was like a prison for his body. And the tie he wore around his neck made him feel choking – although he had already loosened it in an unseemly way.

Of course, as long as they were among themselves, they could have actually taken off their disguises. He himself, however, had insisted on adapting to earthly customs at all times. Only in this way could the foreign rites – as he had experienced it on missions to other galaxies – become a second skin for them. Only then would they move in it as naturally as the Earthlings themselves.

In addition, the strict code of conduct was, however, also due to security concerns. Although the Earthlings as a whole lagged far behind the civilisation of Kadohan in their technical abilities, they had reached a surprisingly high level in some areas. This was particularly treacherous, all the more so because it contradicted the often not very cultivated manners the Earthlings showed among themselves.

So it could also not be excluded that the Earthlings had possibilities to monitor what was happening inside the offices of *StarWind*. Possibly others saw the new company as an unwelcome competitor and therefore spied on it. This was something they had to pay attention to. Such trivialities should by no means lead to a failure of the great mission of gaining new living space and new resources for the Kadohanians!

### First external contacts

The presentation the assistant spoke of referred to the experiments with the Earthling they had chosen as the first intermediary for their project. The requirements to be considered in the selection process had already been determined on Kadohan: It should be a person who – according to the Earthlings' standards – was "close to nature", but at the same time had no reservations with the business world. The person should appear close to the people, but still be willing to take the lead. And he or she should warn of the dangers of industrial energy production, while at the same time appreciating the amenities that electricity offers.

So the choice was made for a certain Alfons Heimenross. With his half-long hair and the dialectal colouring of his language, he emanated – so the Kadohanian selection committee found – a kind of tamed wildness. He seemed close enough to nature to be found sympathetic by nature lovers, but at the same time serious enough not to meet with rejection in the business world. In addition, he was a passionate opponent of all forms of energy production that had previously been commonplace, but lived in an environment that depended heavily on intensive electricity production. So he seemed to be more easily reprogrammable than others in the interest of the Kadohanian mission.

Another advantage offered by Alfons Heimenross was that, as a politician, he had the necessary contacts to advance large-scale projects. What was also favourable: he lived alone. Picking him up for the nighttime reprogramming experiments was therefore much less problematic. It was enough to imprint him on the people who picked him up every night for this purpose. No consideration had to be given to possible family members.

At regular intervals they administered a hypnotic drug to Heimenross via a pizza service. This allowed them to transport him to the experimental laboratory like a sleepwalker. In the early morning they regularly gave him a special forgetting serum. As a result, his convictions changed insidiously, but he could not remember the circumstances under which this happened.



## Programming of an Earthling's brain

The expedition leader nodded to the assistant who thereupon put on demonstration glasses. The others – a total of ten Kadohanians took part in the mission – did the same. Now they could all see the assistant as well as the illustrative material she used for her presentation.

The introductory picture showed Heimenross in the large showroom of *StarWind*, next to the model of a wind turbine that seemed to grow towards the sky in the middle of the room. In order to reinforce this impression, they had even made a ceiling breakthrough. The windmill now seemed to pierce the ceiling and thus vividly symbolised the "reach for the stars" promised by *StarWind*. At the same time, it reflected the idea that the profits to be achieved with the new energy would "go through the ceiling". Furthermore, the dome that vaulted over the wind turbine lent it a sublime, almost religious appearance.

"Is everyone ready?" the assistant asked. After a generally approving nod, she began her explanations: "For programming the test subject, we have resorted to established image-pairing procedures. In addition, we have used neural amplification mechanisms. Whenever we could identify a brain region that responded positively to the stimulus, we amplified the corresponding brain activity with a reward serum."

The assistant tapped briefly against her glasses. These then conjured up a recording from the early days of the experiments. "As you can see, the test subject reacted very unfavourably to the concrete pillars and rotor blades shown at the beginning," she commented.

In fact, Heimenross' negative reaction was extremely strong. He pulled a visibly disgusted face and even turned away from the picture when he was exposed to it for a longer time. All the more astonishing was the change that the assistant and her team had apparently brought about after only a short time.

Another tapping against the glasses, then another recording of the experiments appeared. This time the proband's negative emotional responding was already much less pronounced. "We first tried to change the subject's attitude by using a combination of concrete and piles of money or concrete and nature pictures," explained the assistant. "However, we were only able to achieve a satisfactory effect when we combined both combination paths. The test person responded particularly well to pictures of sunflowers. Apparently the subject has a special emotional relationship to them."

The next recording already showed the success of the test setup. It showed Heimenross in front of the wind turbine model, which in the virtual world of glasses was flanked on one side by a blooming sunflower and on the other side by a large pile of money. His face glowed with enthusiasm, full of passion he

shouted: "Wind power is green, I want wind power, green is the future, green is wind power, we need more wind turbines, wind turbines are green, so green, they are greening so green ..."

"A bit excessive, don't you think?" asked the expedition leader to the group.

"Yes, and at the same time a bit too wooden," another agreed with him. "We should instill a bit more respectability in him. Otherwise no one will take him seriously!"

"Be patient – that was only the beginning!" the assistant made clear. "We first had to arouse a certain passion in the test person. Only then was it possible to immunise the subject against the negative side effects of the stimulus source."

A renewed tapping against the glasses conjured a big bird in front of the eyes of the expedition members. It flew straight towards the wind turbine and got caught in its rotor blades. Tumbling it fell down and hit the ground with a heavy thud. Into the animal's last twitching Heimenross shouted: "Only wind power is clean, nothing is purer than wind power. Whoever wants clean energy must be prepared to make sacrifices. The sacrifice of today is the foundation for the life of tomorrow. Only wind power can ensure the future of our children."

"That makes him look more statesmanlike," confirmed one of the group.

The assistant nodded contentedly. "Yes, we have certainly made significant progress in our experiments. But I must confess: It was hard work. The hardest part for us was overcoming the subject's resistance to cutting down trees for our reinforced concrete towers."

This statement was followed by another recording that illustrated what the assistant meant. While a chainsaw was cutting into a tree trunk, Heimenross covered his ears and pulled his face in disgust.

"In the end, however, we achieved the desired stimulus-response coupling," the assistant summed up. "But we had to increase significantly the secondary stimuli for this – especially on the monetary side."

She was tapping against her glasses again. Now Heimenross was completely unimpressed by the tree felling. While next to him a gigantic clearing machine cut a swathe for transporting wind turbine parts into the forest, he explained unmoved: "The single tree means nothing, the forest means everything. We have to save the forest, for that we have to plant wind turbines, more and more wind turbines, because wind power is green, therefore it alone can save the forest".

Spontaneously all present raised their index fingers next to their foreheads – a sign of highest recognition on Kadohan. Only the expedition leader corrected himself shortly afterwards and clapped his hands instead, in order to adapt to the earthly customs. "Really a very impressive result, Mrs Black," he praised the assistant.

## The prison of the name

He still did not succeed in suppressing the ironic undertone in his voice when he said "Mrs Black". It wasn't so much the fact that his assistant had named herself after her hair colour that made him smile. After all, he too – as "Guntram Groentraed" – had named himself after a colour, albeit in a less direct way.

No, it wasn't the name itself that seemed odd to him. He just couldn't get used to the fact that everyone on earth was fixed to a certain name. On Kadohan everyone was officially registered under a meaningless number. Names could be chosen freely by anyone – and changed at any time. As a rule, nobody stayed with a certain name for too long. Most Kadohanians changed their names at regular intervals – especially when they felt that something significant had changed in their lives.

The only important thing was to inform the others about the name in good time. This was often an opportunity to have more personal conversations that went beyond everyday talks. The change of name was an indication of real change – and at the same time a signal that those who gave themselves a new name wanted to talk about it.

The expedition leader cringed. The thought of being "Mrs Black" a whole life long seemed terrible to him. His gaze wandered to the window and got lost in the growing twilight. It was as if he wanted to penetrate the evening fog with his eyes and fly through the cosmic darkness to his home planet. He knew that Kadohan was floating somewhere out there, safe and lost at the same time.

## 4. The enlightenment

### Disturbing pictures



Lost in thought, Alfons Heimenross stared at the polished brass plate with the engraved letters: "StarWind". The name that the shield glitteringly called out seemed strangely familiar to him. And

yet he was quite certain that he had never had anything to do with this company before.

The day had gone pretty strange until then anyway. The nuclear accident, which had dominated the public debate for days, had also been the main topic in Parliament. Heimenross had been very much affected by the discussions. It is true that the accident had happened on the other side of the world. But the aerial photographs of the burning reactor, the pictures of the animals left behind and now dying miserably, and the recordings of the people driven from their homes were omnipresent.

Fortunately, the civil protection seemed to work: the government and the operating company had reacted immediately and sent rescue teams to contain the disaster. But in fact, what did that mean: containment? After all, no one could predict how and where the radioactive cloud would move on! That was exactly the uncanny thing about the threat: that it spread like a swarm of extraterrestrial warriors, whose form of existence was so different from all earthly life that no human could perceive it. This impression was reinforced by the special workers, who in their full-body protective suits looked like aliens themselves.

After the parliamentary debate, which had made him fully aware of the extent and consequences of the catastrophe, Heimenross had a feeling of suffocation. He urgently needed to go outside to collect himself. Sucking in the oxygen in deep draughts, he had moved further and further away from the parliament building until it was finally clear: he would miss the afternoon session. Never mind, he had told himself, the agenda contained only items that did not concern his area of expertise anyway.

Furthermore, he thought that the solution of the nuclear problem had to have absolute priority from now on. How could his colleagues in Parliament still debate about road traffic regulations and the expansion of nursery schools while the world outside was going under? No, first a way had to be found to leave nuclear energy behind, everything else was secondary for now.

## The windmill dome

What a fortunate coincidence that his path, while these thoughts were driving him, had led him to this particular place! To a company that promised to show ways to alternative forms of power generation with its "Energy Consulting". Where had he heard the name of the company before? And why did the surroundings look so familiar to him, even though he had always ignored the new office complex, whose construction he had tried in vain to prevent as a politician?

But all this, he said to himself, should not matter now that it was about nothing less than saving the planet! He simply had to follow the hint of fate and take the first step towards a better future.

Resolutely Heimenross pressed the bell button next to the brass plate. Spontaneous visits were not his usual style, especially not in business dealings. Normally he had his secretary arrange the appointments – and usually the ones called up went to his office. But he knew, of course, that the beginning of a new era required a departure from old habits.

When he opened the door to the business premises of *StarWind*, a feeling awoke in Heimenross that seemed to flow into him as if from a deep well. He had not felt something like that for a long, long time. It was like a fragrance evoking ancient memories – memories that got lost in the mist of the past as soon as he tried to catch their shape.

Directly behind the door he was welcomed by a spacious showroom, which contained nothing but the gigantic model of a wind turbine. At its upper end it was vaulted by a glass dome. Thus the sparks of light glittered even brighter on its rotor blades, which were spinning incessantly like a perpetuum mobile. It almost seemed as if the sun's rays were enveloping the structure in a gloriole.

Suddenly Heimenross realised what the feeling that floated through his veins reminded him of: it led him back to the church services to which he had accompanied his grandmother in his early childhood. He clearly felt the breath of the incense penetrating his pores, those stunning vapours, which had always made him feel as if his eyes were penetrating the skeleton of the church ceiling and looking straight into the innermost centre of the sky.

## Hypnotic glances

"Would you like a consultation?"

Startled, Heimenross turned around. He felt like a thief in the sanctum sanctorum. In front of him stood a neat young woman, obviously some kind of

receptionist. "Yes," he stammered, "a consultation ... That would probably be the right thing to do ..."

The young woman smiled encouragingly at him. "Black," she introduced herself, "I'm the assistant manager."

Heimenross was quite pleased with the woman, whose dark hair went perfectly with her light blue costume. Only her way of shaking hands appeared somewhat awkward to him. Although she was smaller than him, she reached out her hand to him from above, as if she wanted to bag a fish.

"We can just go to my office," the woman suggested. "There I'll check my schedule to see when we can arrange a consultation."

Heimenross trotted mechanically after the attractive assistant. He was still pretty dazed by the impression the cathedral-like showroom had left in him.

The assistant sat down at her screen and opened the calendar. "You're lucky," she said after a quick glance at it. "Just today a customer cancelled. If you like, you can talk to our managing director right now."

Heimenross felt a little uncomfortable in his skin. The whole thing went a bit too fast for him. But what unsettled him the most was the way this Mrs Black looked at him. He slightly shook his head: What actually bothered him about this look? The young woman smiled at him in a cheerful way, her whole face emanated kindness and obligingness. Why then did he have the impression that her gaze was piercing his outer shell and penetrating his innermost being, or even as if these eyes were looking at him from within himself?

The look had something hypnotic, Heimenross could not escape it. "That ... that would really be great," he heard himself say.

Gaily the assistant nodded at him. "Let's see if Mr Groentraed has time for you."

While the assistant reached for the phone to announce the visitor, Heimenross had the strange feeling of seeing himself from the outside. It was quite bizarre ... Everything went exactly as expected in a business meeting: reception by a secretary, followed by a brief chat, finally the actual meeting. There was nothing unusual or even weird about what happened here. And yet it seemed to Heimenross that this was nothing but a dream. Or more precisely, that he had dreamed it all before. In short, it appeared to him as if he was dreaming of a dream he could only vaguely remember.

### A visionary film

This feeling, however, disappeared immediately when he entered the office of the managing director. With his neatly parted hair, the shimmering grey suit and the perfectly fitting tie, Mr Groentraed emanated great self-confidence.

The twilight of the daydream that had enveloped Heimenross quickly evaporated.

"What good can we do for you?" asked the managing director jovially after they had sat down in the meeting area with the transparent furniture.

Uncertain as to how he should initiate the unexpected conversation, Heimenross involuntarily fell into his political jargon: "Well, as an environmental politician, I ... Okay, let's put it this way: I would say we have to make a complete new start with energy supply."

To Heimenross' amazement, Groentraed put his index fingers to his temples. Did he find his proposal so far-fetched? But no, apparently he was only scratching himself. Relieved, Heimenross saw his counterpart nod.

"You are absolutely right," Groentraed agreed with him. "We just can't go on like this."

"Yes", Heimenross added with a touch of pathos, "with our current technologies we are putting the future of our children at risk! Here and now – and not in 20 years – we must develop viable alternatives."

A corner of Groentraed's mouth twitched. Was that a smile? Or rather the excitement that the managing director of a start-up naturally felt when meeting with a well-known politician?

But Grienbaum immediately regained control of himself. "I think you've come to the right place," he underlined. "If you don't mind, I could show you a little film that illustrates our visions."

Of course Heimenross agreed. This was exactly what he had hoped for: a concrete suggestion to change course.

Groentraed took his laptop from his desk and connected it to a beamer. At the same moment a bright flash of light from the opposite wall pierced Heimenross's eyes. On closer inspection, he recognised it as a wheel of fire. It circled around itself ceaselessly, kept in motion by its enormous flame arms. Incessantly it drew from itself the power to enlighten and warm the world.

Dazzled, Heimenross squinted his eyes. And only now, while soft spherical music began to accompany the short film, did he realise that what he saw was in fact a wind turbine. The impression to see a wheel of fire was simply caused by the fact that the sun shone so brightly on the windmill.

The sparkle was still visible when the camera gradually moved away from the close-up and showed the wind turbine from a greater distance. But now the sun's rays gleamed like diamonds on the large rotor blades. A voice whispered from offstage: "A new dawn has come ..."

Heimenross felt carried away by the flight of the camera, which was now slowly moving into the long shot. More and more the whole windmill emerged out of the morning mist that billowed at its feet, until finally, still illuminated by the rising sun, it grew up to the sky like an enormous torch. The further the camera



moved away from it, the more its wings blurred with those of other windmills that lined up beside him.

Heimenross realised that what he saw was a whole wreath of wind turbines, which formed a kind of dam around a small town. Between them and the houses were deep ditches filled with water. As the camera rose even higher into the air, it became clear that the other towns spread across the plain were also surrounded by such a circle of windmills and moats.

From a distance, the concrete towers of the wind turbines looked like jail bars. The towns thus appeared to be prison cells in which the inhabitants were locked up. All in all, the scenery resembled a vast open-air prison. Heimenross, however, perceived the picture quite differently than the interpretation of his mind suggested. A feeling of security flowed through him at the sight of the windmill wreaths, a feeling of being sheltered, of protection against the hostilities of the unpredictable fate.

Yes, he thought, moved, while the camera stopped and showed the model from the highest possible height: It was a nest that the windmills built around the cities. A warm refuge, impregnable to enemies. He nodded involuntarily as the voice whispered from offstage to the slowly fading spherical sounds: "StarWind: The future is now ..."

### **The gateway to the future**

When the film was over, there was a short silence at first. Apparently the managing director wanted the film's impact to resonate a little in the potential customer.

In fact, Heimenross needed some time to collect himself. The pictures had made a lasting impression on him. In the end, however, his political instinct gained the upper hand and he decided to rather express his skepticism. As he knew from many years of experience with lobbyists, this was the only way to distinguish between advertising messages and facts.

"A fascinating vision, indeed," he remarked appreciatively. "But perhaps a little beyond our capabilities ..."

The corners of the managing director's mouth twitched. "Of course, this is only a simulation. But beyond our capabilities? I wouldn't say that. All it takes is the political will to make the visions come true."

"Do you really believe that wind power has the potential of supplying an entire country with energy?" Heimenross followed up. "The wind doesn't blow all the time. So how can we ..."

Groentraed didn't let him finish. "If I may interrupt you at this point ... I would like to draw your attention to the moats that surround the settlement areas in

our film. These ditches are designed as pumped-storage power plants in which the energy generated can be 'stored', so to say, until it is used. This ensures that there will be enough energy even when there is no wind."

Heimenross frowned. "And that works?"

"But of course," Groentraed confirmed. "All our simulations are based on many years of research and on model calculations which our teams of experts have checked several times, using a wide variety of scenarios."

"Okay, well," Heimenross conceded, "that is for the experts to decide. I can't assess that. But there is another question – the question of financial viability. The costs of such an ambitious conversion project would possibly go beyond the national budget. So, for that reason alone, it probably won't receive majority support."

The manager leaned back in his chair and fixed his client with his eyes. Just as before with the assistant, Heimenross again had the unsettling feeling of being looked at from the inside. Dazed, he glanced aside.

With a calm, almost soporific voice, Groentraed spoke to his guest: "Perhaps we should take a closer look at the costs ... Then you will see: today's savings are tomorrow's additional expenditure. You simply have to think on larger scales here! If we don't invest in the future today, we may have lost it tomorrow. And believe me: this will be much more expensive than the few extra digits after the decimal point that a project like ours will cause in your budget!"

Heimenross felt as if a helping hand was reaching out to him, trying to save him from falling into a deep, dark ravine. But still his emotions were struggling with his mind, which was trying to undermine the triumph of emotions with all sorts of pettifogging objections. He was confused. He hadn't felt this agitated for a long time.

A strong gust of wind hit him as he stepped back into the street. Heimenross paused and looked up to the sky: The wind blew the disheveled cloud robes from the face of the sun. Immaculate, the life-giving star looked down on him in all its shining glory, as if to show him the way to a new, carefree future.

*Images:: Pixabay: Titel: DaphoGo: Galaxie ; 1. Gerd Altmann: Galaxie; 2. Stefan Keller: Fantasy; 3. Michael Gaida: Architektur. Privat: 4. Ilka Hoffmann: Anbetung des heiligen Windrads*

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