

*First, I believe that our colonies should commit ourselves to achieving the goal, before this century is out, of landing a team on the habitable Planet C and guiding others safely from the Earth-2. No single exploration project in this period will be more important to creature-kind, or more important for the long-range future of us all; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish.*

- Patrick Fitzgerald, Chancellor of the United Colonies, New Kourou KOI-7016.01, B+33326:008:005 Synchronous Log Time

## **Background**

Never return from your time-travels empty handed. Visiting the Future will change the Past, but it is always a delight to discover new things originating in the Past. Whatever happened to Earth-1 is no longer known – neither is it clear whether an old Inductor might still be lying somewhere in the stored old travel containers, and, if so, what it would even look like.

But that really doesn't matter anymore. What is more important to know is how the design and related simulations for Planet C started; how the evolution data of Earth-1 fed into those models, and how these were implemented. Without recovering *this*, it will be hard to truly start and accomplish the mission we have set ourselves.

For that, one needs to travel back to past, to the era of Terra-Firma or Planet A (B-39823:868:013).

## **Welcome back to the Past**

Back on Planet A, a group of humans was trying to discover the limits of unacceptable human-induced global environmental change. In particular, they were concerned by the effects of loading of atmospheric gases, its impacts on freshwater and related changes in land use for habitation and food production. Another group of humans was concerned with maintaining longer-term economic growth and prosperity. Reconciling these two approaches was challenging, to say the least.

Meanwhile, a small community of scientists was busy trying to understand the beginning of the Universe. They built large underground tunnels where they accelerated particles and made them collide against each other using large-scale detection and imaging devices. Some claim they lived in these caves; others say they lived in a red bus. One small group was asking how their science – and their new measurement tools – could help with the kind of societal challenges the other group of humans were so concerned about.

This small group were curious as to how the use of detection and imaging, ranging from intelligent sensors to software and non-invasive imaging concepts, could save lives and the environment.

But it seems that the group found it difficult, when talking to the wider population, to explain the relevance of detection and imaging for their daily or future lives. They were unable to link technology to the cognitive aspects of human behavior, even to elementary ways of sharing emotions, memories or experiences using simple devices like the Inductor. It seems they could not communicate the relevance of sensor and imaging technologies in opening the new spectrum of sensing, not only the invisible surroundings and dimensional world, but also one another. People in general had no idea how deeply rooted sensing and imaging really was in their lives, and how it would fundamentally shape their future, as demonstrated by the progress in fundamental research.

Some (incomplete) records suggest that this peculiar group invited some historians (known at that time as science fictioners) for help. It appears too that some cognologers, or philosophers at time, were also present. And there were some people who called themselves communicators, possibly these were translators, working across the different groups.

Apparently, they all met in the red bus and came up with a universal, appealing code related to sensing and imaging and its connection with Planet A. What that was, is not to be found in records, other than the mysterious symbol “?”. It seems that the cognologers understood this... but they never explained it.

### **Welcome back to the Future**

It really is a shame that there are no records available to tell us what the bold, visionary call was that made the inhabitants of Planet A, most probably the very young, commit themselves to reconciling their differences, and concentrate on saving themselves and preparing for the cosmic journey. Most probably, they managed to reverse the damaging trends through applying breakthrough ideas and technologies, prolonging their stay on Planet A. Probably they were able to modify or change human behavior. Perhaps they were even able to develop or create new sustainable principles derived from that field of haruspication known as “economics”.

Or perhaps there was a bold, visionary speech, a shared communique, that resonated with people. Something so simple but so powerful that people could instantly relate to it, irrespective of education or beliefs, beyond culture, history, society. Perhaps there was a speech that brought up the best of their dreams.

If so, one can only wonder. Could anyone have said it better than Patrick Fitzgerald: “?”