

From *Peinlich* by Mattis Manzel

Chapter 11 from the novel “Peinlich” (“Embarrassing”)
published by the Ammann Publishing House, Zurich, 1995,
republished as eBook in 2002 (© Mattis Manzel)

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11.) Carlo's Life

Carlo was small and translucent. His form, that of an upturned pear. To one side, a membrane projected from him, reaching from his summit down to the point of his greatest circumference. He was able to wiggle this membrane in a wave-motion. Further down, it became a little tail called Axolyte. Besides this, four flagellum grew forth from Carlo's circumference. These were similar to Axolyte, but were considerably longer and, moreover, were moveable. When Carlo would row with his flagellum, send swirling pulses down his membrane and make wiggling movements with his body, he was able to move himself about in the surrounding fluid. That he thereby rotated along his vertical axle was a family trait.

Carlo belonged to the genus of Protozoon's and was a flagellant. His full name was Carlo di Trichomonas vaginalis. It filled him with pride that the name of the place, which he inhabited, was included therein.

Between the periods of menstrual bleeding, Carlo would wander along the whole length of Mona's vagina. Even during his youth, this stretch had been a trial of his stamina. By wandering, he would prove to himself that he was not yet ready for the scrap heap. While underway, he would ruminate over past experiences or contemplate philosophical problems. Often, his heart would take simple delight, enjoying the hustle and bustle of his homeland. Here he was greeted by a hoard of Mycobacterium smegmates; there he took pleasure in the sight of a row of baby Peptostreptococcus's who, fastened onto one another like a string of pearls, danced in a playful, hopping ring. Yes, while wandering, sensuality and discipline fell into wonderful accord. With measured strokes, Carlo rowed past a cube-shaped offspring from the family of poxviruses. Respectfully, it interrupted the dissection of a Döderlein Bacillus and rattled the molecule chains in polite recognition. Everyone sensed that it was better to greet Carlo and to allow him to pass unmolested than to eat him.

Carlo was no king or emperor, nor was he a chief. The microcosm, which he inhabited, did not require men of such offices. He was neither citizen nor dictator, and he was nobody's property, if one allowed the exception of his hostess to whom, in a certain sense, everything belonged: the cells; the slime; the monthly floods of blood; the little piece of underwear which occasionally glimmered between the Labia minora at the furthest point of his elongated environs. Everything that was, belonged to Mona.

It had been difficult for Carlo to develop an idea of the play of forces in his homeland. It had taken a long time before he had found a way of seeing things, which afforded him tranquillity,

confidence and inner peace. The less it was tried to disrupt his world, the more stable was its disorder and the less the suffering of those who lived there. Every aggression disturbed the healthy chaos. Whether that entailed high-spirited *Torulopsis glabrata* settling in the urine tube and releasing countless spores there, or whether Mona washed herself between her legs, it all amounted to much the same thing.

At present it was a fairly contemplative time in Mona's vagina. While one was devouring the next, the marauder was being phagocytosed by a third, whose cell wall was, in turn, being bored through by a fourth. While one gorged, others suffered poverty and hunger. There was cell splitting, subjugation, *Volksfest* and epidemics, all on a massive scale. But in comparison with that, which Carlo had already twice endured, it was peaceful.

He reached the edge, the warming vaginal epithelial. This was as far as he had planned to go. The stretch, which lay behind him, had tired him. Wrapping his body in his flagellum, he settled down to rest.

Shortly after separation from the Trichomonade, by whose cell division he came into being, the first antibiotic war had already broken over Carlo. That time, he hid himself between two connective tissue cells and prepared to sit it out. It was long after Mona had given up the treatment that, hungry and exhausted and hardly able to move a single flagellum, he crept from his hideout. His homeland had become a massive graveyard of the single-celled. The survivors were despondent, many ravaged and dying agonizing deaths. The few who remained developed wretchedly. Only slowly did the blasted remnants of Mona's

once blooming vaginal flora regain their strength. Little Carlo's soul had been crushed before it could unfold.

While bacteria, fungi and viruses are considered plants he, as a protozoa, represented a hybrid being between plant and animal. Ceaselessly, Carlo believed that he could sense his own uniqueness. The vast majority of microbes were unable to move around under their own power. Carlo grew up and soon his girth excelled than that of even a white blood corpuscle. On an evolutionary scale, he felt himself closer to more complex organisms such as Mona, than to the creatures of his own approximate size.

The experience of war during his youth had shaken his very being. He felt humiliated as Mona had ignored his uniqueness, and equated him with the other creatures of his world. Only too happily would Carlo have forgiven her for, in the depths of his cell core, he loved her. Unfortunately, he was unsure how he should make Mona's acquaintance. If only there was some way to attract her attention. Surely then she would also have shown him more respect. Maybe she would even have become his girlfriend? But Mona was too big and Carlo was too small. Following the second antibiotic war, as Carlo looked out shamefacedly over countless, obliterated microorganisms, it dawned on him that he ought to at least try to love all creatures. One shouldn't blame him for this: after all, Carlo was only a Trichomonade. The attempt to make this look convincing was the most he could have done. So, following brief reflection, Carlo simply pretended to love all creatures. This was a clever move from him. He would not have survived a third antibiotic treatment.

To have understood that one ought to love, is entirely different from loving. Carlo hadn't loved the creatures of his world between the wars, and he didn't after. On the contrary, he despised them - it was a deep compulsion in him. The ground for this seemed to Carlo to lie in the fact that he felt himself subjugated in Mona's vagina. But then, wasn't it only natural that a *Trichomonas vaginalis* might be murdered at any time by its hostess? No, deemed Carlo: his psyche ought surely to be designed to resist this. But it obviously wasn't. So, gradually, the obsession with an innate inaptitude for existence began to burrow into him. Something evil had taken possession of him and would plague him to the day he died. Carlo saw the proof for this in the contempt, which he felt for his fellow creatures. After the suffering of the second defeat an aura of silent wisdom and discrete grandeur descended. Aristocracy was in, nobility en vogue. The image Carlo had projected until now had outlived its usefulness. He slipped an all-embracing indifference over his mental outlook, and created the charisma of a regent or statesman for himself, knowing this to be equally well-loved among bacteria, viruses and fungi alike. Of course, Carlo was neither regent nor statesman, but he gave the impression of standing nonchalant astride the common folk. The common folk loved that someone put himself above them. Wherever Carlo appeared, admiration would spread. If one might dare to ask him for advice, he would emit ambiguous aphorisms as answers, quite as if the questioner was overstretching his goodness and interrupting him from immensely important and earnest thoughts. Had it become known what was really going on inside him, he would have been roasted and served, main course, for supper. Not that his ruminations were in any way bad, wrong,

malignant or a menace to society. They were merely superfluous. Carlo, however, never said what he thought.

Henceforth, Carlo purported to be convinced that the danger of an apocalypse, of much greater proportions than the previous wars, was a knowledge firmly anchored in both his own cell core and in those of his fellow creatures. When one moderated one's requirements; when one thereby upheld the natural borders; when one would nourish oneself and multiply measuredly; and when one avoided undue stimulation of Mona's mucous membranes: then the likelihood of a renewed *Götterdämmerung* by antibiotics was low. Even the youth, having themselves never experienced the terrors of war, ought to have grasped this. Everyone remain tranquil and prudent and be an example to others.

To all appearances, Carlo lived on worthless molecules, which he absorbed through his cell wall. Imagining himself to be unobserved, however, his Cytostoma would gape open and he would guzzle a tasty microbe. The memory of the hunger during his early and middle years ran deep. It constantly urged him to stock up a reserve against coming times. Because of this, Carlo permitted himself far more than would have been necessary. He was long past an unhealthy corpulence. Carlo found himself fat and insatiable. His guilty conscience plagued him incessantly. He then sought and found, in the peaceful acceptance with which he was received, proof that he was a creature worthy of love. His conduct and the path his life had taken to this point seemed finally to have been justified. Carlo believed that the way people treated him must have something to do with how he was. But, as previously mentioned, he was only a Trichomonade.

Shortly after the first war, the young Carlo began to take off on extensive journeys. He had criss-crossed his homeland from Mona's rear vaginal arch to the absolute edge of her inner labial lips. Even back then he found himself superior to the inconstantly formed Urea Plasmas; to the workshy Herpes Simplex viruses; to the laughable Donovaniae Granulomates: actually to all the parasites metabolizing in his beloved homeland. Carlo felt himself more highly developed than these „plants“ as he secretly dubbed them. He considered them, and soon he knew their wishes and longings.

At that time it was only in his imagination that the world seemed beautiful. Carlo wished it had been moulded from more sublime ideals. Everything chaotic and weak, everything, which had uncontrolledly taken shape, disgusted him. To him, reality seemed sick. He asked himself why such a thing as weakness even existed and came to the conclusion that superior beings ought no longer to stand for the existential claims of inferior ones. The existence of the weak was unjust. Only the absolute and resounding triumph of the superior made true happiness possible. Before this stood battle. Carlo decided to lead himself and his world into victory: that is to say, into happiness. All creatures had to comply with his visions. That, which he had been able to imagine, he felt able to realize. His ideas meant more to him than anything else.

The widespread bitterness about the suffering of the first war served Carlo as means to agitate Mona's vaginal population. He understood how to unleash the rapture of the masses. Helpless, they were taken in by his phantasmagoria. Following his rallying speeches, Carlo looked out over the hordes of microorganisms and bathed in their jubilation. But secretly the masses feared

him. Carlo knew their fear. Once he had felt it himself. But infecting others ideologically alleviated his suffering under the yoke of his own ideas. Only by putting them into practice, did it become bearable for him to carry these ideas within himself. Carlo gathered a gang of unscrupulous cronies around himself: a band of *Neisseriae gonorrhoeae* - aggressive, kidney-shaped diplococcus which would fasten together in pairs, and who actually filled him with dread as, in their pure malevolence, they tried to surpass one another - then a unconscionable band of *Treponema pallidum* - mean, evil bacteria, formed like stretched out spirals and capable of moving under their own power. Carlo made these creatures swear allegiance to himself and, with their help, built up a police apparatus, which controlled everything. Those who criticized or set themselves in opposition were dissolved and ingested. Until the second war and, under changed circumstances, also following it, Carlo believed himself to be the only one who suffered from the prodigy of his own powers of imagination. Above all, he believed himself to be alone with his deepest and most hidden longings. Carlo saw these longings as a personal defect, wantonness: how happily he would have lived a quiet and unremarkable life. He was ashamed of this and feared ridicule. He was so afraid that he no longer dared to acknowledge this most intimate desire. It was Carlo's plan at that time, to break out of Mona's sexual tract and, in an unprecedented field maneuver, to overthrow and occupy her body. Under Carlo's masterful guidance, Mona's illustrious vaginal flora set themselves to the task of spanning a bridge from the real world into the world of Carlo's vision, and to traversing this most perilous of passages. They wanted her

intestines, her liver, her heart and her brain. They wanted to take them by storm, to finally be noticed by her. The vaginal catastrophe could no longer be averted.

Up until the day before Mona was due to mount her second antibiotic attack, Carlo could be heard screeching across the vaginal forecourt: „*Do you want the Total Infection?*“ And from the millions of Cystomas rang out the reply, so loud that the vulva quaked: „*Seep - Heil! Seep - Heil! Seep - Heil!*“

And then they began to fester an epidemic; a yellowish, foaming emission of breathtaking stench, so fearful that Mona was immediately convinced of being seriously ill. She went directly to a doctor, he prescribed antibiotics and the decline of Carlo's odious and mad obsession was sealed.

Reflection, reverie - Carlo loved it. Now and then however, a tension would overtake him for, convinced of being able to reflect on his world, he believed he carried responsibility for it. Was it possible that his intellect was nothing but a fancy of nature? Sometimes it seemed almost conceivable to him that he might still have existed, even without an apparatus for conscious thought.

But how wonderful it was, to be well rested, and to look out over the challenging prospect of a long trek. Carlo stretched his lashes and set out along the way.

First he passed by a graceful clump of fluff. Not far from this was a conglomeration of lozenge-shaped Clostridia, busily splitting proteins. Noticing Carlo, they interrupted their work and applauded him rapturously with their drumstick-like spores. The aura of spiritual greatness and maturity made Carlo unassailable.

He was too small for Mona; he must have understood that. But was there really no possibility to be her equal?

A helpless Haemophillius ducrei, which was just then being eaten by a Cytophagus, crossed his path. Carlo assured himself that he wasn't being observed, and quickly devoured both of them. Then, remembering that he considered himself a think-cell and not an eat-cell, he instantly shamed himself for his unjust act.

The temple of his personality shone before his inner eye. Not through perception and dreaming, not through power and victory, no, only by means of his intellect would he be able to exalt himself to a being, which was Mona's equal. As he prayed from the broad fundamental of his trials and experiences, his intellect spanned out above him: a wonderful, high, gable ceiling, supported by intricate pillars and adorned with figures. Yes, there was a God. This temple could only be the gift of a God.

But whenever Carlo made it clear to himself that eventually he would have to die, the elevated feeling which gripped him while reflecting on his personality would disappear. Could he have spared himself all the trials and tribulations, all the efforts and struggles? Was all this to be taken irretrievably from him? Had all the suffering been for nothing? At this premonition of in advertability, Carlo's cellular fluids froze his Mitochondrion's. *Every death is the death of an idiot*, he tried to laugh in the face of his terror. But before the last breath left his body, his beloved intellect would have been torn from him. None of the trusted figures, not the memory of a single pillar of his holy temple would he be allowed to take with him. He would stupefy - Hung out to die - and finally, unable to remember his own name,

perish. Carlo didn't fear death. What he feared was the cadence from that for which he held himself, to that which he held for the dying.

As Carlo rowed along, a white blood corpuscle politely interrupted the encasing of a Calymmato bacteria within its flabby cell plasma.

Wasn't there a basic discrepancy between existence as he could conceive of it and the full potential of existence itself? Surely such ill ease with his own existence could only have grown from a mistake in the adaptation of his soul for reality? But what should his efforts be concentrated on if life was really unordered, aimless and chaotic?

The sight of a group of joyous Lysteria brought Carlo out of his flow of thought. Or did reality only become truth as one imagined it?

A section of Chlamydiae trachomates, which Carlo was rowing past, stood respectfully to attention.

No, with steely resistance he braced himself against this inevitable fate. But what could he hold on to when it came to dying? What power-giving quintessence would be able to keep the slowly ebbing hour of his glory alive within him until the final moment?

Carlo di Trichonomas vaginalis wobbled on towards Mona's uterus. He wobbled and he rotated.

Perhaps the answer to all these questions was quite simple.

Perhaps all that was required was for him to pull himself out of this metaphysical swamp and to return once more to his reveries. Maybe it was all so simple? Overflowing with emotion, had Carlo been able to produce a tear for this renewed joy-in-life, he would have cried it.

Just then, clad in a thick condom wall and coated with a stinking, poison-gas-like spermicide, resplendent in every color and dragging everything with it; a gigantic, a monstrous, a bellowing, a terror-raising, a pulsating P E N I S spread him across the Epithelium. His lashes and a major part of his membrane were thereby ripped off. The gigantic Lindworm raged, tore untethered hither and thither and ground countless microbes to death. Just before Carlo's cell core burst that which at this point still remained of him prayed to the holy idea of an eternal being in the lulling surety of Mona's pussy.