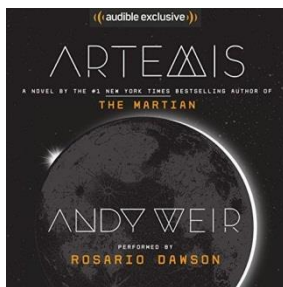


(Audio-) Book Review:



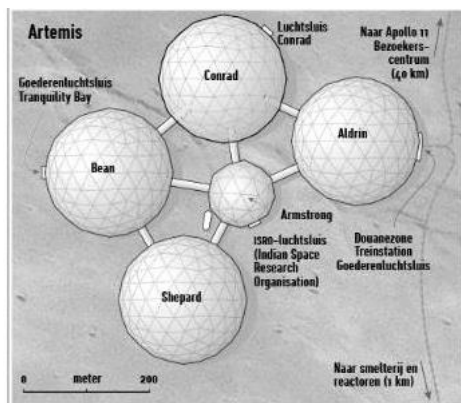
Andy Strikes again!

In his latest book „Artemis“ Andy Weir moves his characters relatively farther away into the future but closer to Earth than in his previous bestseller “The Martian”.

I was intrigued by the sentence “safety begins with the operator” – a rule Jasmin Bashara (Jazz) follows during her (flunked) EVA- Master examination. A rule on which the existence of 2000 inhabitants of the first moon city depends.

Now, Andy Weir would not be true to himself if his main character Jazz would follow this rule all the time: the plot is conventional – a sabotage act for an “unfriendly” takeover of the aluminum production plant by another industrial tycoon to produce resistance-free glass-fiber-optic cables only producible under reduced gravity.

We learn a lot about chemistry, EVA techniques, space suits, oxygen production, airlocks, welding techniques under reduced gravity and in vacuum, and about the general living conditions on the moon in airtight bubble domes, but mostly underground – which is interestingly enough considering that the described city rudimentary resembles European Space Agency’s (ESA) vision of its “global Moon Village” vision.



Andy Weir’s layout of Artemis
Ref: Andy Weir: “Artemis”



ESA’s Moon Village Vision
http://m.esa.int/spaceinvideos/Videos/2016/02/ESA_Euronews_Moon_Village

Spiced up with the “sci-fi crime” plot under restrictions of the hostile Moon environment, Andy Weir renders a technical-scientific plausible story, written in a “google-generation” language offered mainly by Jazz (“in certain situations you have to change your cursing formulas because they might lose their power”), that might draw the young generation to read Andy Weir’s thoroughly researched factual and technical stuff as well.

The interesting part of the book for me is the described “human” aspect of planet colonization (“building a civilization is ugly”). Weir’s perception is (and I fully agree) that the population of the moon city also is “only human” – as any city population on earth, driven by capitalistic motives – and they are not at all gallant. I also appreciate the multicultural composition of characters of the moon colonists – a moon village will not be possible without international cooperation. Surprisingly, moon-operations is not dominated by America, but by the “Kenyan Space Corporation” KSC (!) located in Kenya, Africa (San Marco platform?).

For space enthusiasts the book is educational and entertaining to read, because all the astonishing features described in the book are either known or under research. With NASA’s refocusing on the Moon, the moon-village might become reality by the end of our century, and might Andy Weir’s book

influence the conscience of the next generations of decision makers and engineers not to allow a development of moon civilization as assumed in the book – this part can easily remain pure science fiction.

It is great reading – after all it's just a story!

November 2017, Joachim Kehr, Editor "Journal of Space Operations & Communicator"