

CREDO

LGT JOURNAL ON WEALTH CULTURE

HONESTY | XX 2015

Honesty

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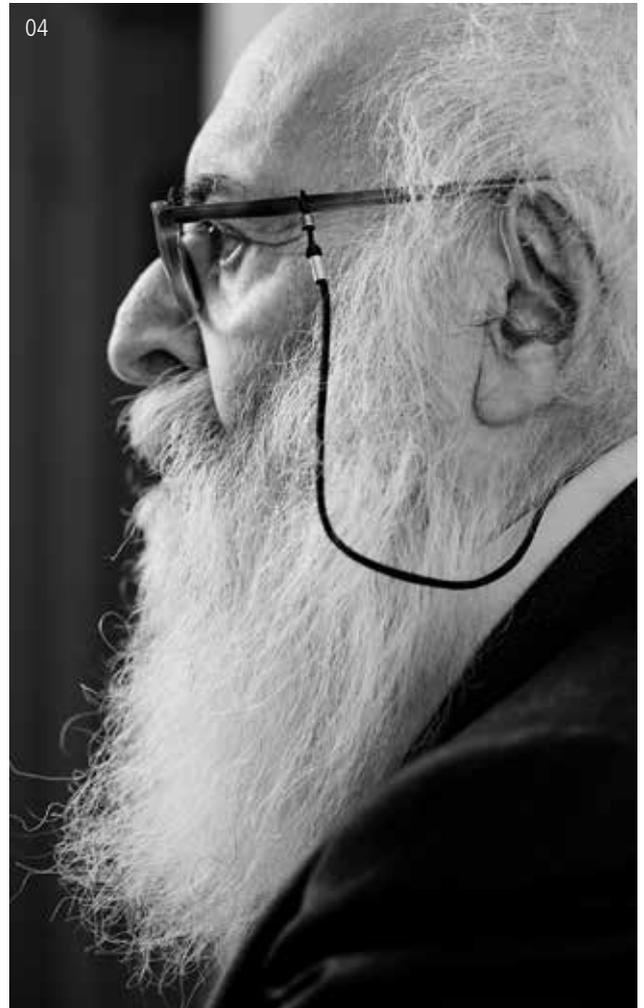
Battle pictures all too often glorify war as a victory over the enemy. Krafft was the first artist in the German-speaking world to come close to a more truthful depiction of it.

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Dear Readers,

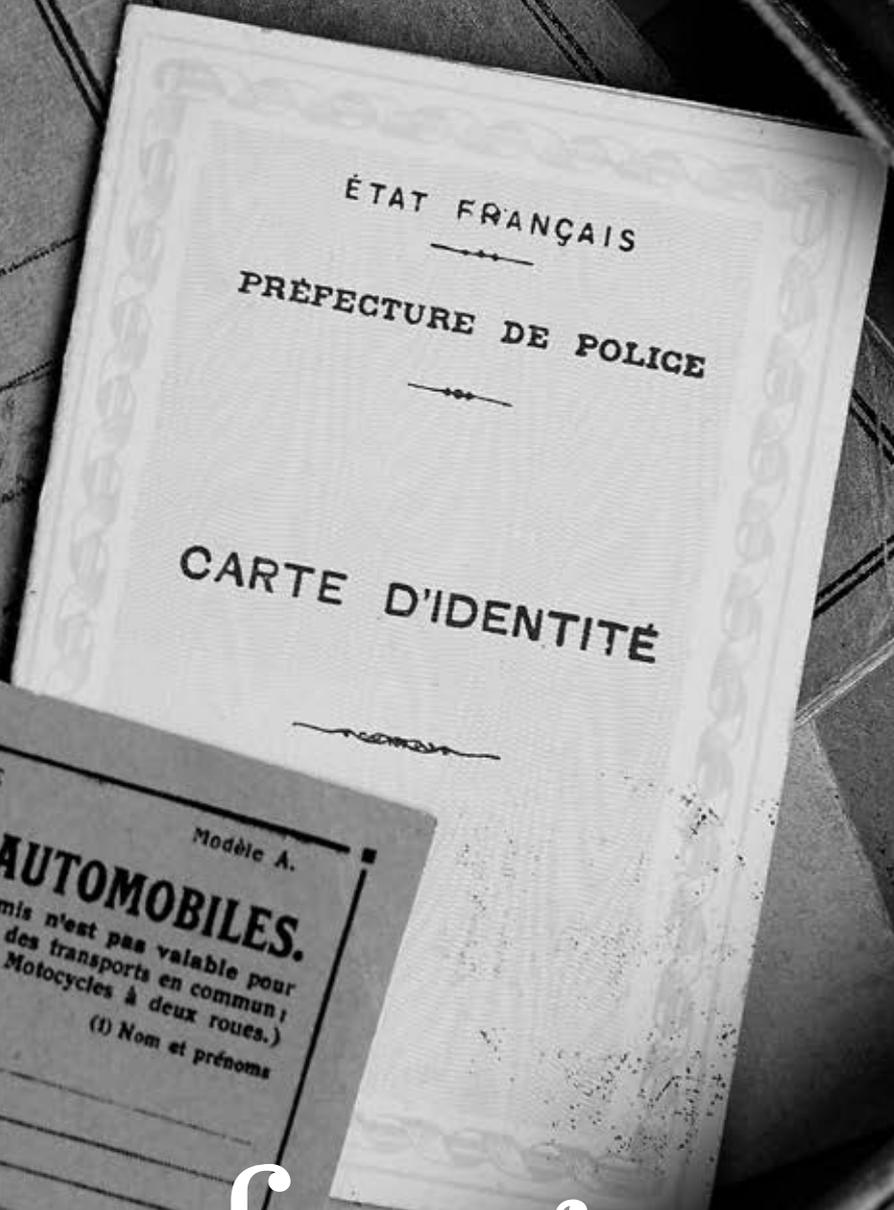
“Thou shalt not lie” – this concise phrase has allowed us to internalize the Eighth of the Ten Commandments from earliest childhood onwards. Nevertheless, a scientific study is said to have proven that everyone indulges in some 200 white lies every day. But is this statistic itself a lie? One thing is certain: no one likes to be lied to. So honesty in our dealings with each other is a legitimate, omnipresent demand that is made of us.

However, no one could reproach Adolfo Kaminsky, the subject of our “Portrait” in the present issue of CREDO. As a young man in occupied France he experienced the suffering that the injustices of the Nazis brought on the Jewish people. He began forging identity documents out of necessity, and thereby saved thousands of people from death. Although his activities were based on being able to deceive the Nazi persecutors, this master forger today rightly says: “I see myself as someone who was fundamentally always honest.” The capacity to empathize is something that the evolutionary biologist Volker Sommer has also observed in the animal kingdom. He argues that true sympathy is not something we’re born with but a by-product of the process of civilization, and grows out of an ability to lie and deceive. Ruben Salvadori has observed that even seemingly objective press photos in a political hotspot can be dishonest. That’s why, in “Portfolio,” he argues that we should subject photos to critical scrutiny. And in “Essay,” Klaus Klemp urges us to abjure the manipulative lure of the consumer world and to return instead to honest products. The saying “honesty is the best policy” was perhaps never as relevant as it is today.

I hope you enjoy reading the variety of articles in this issue.



H.S.H. Prince Philipp von und zu Liechtenstein
Chairman LGT



The master forger



Text: **Michael Neubauer** | Photos: **Raphael Zubler**

After his mother died and everything pointed to her having been killed by the Nazis, the young Adolfo Kaminsky joined the French Resistance. He was a dyer, loved chemistry, and was a talented forger able to make hitherto indelible inks disappear. This proved the beginning of a long double life during which he would provide false passports and papers to many resistance movements all over the world.

He pulls back the white curtain by the window. The bright sunlight streams in, dazzling his bad left eye behind his big glasses. He's already blind in his right eye. You need your eyes to be a forger, and for decades this eye peered through magnifying glasses, camera lenses and microscopes. "I ruined it," says Adolfo Kaminsky, and sits down at the big table in his living room. His daughter Sarah is on the phone in the kitchen. His wife Leila brings him a cup of tea. "Can I have another piece of sugar?" he asks her. Leila brings him the sugar bowl and smiles at him.

Kaminsky's long, snowy beard contrasts vibrantly with his black jacket. Underneath it he's wearing a white shirt. A mobile phone hangs from the belt of his black jeans. He points under the table at his black slippers. The right one has a ragged hole in it. "I cut that one open because of the pain in my foot." The pain makes it difficult for him to go walking. His Paris apartment is situated just a few minutes by foot from the Eiffel Tower, but it's too difficult for him to go there.

Yet while Kaminsky might be 89, he doesn't want to talk for long about old age and his ailments. He'd rather talk about his photos that hang on the walls of the living room. Black-and-white shots of Paris. He's just had an exhibition that his daughter helped him with. "Come with me!" he says, getting up, and he goes on ahead with small, hurried steps. "I've got a lot of photos that I really like but no one has seen yet."

He opens a door at the end of the dark hallway. It's a converted shower room just over 40 square feet in size that he uses as a darkroom. The window has been covered up with black paper. Bottles with chemicals stand on the mirror shelf and there are boxes full of negatives. Plastic tubs for developing photos stand in the shower basin. He switches on the small light box that he uses to examine his negatives. Then he dips into an Ilford box and you hear the rustling of protective paper. He pulls out negatives. He's got thousands of them in his apartment and has never counted them. Nor did he have time to make prints from them before. He's catching up on that now.

This man is regarded as one of the greatest forgers of the 20th century. He operated underground for almost 30 years, forging documents for Jews and for the victims of political persecution all over the world. And now, he's using what's left of his eyesight to develop and organize his photos from earlier times.

A love of chemistry

Adolfo Kaminsky became a forger out of necessity. "I had no choice," he says. His parents were Russian Jews who met in Paris in 1916. They emigrated one year later to Argentina so as to get away from the turmoil of the First World War. That's where Kaminsky was born in 1925, and the whole family took Argentine nationality. But when he was five years old his parents decided to return to France. In his teens, Kaminsky did an apprenticeship at a dyer's shop in Normandy. He loved working with chemicals, and secretly experimented with small color samples and the fabric remnants that he found lying around in the workshop of his father, a tailor. When he was 14 he was fascinated by inks that were supposedly indelible – and though he was self-taught, he was highly ingenious with it, and managed to make them all disappear. During the Second World War he made soap, shoe polish and candles for the local people.



Adolfo Kaminsky's career as a photographer was a perfect disguise that allowed him to work for resistance movements. In his Paris apartment today, he still keeps a few objects from his earlier life as a forger – such as this old camera that he used for making reproductions of passport photos. On the walls of his apartment hang photographs that he took in Paris after the war.

When the Nazis occupied France in 1940, everyday life for the Jewish population became ever more difficult. Then Kaminsky suffered a devastating loss: his mother died on a train journey from Paris back to Normandy. The police claimed she had opened the outside door of the train while it was moving because she thought it was the door to the toilet. But Adolfo and his father were certain that she was killed by the Nazis.

Disguised as a photographer

Adolfo Kaminsky has returned to his living room. He points to his photos from the years after the war. One of them depicts a little girl in a narrow Paris street. “Today, modern concrete blocks stand there and the street looks completely different,” he says. Next to it is a photo of a book dealer, surrounded by his books and four cats. There’s also a photo of the Opéra Garnier in Paris.

Photography means a lot to him. “I actually wanted to become an artist. A painter,” he says. But his father wouldn’t let him. He had to learn a “proper” trade instead. Later, photography served him as a substitute for painting.

Kaminsky points to the box-shaped Lorillon camera next to the red sofa. “That was the camera I used when I made reproductions for passports.” Then he fetches an old Rolleiflex camera. “It made very good photos.” When he enthuses about old technology and talks of his photography, this elderly man suddenly seems very young instead.

But what’s now his hobby was once part of his life as a forger. Kaminsky taught himself photography in order to be able to forge passports and official documents. At the same time it had a protective function: his job as a photographer was a good disguise for a man whose underground work meant he was always in need of chemicals and paper.

The guilt of the survivor

For many years he refused to talk about his past as a forger, and even today he does it reluctantly. “I preferred to remain silent all my life. Talking isn’t really my thing.” Kaminsky sits down again and takes a sip of tea.

In 1943 – not long after the death of his mother – all his family was taken to the French internment camp of Drancy. He saw thousands of Jews being shipped off to the death camps, even small children and the elderly. It was claimed that they were being sent off to work in camps in Germany. “We knew it wasn’t true,” says Kaminsky. But then the Argentine consulate



Adolfo Kaminsky is happy to show visitors his old forging utensils – such as this box full of stamps. Often he needed to make a whole series of documents for a single individual, such as a birth certificate, a passport and a driver’s license.



When Adolfo Kaminsky works in his small darkroom today, he can only use his left eye. He's blind in his right eye – decades of making forgeries have ruined his sight, he says.

intervened in time and made sure they got free, so he managed to avoid deportation along with his sister, his brother and his father.

Kaminsky's eyes well up with tears. It was very difficult for him back then to accept that he got away. "There is a guilt that's felt by those who survive, and it's almost unbearable. This sense of guilt is why my life became what it is."

After being set free from the camp at Drancy, the Resistance got him false papers that allowed him to establish a new, secure identity. From now on his name was Julien Adolphe Keller, and his nationality was French. The Resistance realized that he was an expert in inks and had a knowledge of chemistry, so they asked if he wanted to help them. Kaminsky said yes. It gave him the feeling of being able to avenge his mother. That's how his life as a forger began. He was just 18 years old.

During the day he worked as a photographer in Paris, and at night he made his forgeries in a hidden laboratory. He edited photos, produced counterfeit birth certificates and forged



Adolfo Kaminsky among his chemicals, photo paper and developing materials. He's turned a small bathroom in his apartment into a darkroom. This is where he pursues his hobby and makes photo prints for exhibitions.

driver's licenses and passports. He used photogravure and colotype to make official stamps, letterheads and watermarks. His equipment was improvised: materials from the flea market, string, and complicated devices that he constructed himself.

A life of continual resistance

"Take a chocolate," says Kaminsky, and starts eating them himself. Then he brings a small box full of forgeries from earlier times: a red, temporary alien passport with a swastika on it. Tax stamps and ration cards. A French identity card from the early 1940s when the Vichy government was collaborating with the German Reich. He points to the issue date: "Look, I wrote too heavily over the number 9. I had to do this one again." He proudly closes the little box again. There was nothing Kaminsky couldn't forge. Even Swiss passports.

Kaminsky worked for the Resistance until the end of the war. But in the decades thereafter, when he could have made a cozy life for himself in France, the requests from resistance organizations never stopped coming in. So he carried on forging. Initially, he made documents for thousands of survivors from



Original documents from former times: these stamps from police stations, town halls and administrative offices were all Adolfo Kaminsky had when he set about forging their stamps in his laboratory.

the Holocaust who wanted to emigrate to Palestine. Later, he forged for members of the resistance fighting Spain's dictator, Francisco Franco; then came revolutionaries from Latin America, and from 1960 onwards there were South African freedom fighters busy with their underground battles against apartheid. Then there were the Greeks who in the late 1960s and early 1970s resisted the military dictatorship in their country. As an anti-colonialist, Kaminsky placed his filigree skills at the disposal of the Algerian independence movement in their war against the French colonial powers. He did it because he was ashamed for France. For a while he was working for campaigners, rebels and draft dodgers from 15 different countries, all at the same time. And all because he had a dream of a fairer world.

In 1968 he made his own forged contribution to the student revolt. The leader of the protests, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, had been expelled from France, but Kaminsky provided him with a false passport so that he was able to return and give a speech in Paris, much to the astonishment of the police. Kaminsky later described this as the most media-effective forgery he had ever made – but also the least useful.

Firm principles

During all his years as a forger, Kaminsky never breached his two main principles: he only ever had contact with a single intermediary, and he never took money for his forgeries, even though he was often overwhelmed by debts. "Taking money means you're dependent. If I'd accepted payment, people could have made demands of me," says Kaminsky. In 1962 he even burned a huge amount of counterfeit money. He had produced reams of hundred-franc notes so as to destabilize the French economy during the Algerian War. But when the ceasefire came they were no longer needed. He felt relieved when he saw all the money burning, he says.

Kaminsky's daughter Sarah has hung up the phone and now sits down at the table. Lovingly, she places her hand on his. For a long time she had no idea about her father's other life, because he often had to lie or just keep quiet. Over all those years, many of his partners and friends knew nothing of his double life. His first marriage resulted in two children in the early 1950s, but then it broke up. Many of his later girlfriends did not appreciate his lifestyle, which could mean he'd leave the

house at four in the morning and not come back for three days. Although he was always working, he always needed money.

For decades, Kaminsky was a prisoner of his lonely secrets. Even today, he says he had no choice. “If I had talked with the people I loved about my work, it would have put them in danger.” Of course he suffered because of this. He suffered from the sleepless nights, the lack of money and the fear of being caught. But when he thought of all those unknown people in need whose lives were in his hands, then all his self-pity evaporated.

What does “honesty” mean to someone who lived his whole life outside the law? “It’s very important to be honest,” Kaminsky says seriously. “I see myself as someone who was fundamentally always honest.” Honesty in fact always played a big role in his life, he says – because those who were persecuted had to trust him to be honest. That was the only way they could be saved.

For a while, Kaminsky says nothing. And then: “Yes, you can lie and be honest at the same time.” That’s not true if it’s only about your own interests. “But if you lie in order to save people’s lives, that doesn’t affect your honesty or your sincerity.” He’s quite at peace with himself about this.

His double life didn’t change him, he says. But the past will never let him go. And his body proves it – for some time now he’s been suffering from a rare form of psoriasis. He blames it on the constant pressure, on the necessity to remain calm and pretend to be someone else, even when he was in mortal fear. “My health problems are a result of my difficult life.”



Kaminsky’s original armband from the Resistance. He was given it at the end of the war.

The bonus life

In 1971 Adolfo Kaminsky called it quits. Several incidents suggested that his network had a leak, and that worried him. He felt burned out and needed to hide. He was 46, and had been working as a forger since the age of 18. It’s a miracle that he was never discovered. So he traveled to Algeria and there started what he calls his “bonus life.”

Kaminsky stayed there for ten years, teaching photography in Algiers. He met an Algerian girl who was much younger than him – a law student called Leila. He decided to begin a new life with her, and together they started a family and had three children: Sarah is the youngest, born in 1979. She’s half Jewish, half Muslim, and he was already 54 years old when she was born. In 1982 the family returned to France because they were afraid of political developments in Algeria.

A lucky hero

Sarah Kaminsky didn’t want her father’s memories to disappear when he died, so she wrote his biography. “It was the birth of my son that gave me the impetus for the book,” she says. She decided that her son should one day know what his grandfather had achieved in life – that he had committed illegal acts out of a humanitarian instinct: “I had to write this book.”

Kaminsky is very proud of his daughter and how she wrote the book, he says. “I’d never have managed that,” he says, looking at her. “It would have been much too difficult.”

Now and then, when he can walk better, he visits schools with his daughter and tells his story. Once, a chemistry class made soap after his visit and sent him a piece. Another time, a woman gave him back the Swiss passport and driver’s license he’d made for her, and thanked him. Things like that really touch him.

To many people, Adolfo Kaminsky is a hero. “I’m not a hero, I’m a zero,” he says – “Je ne suis pas un héros, mais zero,” and laughs in delight because it rhymes. “I simply had the good fortune to be able to do something and save people’s lives. That makes me content.” ♦

Michael Neubauer has worked as a freelance correspondent in Paris since 2012. Before that he was the political editor for eight years of the “Badische Zeitung,” a daily newspaper in Freiburg in Germany. He was presented with the Franco-German Journalism Prize in 2002, and in 2004 he was awarded the Northern European Bursary by the International Journalists’ Programmes (IJP) of Copenhagen.



Father and daughter. It wasn't easy for Sarah Kaminsky to get her father to talk about his incredible double life, but she succeeded. To find out more about his past, she also spoke with his former comrades. The result is a book. "I had to write it," she says.

A forger's life Sarah Kaminsky's book about her father

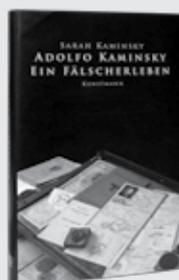
For a long time, Adolfo Kaminsky's children knew nothing about his past or his life as a forger. They thought their father was a street worker, helping young criminals to reintegrate into society and teaching them photography. But then there would always be little things they wouldn't understand – such as when friends came around and they'd hear snatches of their conversation.

In 1992 Kaminsky's family took on French nationality. Years afterwards, his daughter Sarah came across the documents for their naturalization process and was astonished to find a letter from the French state, thanking her father for his work in the French Army's intelligence services in 1945. He had provided French agents with forged German identity documents so that they could track down unknown concentration camps in Germany just before the war ended. "But time and again, when we asked him about these things, he'd make a joke and change the subject," she recalls.

Adolfo Kaminsky had actually planned to commit the tale of his adventurous life to paper himself, even signing a contract with a publishing company. A journalist was due to help him with it. But he never managed to do it. Delving into his difficult past was too painful for him. But his daughter persevered, and her tenacity paid off. She got her father to talk, though at the beginning he still didn't want the microphone she'd set up.

"Are you from the police?" he'd ask sternly. She spent two years asking questions time and again. Sometimes they'd both sit in tears in the living room, distraught and moved by the events of the past. Sarah also met former partners of her father, because he'd never made notes – they would only have endangered the forger, his family and his resistance networks. Finally, in 2009, her biography of him appeared in France and became a literary success. Later, its success would be repeated in many other countries too.

Sarah Kaminsky was born in 1979. She's a scriptwriter and actress, and lives in Paris. Her father's reminiscences are written in the first person as if they were the transcript of a tape recording, and they read like a thrilling novel. The book shows how her father's spirit of resistance was awakened in his youth and how he was in just as much danger as the people he wanted to help. That's probably why many young people are interested in the book. Sarah Kaminsky hadn't expected that – "And it really makes me happy."



Sarah Kaminsky:
Adolfo Kaminsky, une vie de faussaire
("a forger's life"). Calmann-Lévy, 2009.

Available in German, French and Italian.

Lies and deceptions



Founded on fraud

The Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, is said to have set the Hanseatic city of Hamburg onto its subsequent path of economic prosperity by issuing a charter freeing it from customs duties. Although there are many indications that this document, dated May 7, 1189, was either forged or at least tampered with, the citizens of Hamburg still use it to justify their annual celebrations for the “birthday of the harbor.” Researchers have recently discovered that the people of Hamburg had in fact long been adept at trickery – for the founding charter of the Bishopric of “Hammaburg,” issued by Emperor Louis the Pious in 831, is also a forgery. Its purpose was to prove that Hamburg had older, proprietary rights to Bremen than did the city of Cologne, which had also laid claim to it. The swindle was successful. Bremen was given to Hamburg, and in the year 893 Pope Formosus proclaimed the Bishopric of Bremen-Hamburg.

The evolutionary history of mankind

When he unveiled a monolith memorial for the archaeologist Charles Dawson, the British anthropologist Sir Arthur Keith declared that Dawson’s name would be remembered forever. And he was right, though it wouldn’t be Dawson’s scientific merits that kept his name alive. “Piltdown Man,” discovered by Dawson in 1908, was proven almost 50 years later to have been an audacious hoax. Its author – or authors, because others, such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, are suspected to have been involved alongside Dawson – had constructed the find from a medieval human skull, the 500-year-old lower jawbone of an orangutan and the fossilized tooth of a chimpanzee.

Life on other planets

The “New York Sun” offered the first-ever proof of extraterrestrial life in 1835. But its series of articles with illustrations of bat people living on the Moon (“vesper-tilio homo”) naturally turned out to be a hoax. The same has been true of all other supposed proofs of life on other planets. These include a film revealed in the 1990s that purported to show the autopsy of an alien recovered from a UFO crash site in 1947. The London film producer Ray Santilli claimed to have acquired the film from a cameraman in the US Army. Ten years later, Santilli admitted that he had made the film himself. His excuse wasn’t very convincing, however – he said that the original footage had already been in such a bad condition that he had simply decided to “re-film” the event.

Whether in politics, science, business or history – there’s no field that doesn’t have its swindlers and fakers.

Text: **Manfred Schiefer**



The fabulous world of Cottingley

In July 1917, the cousins Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths from Cottingley in northern England – aged 16 and nine, respectively – brought home photos showing themselves together with little fairies. Their veracity was initially doubted, but Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the originator of the master detective Sherlock Holmes, refused to be disillusioned and published the photos of the two girls in both the literary magazine “Strand” and in his book “The Coming of the Fairies” as proof of the existence of supernatural beings. It was only in 1983 that Elsie Wright, by now 83 years old, confessed to how the photos had been staged. She had drawn copies of fairies in an illustrated book, cut them out, fixed them to the undergrowth with hat pins, and then taken up position behind them. However, her partner-in-swindle, Frances Griffiths, insisted that she had indeed seen fairies.



Fake forgeries

In April 1983, the German news magazine “Stern” announced that Hitler’s diaries had been discovered. Just two weeks later, an examination proved them to have been forged – they were in fact the work of the painter Konrad Kujau. “Stern” had paid more than 9 million marks (some USD 5 million) for this supposed sensation. In the turbulent days after the forgeries were revealed for what they were, the founder and editor of “Stern” publicly declared that “we have reason to be ashamed before our readers.” He soon afterwards left the magazine. But the scandal made Kujau so famous that when he later painted “original Kujau forgeries,” his own art was in turn copied by other forgers and offered up for auction on the Internet.



Plagiarius prize

Whether it’s a set of scales, a wristwatch, a chainsaw or a pressure control valve – there’s no product today that’s safe from being counterfeited. Forgeries can be found in all quality levels and across the price spectrum, ranging from cheap imitations that can damage your health to high-quality, faultless products that only a lab test can reveal to be fake. Brand piracy and counterfeit products are a lucrative business worth billions. For nearly 40 years now, they have been the target of the German “Plagiarius” anti-prize. This trophy, in the shape of a mischievous gnome, is naturally not a forgery itself, but in fact doubly original: the designer and originator of the prize, Rido Busse, unceremoniously covered the Heissner company’s garden gnome No. 917 in black paint and gave him a golden nose – as a symbol of the exorbitant profits that product pirates earn at the cost of others.



What we get to see: action.

Photojournalism Behind the Scenes

Text and photos: **Ruben Salvadori**

Photos only ever show a section of reality. And sometimes they even stage their motifs. This is what Ruben Salvadori experienced as a student in explosive Jerusalem. Given the seminal influence of press photos, he therefore calls for media reporting to be critically questioned.

The overwhelming flood of images that we are constantly exposed to in the face of the 24-hour news cycle mixed with a perpetual social feed repeatedly causes a numbing effect on what the content of such images is meant to provoke in the viewers. With a growing race for clicks, shares, views and interactions, the quest for dramatic material is often crucial for a production process in which publications engage in a ruthless fight with competitors to attract the audience's attention, while content creators are simultaneously forced to get the editors' consideration by crafting the right material to get published. This sometimes means using a visual language that seeks dramatic elements even when the situation to be documented is not nearly so tense. Moreover, the financial constraints that have characterized the photojournalistic market in the recent years, mixed with the mass amateurization of the photographic medium, have led to many ethical issues arising from our practice.

These are some of the lines along which I moved to create *Photojournalism Behind the Scenes*. The project began with a simple wish to collect "conflict images" while I was living and studying in the city of Jerusalem. I started documenting weekly clashes between parts of the Palestinian population of the Silwan neighborhood and the Israeli forces. Here, every Friday at the same time, the two groups in conflict would meet and engage in what seemed like almost ritualistic actions that would either escalate into violent exchanges of rocks, tear gas and stun grenades or a calmer protest that would fade out quietly.

After my first few experiences in the field, though, what caught my attention was not just the overused imagery of the Palestinian throwing a rock or the Israeli soldier shooting tear-gas canisters, but a third player who is only rarely mentioned or discussed despite always being present on the scene: the photographer. It is here that I started looking at the role that we play in the field as photojournalists, and the implications that our presence has on the events we document, considering the link to dramatic content and the need to get published in an environment where many photographers are shooting the same situations, while competing to get picked by the same handful of outlets.

Photojournalism Behind the Scenes is an attempt to play with the creation and destruction of dramatization by including the photographer in the frame and thereby encouraging the

audience to consider how the process of conflict image creation plays out. The aim of this work is not to point out the wrong or right behavior of specific photographers, but rather to trigger in the audience an understanding of the need to transition from being a passive viewer to becoming an active observer who has the tools to be receptive and understanding of what is being shown.

While most traditional outlets were not willing to publish the project at first, it gained traction in the social media, which indicates how what "professionals" sometimes take for granted or prefer not to show may actually be of great interest to the audience if unfiltered by the gatekeepers. Finally, such unconventional momentum led to a series of major publications that triggered a much-needed debate of some of the ethical aspects of our practice.



What we don't get to see: the setup.

Failing to understand the processes behind our images and the related professional discourse leads not only to the miscomprehension of current events that have worldwide repercussions, but also to the crystallization of distorted visual perceptions that can translate into dangerous preconceived notions that could shape perilous actions. ♦

Ruben Salvadori went to Jerusalem in 2008 as a student of anthropology/sociology and international relations and devoted his time there to research in the field with his camera. This developed into the *Photojournalism Behind the Scenes* project, which saw a global response in the media.

“Lying is a sharpening stone for our intelligence”

Interview: **Mathias Plüss** | Photos: **Mischa Haller**

Honesty is good, lying is bad? It's not that simple, says the evolutionary biologist Volker Sommer. Observing both animals and people has led him to conclude that there's no intelligence without lying. What's worse: a life without lies would be dreadfully boring.

CREDO: Is honesty overvalued as a virtue?

Volker Sommer: Hardly. The great significance of honesty is proven by the energy alone that we expend in order to reduce the impact of deceit and lies.

One of your books is called “In praise of lying.” Do you seriously regard lying as something praiseworthy?

As an evolutionary anthropologist I'm interested in factors that helped to form our psyche during our evolution. One driving force was the competition between those who want to deceive and those who want to unmask them. And while our brain developed to become ever more subtle in generating deceptions, the intellectual organs of potential victims became increasingly efficient at detecting lies. Lying was thus a kind of sharpening stone for our intelligence.

“Sharpening stone” sounds so positive. Wouldn't “the downside of intelligence” be more appropriate to describe lying?

As a scientist I'm primarily concerned with observing the phenomenon in an unbiased manner. But if you want, you can say that improving our intelligence is the sunny side of lying, while the constant threat it poses is its shadow side.

Would you go so far as to say that intelligence is there to deceive?

It's there for both: to help us to deceive others, and to protect us from deception. In order to be successful, we have to consider what the motives of others might be, and then incorporate this conjecture in our own strategies for action. Intelligence is in this sense primarily a matter of social competence.

So lying is a testament to empathy. Is lying perhaps just a by-product of our capacity for empathy?

I'd say the opposite is the case. If we are only concerned with the well-being of others, without looking after ourselves, we will find that our genes are rapidly underrepresented in subsequent generations. Just as there is reconciliation because conflict exists, and just as we develop cooperation because we are egotistical, so too one could claim that true empathy springs from the dunghill of our ability to exploit others and read their minds.

There is a popular tendency to contrast the innocence of nature with human corruption. But can animals lie too?

To me, lying isn't a reflection of any gradual degeneration of a complex civilization. It represents an ancient, natural heritage. Because sending out false information and false signals is something that's common among non-humans in the animal kingdom. That encompasses the stick insect's art of illusion and the camouflage colors of the common frog. Then there's the sparkling of fireflies that they use for predatory purposes, attracting their victims, or the black and yellow rings that the harmless hoverfly uses to pretend it's a wasp.

These might be convenient examples of sending out false signals, but surely that hasn't got much to do with lying?

That's true, because these animals have fixed themselves to a single trick in each case. Liars, on the other hand, react flexibly to specific situations. Male barn swallows do that, for example, when they return to their nests only to discover that their partner has flown off. If the female is in her egg-laying phase, then the returning males almost always sound a false alarm so as to prevent any possible infidelity on the part of the females. During the building of the nest or in the brooding phase, when sexual infidelity involves no danger to the male's chances of reproduction, you hardly ever hear a false alarm from them.



Volker Sommer: "If we didn't live in danger of fraud, we probably wouldn't have a modern economy."



The campus of University College London, where Volker Sommer holds a Professorship in Evolutionary Anthropology.

You've observed apes and monkeys for many years – have they also mastered tricks like that?

In the case of langur monkeys in India, I was able to document what happened to the highest male in a group after it trod on a thorn. The hobbled alpha male was then pushed around by the lower males, who went to eat the best pods from under the acacia tree instead of letting him have first pick. When the upstarts hassled him a second time, the alpha male began to bark his alarm signal. The rebel males were clearly seized by fear, thinking “There must be tigers! leopards! or dogs!” – and they all clambered up the surrounding trees to save themselves. At which point the unruffled alpha male went over to pick up the best pods.

So this is all intentional?

I think that extremely social animals are probably capable of consciously manipulating others. Such as elephants, whales, crows and, most especially, the great apes who are our closest relatives.

Can you give us an example?

The chimpanzee Lucy, who was taught sign language in the USA, used her signs to accuse innocent third parties of doing things. Let me read the dialogue that took place when her carer Roger Fouts noticed a pile of feces in the living area. Roger: “What that?” – Lucy: “What that?” – Roger: “You know. What that?” – Lucy: “Dirty dirty.” – Roger: “Whose dirty dirty?” – Lucy: “Sue.” (another trainer) – Roger: “It not Sue. Whose that?” – Lucy: “Roger.” – Roger: “No! Not mine. Whose?” – Lucy: “Lucy dirty dirty. Sorry Lucy.”

People also use lies for social bonding. For example, a wife might refrain from telling her husband that she no longer loves him, so as not to hurt him. The psychoanalyst Arno Gruen told me recently that he doesn't believe in such well-meaning dishonesty because it undermines any real engagement with your partner and means that nothing can really change.

I think that we all somehow have to learn to playact and to engage in role-play. Such things are part of the normal theater



Great apes have also mastered the art of conscious manipulation.

of life and I think it's healthy. To have the pure, unadulterated truth about ourselves would be too much for us to bear.

So if in doubt, we should be dishonest?

As long as my self-image and my opinions of those close to me are free of any morbid psychological strain or tension, then I wouldn't want to insist on more honesty. But if frustration and stress proliferate, then we should certainly talk with each other.

If we're so good at lying, why are we so bad at uncovering lies? Up to the present day, we still don't have any really viable lie detector.

What we are aware of and what is real don't necessarily have a lot to do with each other. For one thing, we filter all the information that we take in. Which is why five different witnesses can describe the same incident in very different ways. For another thing, our psyche stores its content mostly in our unconscious, meaning that it's not rationally accessible. There's a point to that, because I want to present myself in the best possible light

so that my fellow men trust me and are ready to interact with me. That works all the better, the less I'm aware of my egotistical motivation and my own manipulative intentions.

So most of the time we don't even notice when we're lying?

Yes. As soon as I know that I'm deceiving someone, my voice starts to tremble, I blush, and my knees become weak. What we call "self-deception" is actually a mechanism that not even lie detectors find it easy to detect.

Let's touch on three concrete areas now. Medicine: How honest should doctors be, when honesty can be so painful?

Luckily, I don't have to take such decisions. Is it better if the doctor glosses over a fatal cancer diagnosis so that I don't become even more depressed? Right now, I think I'd want to look my impending death in the eye, rather than giving in to some illusion. But precisely because that answer can't be regarded as generally applicable, it also reveals the deeply human aspect of lying: it compels us time and again to define our own dignity.

“If we are only concerned with the well-being of others, without looking after ourselves, we will find that our genes are rapidly under-represented in subsequent generations.”



Competition between frauds and those who unmask them was a driving force behind evolution.

And what about science: Must a scientist be unconditionally devoted to the search for truth? Or would it be excusable for him to lie, in the service of a higher purpose?

No. Clean data is the sine qua non of science. Nevertheless, here too there is at times a great temptation to falsify information in order to gain rapid fame. A Korean stem cell researcher tried just that recently, though his bogus claims were quickly revealed for what they were. The science world is a special type of information community where mutual mistrust belongs to the corporate culture. Furthermore, good science is not about asserting the truth; it's merely about delivering the best possible explanation at the current time. Its provisional character alleviates any claims to the absolute and thus lessens the incentive to lie.

Now the economy. Trust is the basis of every trade – deceit is poison to business. Surely it's difficult to find anything positive about lying in this field?

To be sure, dishonesty has damaging consequences. But its ubiquity also stimulates innumerable cases of innovation. Because we mistrust communist goodwill to mankind, money circulates. And banks watch over the assets they hold with sophisticated technologies – with safes, keys, video surveillance, computer firewalls, and chips in credit cards. Whole armies of guardians of the law are trained: policemen, food inspectors, judges and parole officers. I'm not even going to begin to talk about military technology that can evade radar. An inventive approach to truth generates sales for companies producing rejuvenating make-up products or bras that add extra lift, and for plastic surgery. And what's more, a life without lies would be boring because they nourish vast swathes of our culture and entertainment industries. After all, novels, operas and movies are largely based on tales of lies and deception. In other words: we probably wouldn't even have a modern economy if we didn't live in danger of fraud.

But if lying otherwise isn't so bad at all, why does it have such a bad press?

If we condemn lying publicly, we don't do it because we ourselves are so virtuous. We do it rather because we want to encourage our fellow human beings to be as honest as possible. If we succeed in this, we'll come off better when we cooperate with them – better than if they were to shortchange us. That's especially true of modern societies that are essentially based on a credit economy.

What do you mean by “credit economy?”

In traditional modes of cooperation, I exchange services directly with people I know personally or with fellow tribesmen or blood relatives. If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. If anyone



Volker Sommer in front of the oil painting "Darwin and Friends," (1980) by the animal illustrator Stephen D. Nash.

deceives me I can punish them directly or boycott them. In a multilayered society, advance payment is mostly made not by the original receiver of the goods or services, but through third parties at a later date. That's how insurance companies and goods transport function. Such complex economies can only exist if we set up universal systems of morality. It is precisely for this reason that public condemnation of lying is so important.

Don't you think that by de-demonizing lying, you could be a corrosive influence? If lying is something natural, as you claim, then doesn't it sound a bit like self-justification?

Whether or not something is natural says nothing about whether we should endorse it ethically. In my career I've researched the most varied phenomena in natural history, from babysitting to polyandry to cannibalism and masturbation. There are things that some people would find objectionable, whereas the same behavior in another cultural context would be quite acceptable, even desirable. Just because it's natural to do something doesn't mean it's ethically right. If we were to claim that, we'd be committing the "naturalistic fallacy" as described by the Enlightenment philosopher David Hume. Dogmatic and religious systems

often succumb to this fallacy by asserting their own moral values and claiming that they are eternal.

And such eternal values don't exist in your opinion?

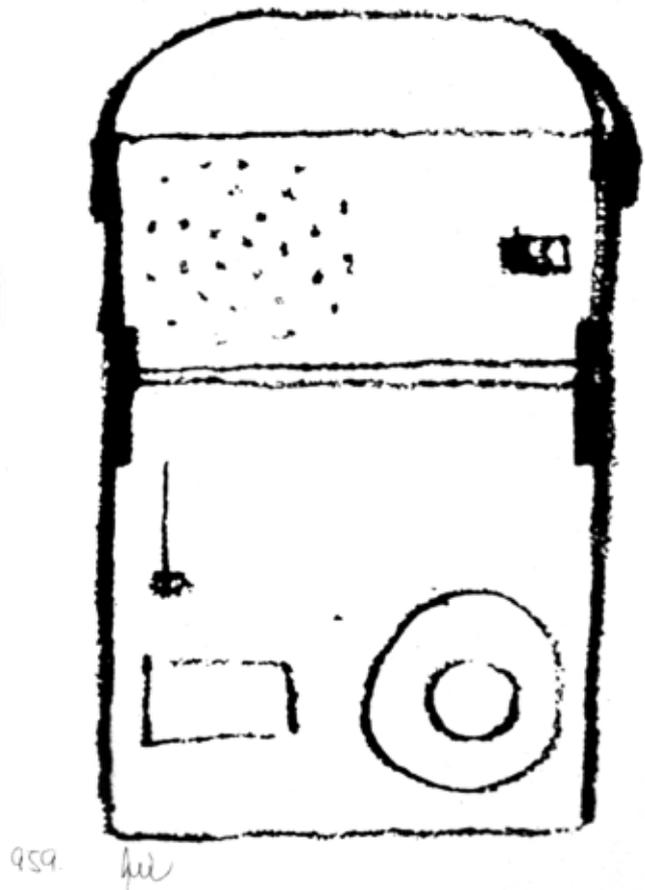
No. A modern society is always negotiating its values anew, and will arrive at different norms according to the times. That's the same with lying. That's why Winston Churchill could say: "In wartime truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies." ♦

Volker Sommer was born in 1954 and is Professor of Evolutionary Anthropology at University College London (UCL). He is an internationally renowned primatologist and researches into primates in the wild – such as temple monkeys in India, gibbons in the rainforests of Thailand and chimpanzees in the mountain forests of Nigeria. He is a scientific advisor to the Giordano Bruno Foundation, where he campaigns for secular humanism. He is also known to the public as a conservationist thanks to his appearances on radio and TV and to his provocative books on evolutionary biology – most recently "Darwinisch denken" ("Darwinian thinking," 2007), "Schimpansenland" ("Chimpanzeeland," 2008) and "Menschenaffen wie wir" ("Apes like us," 2011).

Good design is honest

In the brave new world of merchandise, everything is design. But while “design” might be the magic word of the marketing strategists, it belies the fact that true design is at present just a pious hope. Klaus Klemp, a professor of design history and theory, insists that this has to change.

Text: **Klaus Klemp** | Sketch: **Dieter Rams**



Honest design passes the test of time: With his “Radio-Phono-Transistor TP 1” of 1959, Dieter Rams more or less preempted the idea of the Walkman. Yet the audio carrier of the TP 1 wasn’t a cassette tape – which was only invented years later – but a tiny vinyl record that existed at the time, and that only played for three minutes on each side. But this was a case where the idea was more advanced than the technology available at the time.

“Thou shalt not lie” is our usual paraphrase of the Eighth Commandment. A more literal translation of God’s instruction in the Old Testament would be: “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” But in today’s world of merchandise with its promotional emphasis, this Commandment seems to find little attention. Many things that are offered for sale in shops or on the Internet promise more than they deliver. You wade through forests of packaging for a mere hint of perfume; there are hair-dryers so monstrous you almost need a gun license to use them; we have coffee machines whose design seems to want to tell us something about their towers, their ornaments, their waistlines and their lines of force; and then there are the cars that are getting ever bigger and packed with ever more muscle – colossal SUVs that blind us in our rearview mirror. And yet all these are banal everyday objects or mere means of getting from A to B. “Design” has in these cases become a perverted magic formula.

Willing design accomplices

The word “design” has pretty much gone to rack and ruin. Everything today is design – from nail design to designer jeans to designer laptops available at discount stores. Design is cool, design is “in,” design is cult. Design offers added value. “Design” has been degraded into a mere battle cry of the marketing strategists who want to sell something for more than it’s really worth. Even the word itself encapsulates a lie in most cases today. At the point of sale, a thing has to rake in a lot more than it actually cost to make and sell. Since the advent of postmodernism, “celebrity designers” have become willing accomplices. A pair of jeans is torn to give them a “designer” look so that they can sell for 400 dollars – and are thus far more profitable than a normal pair that sells for just 40.

Not manipulative

Dieter Rams was for almost four decades the head of design at the electrical appliance manufacturer Braun, responsible for everything from electric razors to hi-fi sound systems – and he’s always been of a very different opinion. Between 1975 and 1985 he formulated ten design theses that are the quintessence of his many years of design experience. One of them is this: “Good design is honest. It doesn’t make a product seem more innovative, more efficient or more valuable than it actually is. It doesn’t try to manipulate the user by promises it can’t keep.”

Braun’s good design

Braun was founded in Frankfurt am Main in 1921 and from the mid-1950s to the 1990s it consistently maintained a design ethic whose goal was an honest product. Its company philosophy also

encompassed an honest appreciation of its employees, providing them with a medical service, company sports, a cafeteria that offered a balanced diet, and even profit-sharing – all of which served to intensify their sense of identification with the company and its products. And this was not without impact on the company’s business success, helping to turn the regional firm of “Radio Braun” into a globally positioned enterprise whose design was regarded as exemplary everywhere in the world. At its core was a design approach that was as functional as it was aesthetic, that had simple, intuitive prompting for the user, and that was durable in both its technical and visual aspects.

A Braun hi-fi system from the 1970s or ’80s is no longer technologically up to date, but its design is still head and shoulders above most of today’s products. A Braun wristwatch from 1989 still makes a good impression today. And if the Braun KM 3 food processor – whose form remained virtually unaltered over some four decades – were revived today, equipped with up-to-date technology, it would make all its modern competitors in the kitchen look monstrous in comparison. This is more than remarkable, because technical equipment is an area where design usually only has a short half-life.

Back to the beginnings

Modern design demanded four things above all: integrity in its materials (and a concomitant renunciation of false ornament), functionality, broad availability, and a new sense of beauty derived from the very industrial character of the things themselves. However, there was many an argument about this. Some, such as Karel Teige, thought that beauty would result of its own accord as long as the product was purely functional. Others – such as Peter Behrens or Ludwig Mies van der Rohe – believed that an occasional resort to the dysfunctional would be necessary in order to find the right form.

In 1926 Walter Gropius defined the Bauhaus production ideal as follows: a thing “should serve its purpose perfectly, in other words it should fulfill its function practically, be durable, cheap and ‘beautiful.’” The focus was on the everyday world, on living with all its necessities and accessories, on the world of work, on means of transport, on community organizations and on the use of text and images. The goal was to make possible a better society, also through better design. This was a process that necessitated continuous updating because the paradigms of society keep changing too. This could perhaps be called a “policy” of design – though today one can search long and hard for any real “design policy” without finding one.

Things didn't use to be this way. In the course of nearly 200 years of design history, which began with industrial mass production towards the middle of the 19th century, the question of the rational use of objects surfaced repeatedly. At the time, Gottfried Semper drew up appropriate criteria for the proper use of materials and the visual coherence of objects, and his "plan for an ideal museum" provided an important impetus for the idea of an "ideal specimen collection" that lay behind the South Kensington Museum in London, today known as the Victoria and Albert Museum.

William Morris was active in 19th-century England too, and was also concerned with quality and durability, even though he largely ignored the new industrial manufacturing conditions and his design interests were focused more on the past than on the future. But this nevertheless opened up a discussion about design quality that would determine the whole of the 20th century. In the early 20th century, this discussion was accompanied by a search for new forms that would also be long-lasting and functional.

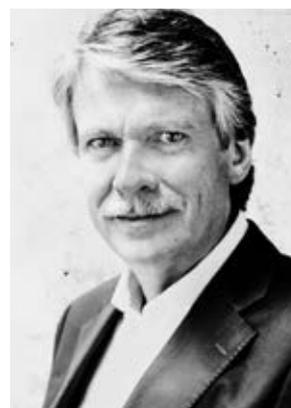
"Less is better"

It's one thing to insist that we once again need sensible, long-lasting products – in other words, products that are good and honest. But how can this be realized in a consumer-centered society? Perhaps Dieter Rams's dictum "less is better" can help us here. Consuming less, but instead acquiring better, more expensive products (though not overpriced) is a financial zero-sum game for the consumer and yet still keeps the economy moving.

This could be a challenge to develop a new understanding of marketing. Because the phenomenon of globalization, with its rapidly growing number of market participants, is in itself economically expansionary. Perhaps, when they periodically urge

us to go out and spend, politicians should finally differentiate and talk of "sensible demand" instead of "necessary demand." Product design has long been more than just formal design. It's also a matter of reflecting and planning how to conceive our material, structural future.

This isn't all about moralizing, or an attempt to make us all submit to some Calvinist design uniformity. It's not about being a killjoy or about some act of enforced impoverishment: it's about enriching life by reducing complications and complexity. It's about adjusting how we approach materials and our fellow men, about making optimum use of resources instead of being extravagant, and it's about a shift away from egotism and from thoughtless supersizing consumerism towards a better quality of our life with others. The Brazilian graphic designer Alexandre Wollner, who studied at the internationally renowned Ulm School of Design in the 1950s, once defined design as a path to "collective well-being" – and this is certainly an aspect worth considering. The design of honest, long-lasting products that can also provide fun is in this respect a thoroughly worthwhile goal. "Function and fun" could be our watchword. ♦



Klaus Klemp is Professor of Design History and Design Theory at the Offenbach am Main University of Art and Design, and Head of the Design Department of the Museum of Applied Art in Frankfurt am Main. He has numerous publications to his name, and was the editor and co-author (together with Keiko Ueki-Polet) of the comprehensive bilingual exhibition catalog "Less and more. The design ethos of Dieter Rams" (Berlin 2009).

Hooked up – a self-test with a lie detector

Text: **Roberta Fischli** | Photos: **Julian Salinas**





Before the test, the measuring instruments are set up.

Lies can be more interesting than just about anything else, simply because they can be so difficult to detect. The polygraph, commonly called the “lie detector,” still fascinates people over a hundred years after it was invented. A machine that can reliably unmask a liar? It sounds too good to be true. Our reporter Roberta Fischli has tried it out on herself.

In 2011 the Spanish cyclist Alberto Contador, a three-time winner of the Tour de France, underwent a lie detector test so as to clear himself of suspicions of doping. Although he passed the test, medical results proved he was in fact guilty. So in 2012, Contador was banned retrospectively for two years and he was also stripped of his title for the Tour de France in 2010. In the case of the former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko, who was apparently poisoned by radioactive material in London in 2006, the main suspect – Andrey Lugovoy, a member of the Russian Duma – took a lie detector test before live cameras, and passed it. Were both Contador and Lugovoy innocent, or had they succeeded in outsmarting the machine? To this day, the validity of lie detector tests is in dispute, and nowhere in the world are there any really solid statistics about their reliability.

“I have to understand how people tick.”

“Just stay relaxed. It’s best if you focus on the small white dot on the wall in front of you,” says Holger Leutz while I sit down on a chair. He is a qualified engineer and teacher who trained as a polygraph operator in Israel, and today carries out lie detector tests in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. I would like to find out how the machine functions – and whether it can indeed prove when I lie.

Before we begin this self-test, Leutz subjects me to a comprehensive interview – this is a fixed component of the procedure that serves to explore how the test person defines different concepts and moral values. It also lets Leutz adapt the set questions to the personality of the person to be tested. “I have to understand how people tick,” he says. Then we decide on a question to be clarified by the polygraph test. I suggest to Leutz that he should ask whether I ever cheated in a school exam. He agrees.

Precursors and predecessors

For hundreds of years, the search for truth was closely bound up with a belief in a higher power. Divine judgment was supposed to decide in cases of doubt. In Africa, India and Asia, for

example, suspects had boiling water poured over them or were maltreated with a burning iron. These procedures – little different from torture – were all based on the assumption that an innocent person would come out of such an ordeal unscathed, whereas a liar would suffer on account of his crimes. Although medical doctors and physiologists suspected early in the 19th century that lying was accompanied by quantifiable bodily signals such as fear, trembling or a heightened pulse, it was only in the early 20th century that scientists developed methods and testing procedures to detect such reactions.

During the First World War, the National Research Council of the USA – a private, nonprofit organization – commissioned several psychologists to investigate whether these procedures were in fact suited to unmasking spies. But the war was over before the US government was able to make use of their findings. William Marston, one of the psychologists involved, had meanwhile refined an instrument for measuring blood pressure and would later describe himself as the “father of the polygraph.” Marston claimed that his machine made it possible to determine the truth of a suspect’s statements.

Scientists such as John Larson and Leonard Keeler made further refinements to the technology and constructed a portable polygraph. Keeler added a sensor to the apparatus so that it could measure changes in the electrical resistance of the skin. This meant that all the elementary components of the modern polygraph were now in place.

“Is today Friday?”

“Before we begin the test I’ll tell you what questions I’m going to ask you,” explains Holger Leutz. Many of them are easily verifiable, everyday questions such as “Is today Friday?” He will mix his “real” questions in between these – the questions intended to find out whether or not I ever cheated at school. Disclosing the questions is part of the procedure. It’s all so as to build up trust, says Leutz. The test person has to go along with the procedure, otherwise it’s impossible to evaluate the data it produces, and the results are worthless.

Then Leutz clamps electrodes to the index finger and middle finger of my right hand. These are to measure my skin resistance. He loops a belt around my chest that will measure my heart rate, and hooks me up with sensors to monitor my blood pressure, my breathing and my pulse. All the cables lead to a small box that’s attached to a computer.

I already feel apprehensive – and somehow guilty, too. Hooked up to this machine, nothing seems to be voluntary. At the moment, the notion that this procedure could prove someone’s innocence – as its advocates like to claim – seems completely absurd. Leutz laconically adds that I can break off the test anytime if I want. “You just have to tell me.” Has the psychologist in him noticed my anxiety? A lie detector test is voluntary and can be ended at any moment – but that’s something I forget pretty quickly.

The aura of the apparatus

In 1923 a US federal court rejected the recently invented polygraph as a means of providing evidence in a judicial case. The reason was that this newfangled detector was not yet sufficiently accepted by science. Nevertheless, the US police used the polygraph more and more in their investigations from the 1930s onwards. Not long before this, there had been criticism of the brutal interrogation methods hitherto used to force confessions. The lie detector offered a gentler alternative.

“I already feel apprehensive – and somehow guilty, too. Hooked up to this machine, nothing seems to be voluntary.”

The polygraph was used so regularly that it was soon perceived by the general public as something reliable, even infallible. The apparatus thereby acquired a kind of aura that meant it sometimes sufficed just to show it to suspects for them to confess. Thus began the triumphal march of the lie detector in the USA. The increasing number of confessions led the investigating authorities to buy even more polygraphs. Soon, hardly anyone questioned the reliability of the machine.

Private companies also became interested in the polygraph. Heads of human resources used it during job interviews. If anyone refused to take a test, he or she hardly had any prospect of being considered. Companies used the polygraph to check the loyalty of their employees and also to investigate cases of embezzlement or theft.

At the beginning of the Cold War, the US intelligence agencies also used the lie detector for the very purpose for which it had originally been created: to try and root out spies. However, there remained a stubborn suspicion that well-trained people could outsmart the machine. Aldrich Ames, a CIA employee who had sold information to the Soviets, was subjected several times to polygraph tests, and was never proved to have lied in them.

“Have you ever cheated in an exam?”

“Are you sitting on a chair?” asks Holger Leutz. I answer, truthfully, “yes.” “Are we in Zurich here?” Again: “Yes.” “Do you lie to people who trust you?” I think of a colleague who’d just had a dreadful haircut but whose coiffure I had praised the day before. I say: “No.” Has the machine spotted my dishonesty? I notice that my gaze has become fixed and I’m tensing my left arm, the one that has the blood pressure cuff on it. “You mustn’t tense any muscles,” admonishes Leutz when I also start to move my thighs back and forth nervously. His voice now sounds as if it’s far away. Then I hear him ask the decisive question: “Have you ever cheated in an exam?” I think back to the chemistry exam in junior high school and the hand signs my best friend gave me – and I lie again: “No.” Leutz goes through all the same questions once again, in order to refine the results and to be quite sure, he says.

Locked away

In the early 1960s, critical voices in the USA warned against the misuse of the polygraph. There were more and more cases in which employees of personnel departments were asking questions that infringed upon the privacy of applicants. In 1988 the US government introduced major restrictions in the use of polygraphs in the private sector. Today, the different states of the USA have different regulations regarding the use of polygraphs in court proceedings. But the US security services remain able to employ the polygraph, and the CIA is said to use it in job interviews. But facts and figures about this are almost all kept locked away. Besides the USA, Canada and Israel also use lie detectors. The world’s biggest professional association in the field is the American Polygraph Association (APA), which has its headquarters in Tennessee.

“The machine doesn’t hurt.”

The test is over. It didn’t last longer than ten minutes. Nevertheless, I feel completely drained and exhausted. “The machine doesn’t hurt, but it still puts the body under stress,” says my interviewer matter-of-factly. He looks at the curves and diagrams on his computer screen with its arches and arcs that depict my

heart rate. Then comes the result: “The machine couldn’t prove any lies on your part,” says Leutz. I’m relieved – and irritated. I intentionally lied twice; didn’t the machine notice?

How is this possible? Can I be as skillful as a master spy, even without any preparation whatsoever? Holger Leutz squirms a little and begins a long, complicated explanation. In brief: I had a strong physical reaction to all the questions, even to those that I had clearly answered truthfully. This shifted the averages of the measurements, meaning that the machine had no viable means of orientation to calibrate my answer when it came to the question that was actually relevant – “Have you ever cheated in an exam?”

Leutz has to admit to a surprising, yet banal fact: the machine only measures and records the data. The actual challenge lies in interpreting it – and this is the task of the person carrying out the test, it’s not done by any seemingly objective, incorruptible apparatus. As my self-test makes evident, the polygraph delivers up only diagrams of bodily signals. On its own, the machine can’t see through a lie.

Data that’s more than merely sketchy

So should the detector be utilized at all anymore? In 2003 the National Research Council of the USA published a report nearly 400 pages long about the polygraph and various related means of testing the truth. Newer technologies try to identify deceptions by means of voice analyses or brain scans. But the report concluded that the data on the reliability of all these technologies is more than sketchy, and that there exist almost no standards regarding their application.

“Besides the USA, Canada and Israel also use lie detectors.”

So from today’s perspective there are good ethical and scientific grounds to find the use of polygraphs problematic. Many scientists also doubt the basic assumption that certain bodily signals can offer reliable conclusions about the veracity of a statement. And the fact that interpreting the data depends on a human tester makes the procedure vulnerable to error and liable to be influenced by prejudice.



The challenge lies in interpreting the curves.

So does the defendant enjoy the benefit of the doubt?

But the procedure still has its advocates, and not just in the USA. Wolfgang Vehrs is the co-founder of the Institute for Forensic Psychophysiology (IFP) in Munich and is one of the few polygraph specialists in the German-speaking world, along with Holger Leutz. He says: “The polygraph can be an efficient method, especially when there is no better procedure available to clarify the body of evidence.” But even Vehrs is convinced that the method should only be carried out by specially trained psychologists. He also says that “there are situations where I don’t want to make a judgment. Falsely interpreting the data collected could potentially cause far too much damage.”

In Germany, says Vehrs, the procedure is carried out by independent institutions such as the Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Gerichts- und Rechtspsychologie (“Society for scientific court and legal psychology,” GWG), especially in family matters such as custody issues and visitation rights, and in cases where there is a suspicion of sexual abuse. Often, however, it is merely used to support credibility reports and to exonerate suspects. The polygraph remains inadmissible as an official means

of evidence in German courts, and this is also the case in Austria and Switzerland. It is possible that change is on the horizon, though. On May 14, 2013, the Provincial High Court of Dresden decided that “a polygraph test is a suitable means of exonerating an innocent person in proceedings related to custody and visitation rights.” Shortly before this, the Bautzen District Court judged that a polygraph test was also admissible as exonerating evidence in criminal proceedings. Both judgments thus invoke the exonerating function of the procedure.

But over a century after the invention of the lie detector, we’re still waiting for conclusive scientific data on the reliability of its technology. Only then could we answer the question: Can the polygraph make a contribution to clarifying a situation, when used correctly and in the appropriate context? And there’s also the question: Should it even be allowed to do so? ♦

Roberta Fischli is a freelance journalist who writes for the “Tages-Anzeiger,” its weekend supplement “DAS MAGAZIN” and elsewhere. She currently lives in Berlin.

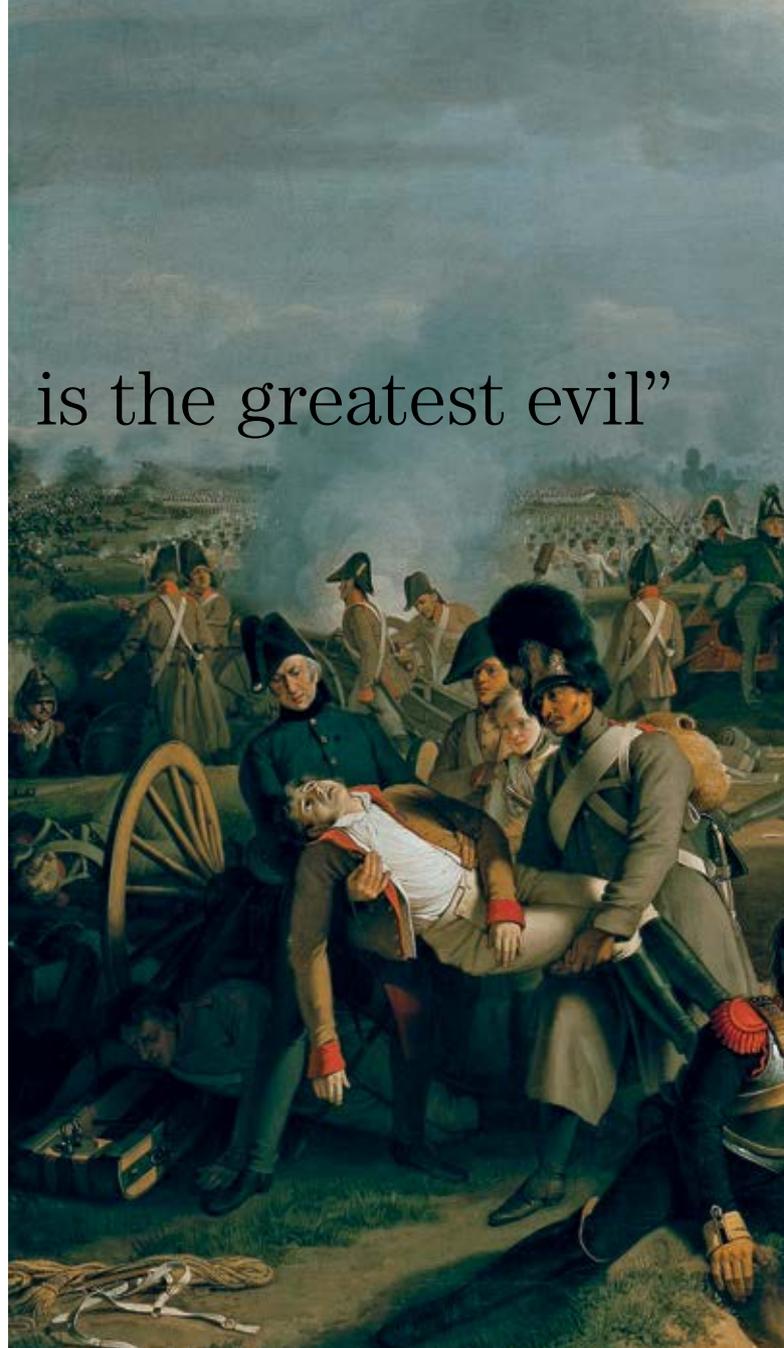
“War

Archduke Karl, field marshal and generalissimo of the Austrian army, sits high on his white horse. With his right hand he points to the battlefield behind him where thick, dark trails of smoke rise up from cannon shot and fires. He is accompanied by the highest-ranking military dignitaries, including Prince Johann I of Liechtenstein.

“Archduke Karl with his staff at the Battle of Aspern in 1809” was painted in 1820 by Johann Peter Krafft (1780–1856) and commemorates a seminal moment in Austrian history. The Battle of Aspern marked the first time that Napoleon had been defeated in the Coalition Wars that raged between France and its European enemies from 1792 to 1815. The “specter of Napoleon,” who along with his vassal states tried to dominate the whole continent, seemed no longer to be unbeatable. And thus it was that Archduke Karl became a mythical hero and has remained so in popular history to the present day – the “conqueror of the unconquerable” was how Heinrich von Kleist celebrated him in an ode.

This act of glorification ignores the minor political significance of this victory in the further course of events, though it is not wholly absent in the Archduke’s depiction by Johann Peter Krafft. But what is truly original here is Krafft’s almost bourgeois, Biedermeier-like rendering of the horrors of the battle in which he strives for a sense of realism, displaying the fate and death of common soldiers such as we see in the foreground of the picture. For the first time in the German-speaking world, Krafft refrains from painting the ultimately irrelevant, heroic deaths of unknown, nameless soldiers. Instead, he paints them with a similar attention to detailed portraiture as he devotes to Archduke Karl and his staff – to the left, for example, we see Second Lieutenant Johann Zadrazil of the Fourth Imperial Field Artillery Regiment, seriously injured and on the point of death, surrounded by his horrified comrades. Death now has a name and a face. To the right, a dragoon has collapsed next to a captured imperial standard with Napoleon’s eagle, and he is being mourned by a companion.

is the greatest evil”



“War is the greatest evil that can be visited on a state or a nation. It must therefore be the prime concern of a regent and of a commanding general to summon up the greatest possible strength at the very first outbreak of war. He must deploy everything at his command so that the war lasts for as short a time as possible, and is decided swiftly in the most beneficial manner possible.” This was how Archduke Karl had described war in his “Fundamental principles for the higher art of war for the generals of the Austrian army” of 1806. Johann Peter Krafft’s painting serves to illustrate the truth of the Archduke’s precepts.

At the same time, when Krafft painted this picture he knew how the Coalition Wars had continued. Just a few weeks after the Battle of Aspern, Napoleon had defeated the Austrian army at Wagram, and Archduke Karl had been relieved of his military duties.



Johann Peter Krafft, detail from "Archduke Karl with his staff at the Battle of Aspern in 1809," (1820). © LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections, Vaduz–Vienna

As early as 1811, the Battle of Aspern was regarded as the most significant historical event of the recent past and was recreated in panorama form for the population of Vienna. In 1813 Johann Peter Krafft was commissioned by the estates of Lower Austria to paint monumental depictions of the victories at Leipzig and Aspern for the hall of honor in the Invalidenhaus in Vienna. On October 18, 1817, the fourth anniversary of the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig, his first painting was hung, namely "The news of victory in the Battle of Leipzig," and in 1819 it was joined by his equally monumental painting of the victory at Aspern. This painting, which is on display today in the Museum of Military History in Vienna, was copied by Krafft himself in 1820 on a smaller scale for Prince Johann I of Liechtenstein (this is the version reproduced here) and in a significantly larger version for the Kinsky family, who had been

involved in the battle. This version is also owned today by the Prince of Liechtenstein.

Delving into the horrors of the Coalition Wars clearly demanded a lot of time. Johann Peter Krafft's subject is an early example of the shift away from glorifying battle to a more honest depiction of the dark side of war and of the misery of the soldiers involved in it. ♦

Dr. Johann Kräfner is the director of the Princely Collections of the House of Liechtenstein and from 2002 to 2011 was director of the LIECHTENSTEIN MUSEUM, Vienna. He is the author of numerous monographs on the history and theory of architecture.



The seductive power of fiction

Even before he called his autobiography “Fiction and truth,” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had the two concepts clash in his “Faust”: “I had nothing and yet enough: the urge to truth yet pleasure in deceit.” Since its very beginnings, narrative literature has had its own quite particular relationship to “honesty,” because ultimately it seeks out truths (or at least “a” truth) through the circuitous route of fabrication. It profits from the fact that fictions often have a far greater impact than sober facts. Just how the fictional can merge with reality and thereby sow the seeds of fatal dogma and prejudice is one of the great themes beloved by the Italian writer Umberto Eco. Whether as a famous novelist or as a celebrated scholar: conspiracy theories are his favorite topics.

Umberto Eco’s most recent novel is “The Prague Cemetery,” published in 2011. It is a sophisticated attack on the gullibility and corruptibility of the reader. The trick lies in pretense – just when you think the author’s imagination is getting away with him, he’s in fact sticking scrupulously to historical truth. And when everything seems to be logical and consistent, it’s actually Eco the storyteller who’s at work, with his tongue in his cheek. Naturally, the novel doesn’t pretend to offer any specific truth, but it does convincingly depict the origins and dissemination of the world’s most fateful lie.

It’s about the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” the perfidious tract that supposedly proved a Jewish world conspiracy and was

purportedly agreed at a secret rabbinical cabal at the Jewish cemetery in Prague. The “Protocols” were first published in 1903 in Russia. Although they were revealed to be a forgery – and in fact were plagiarized from numerous sources – this did not stop their various versions and translations from being used by anti-Semites from Hitler to Hamas in order to justify their hatred.

Umberto Eco had already engaged with the story of the “Protocols” in a series of lectures he gave at Harvard under the title “Six Walks in the Fictional Woods” (1994). But the idea of using literary means to trace the devastating impact of this lie appealed to him. The anonymous author of the “Protocols” had worked with a “copy and paste” procedure *avant la lettre*, drawing on many different works including a satirical text, adventure novels and penny dreadfuls. Eco’s book is neither a documentary nor even a historical novel, even though it is based (as it often says in the movies) “on true events.” “The Prague Cemetery” is instead a conspiracy thriller packed full of all possible postmodern tricks. Its protagonist is one Simone Simonini, double agent, hater of Jews, author of the “Protocols” and – thus Eco – “perhaps the most cynical and disagreeable character in all the history of literature.” And he’s the only figure in the novel who is a complete fiction.

This Simonini wakes up one morning in 1897 only to realize that he is suffering from almost total memory loss. When he tries to remember his various misdeeds, not to mention the origins of the corpses in his cellar, he is assisted by a young psychiatrist called Dr. Froide and a narrator who remains nameless, but who adds his own commentary to Simonini’s diary entries. Simonini is an unscrupulous misanthrope who takes part in the Italian war of independence, in the uprising of the Paris Commune, and in the Dreyfus Affair. But it is only when he has the idea for the “Protocols” that he does true justice to his revulsion at mankind.

At least as fascinating as the occasionally convoluted plot is the novel’s subtext, for its topic is the credibility of all literature. As a linguist and professor of semiotics, Umberto Eco had early on intervened in the debates about literary theory, for he was convinced that texts – unlike the world – can be finite, and thus the same may be said of their interpretation. We should stop reading the world as if it were a book, he says, but also stop treating books as if they were worlds. Fictions are nothing more than models that can help us to a better understanding of the world, but that will always fail to attain its complexity. Eco’s breakneck ride through the cesspits of human nature and its other abysses closes with a logical warning by its author that this fiction should be believed only a tiny bit more than the

bogus “Protocols” themselves. But thankfully, the author does not offer us this insight before having first placed before us the whole seductive power of his fiction. ♦



Umberto Eco

Umberto Eco was born in Alessandria in the Piedmont region of Italy on January 5, 1932. His last name was reputedly given by monks to his grandfather, who had been abandoned as a baby (“eco”: *ex caelis oblatus*, offered from heaven). After studying philosophy and literary history, Eco initially worked as an editor for the publishing house of Bompiani. He was appointed a lecturer in aesthetics at the University of Turin, and made a name for himself as an art theoretician with his book “Opera aperta” (1962, “The Open Work”). In 1971 he was appointed a professor of semiotics at the University of Bologna. His researches into the history of aesthetics, the poetics of the avant-garde, mass communication and the culture of consumerism have all found their way into many of his works. In 1980 Eco published his first novel, “Il nome della rosa” (“The Name of the Rose”), which became a success all over the world. There followed other bestsellers such as “Il pendolo di Foucault” (1988, “Foucault’s Pendulum”), “L’isola del giorno prima” (1994, “The Island of the Day Before”) and “Baudolino” (2000) as well as numerous volumes of essays. Umberto Eco is also known as a bibliomaniac who sees collecting books as an act of cultural welfare.

Felicitas von Lovenberg is head of the literature section at the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” and hosts the TV program “lesenswert” (“worth reading”) for SWR in Germany (Southwest Broadcasting Company).

Getting involved

Recorded by: **Sidi Staub**

As a 19-year-old au pair girl in Paris, Marie Eleonore von und zu Liechtenstein went up to homeless people without any qualms or reservations. Today she is committed to helping children and old people in Romania, Moldova and Bulgaria.

Help for children, young and old people

CONCORDIA Social Projects was founded in 1991 by Georg Sporschill, a Jesuit priest from Vorarlberg in Austria. Back then, he had gone to Romania with a small team of people to help homeless street children. The first children's home was at Concordiei Square in Bucharest, and that was what gave the project its name. Over the course of the years, further children's homes were founded in Romania along with a social center and supervised living communities. In 2004 the Foundation expanded its activities to the neighboring Republic of Moldova, and since 2008 it's also been active in Bulgaria. Today, there are some 600 local helpers in these three countries who are working with and care for more than 1 000 children and young people and 3 000 old people (see www.concordia.or.at). In 2012 Father Georg Sporschill founded another project, called ELIJAH (www.elijah.ro), which is devoted to the Roma communities near Sibiu in Transylvania, helping them to escape poverty and destitution.

I was the second-youngest of seven children and grew up on a forestry and farming estate in a little village in Lower Austria. I remember that the children at school asked if my father was a king and whether we had a crown at home. I found their questions funny because there was nothing special about our home. I had lots of friends in the village and knew which family had just had a baby or whose grandmother was sick. I was a curious girl and was very interested in what happened on the street, about how people spoke to each other, and what they talked about.

After finishing my exams at a convent school in Vienna, I went to work as an au pair girl in Paris for a year in 1976. It was a new world to me. For the first time I felt a certain degree of independence and freedom. And for the first-ever time I saw people living on the streets, and I spoke to them.

At the age of 29 I started to get involved in working with the homeless in Vienna. I was concerned that life was good for me but not for other people. A cousin of mine put me in touch with Father Georg Sporschill. He was a Jesuit who had founded shelters for the homeless on behalf of Caritas in Vienna and he was looking for helpers. I find it relatively easy to talk to other people and I've heard many sad tales of people's lives: tales of debt, illness, losing your apartment or your work, broken families and alcohol problems. And I realized that homeless people are just like you and me with their worries, their hopes, problems and dreams.



CONCORDIA supports Romanian orphans and elderly people in need in Moldova.



Later, I ran a work project in the form of a restaurant where the unemployed and ex-convicts could learn to get back into the world of work. As the head of the project I had to motivate my colleagues to show up for work every day and not to run away the moment there was a problem. And at the same time we had to keep the restaurant running normally. Since then I've had the greatest respect for people who work in the food service business for decades.

After the Romanian revolution of 1989 and the coup that led to the fall of the communist dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu, Father Sporschill was called to Romania in 1991. Back then, there were many homeless children in Bucharest. Most of them had been abandoned by their parents on account of Ceaușescu's disastrous family policies, and they had been housed in giant state "orphanages." After these institutions were dissolved, in the chaos of the revolution, the children ended up on the streets. We literally went down into the sewers of Bucharest. Massive heating pipes are down there, and children were living between them because of the warmth they gave off. The stench took your breath away, but after a few minutes you didn't notice it anymore. We were able to place the first children in a little house that we bought on Christmas Day 1991, thanks to the generosity of a patron.

It's like in a family: you love the children you have, you give them food and drink, you clothe them and wash them. And when they get a bit older you have to find a school to take them. I always wanted to have a big family. Things have turned out differ-

ently, but I've still ended up with lots of children. I don't think that my commitment is anything special. It's just my way – one way – of founding a family of my own.

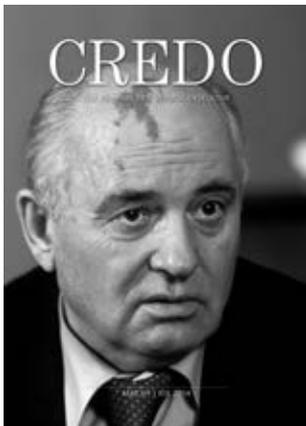
My main task today is fundraising. I use my connections, make new acquaintances and gain new supporters. It says in the Bible: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." If we are really inspired by something, then it's possible to win over others for it. I have lots of friends and acquaintances and tell everyone I meet about our work. I rack my brain about who I could still contact. It's easy for me to go up to people and fire them up with my own enthusiasm. If, like me, you had to assert yourself among older, stronger siblings, then you've learned to convince people and to prevail with words. What's important to me is that I can be honest. Sometimes I'm perhaps a bit too direct in my honesty.

If we look at all the problems of the world, naturally you could claim that the result of our work is a mere drop in the ocean. But for me it's more like a seed that will one day grow into a big tree and bear fruit. If 100, 200 or 1000 homeless children can learn to structure their lives, and if they can experience warmth and spirituality, then at some point they'll pass on these values to others. Twenty-three years ago we started the social services organization CONCORDIA. Today, many children have finished an apprenticeship or a university degree, they've founded a family, and they're successful in their own lives. Just recently, a young man was ordained deacon who was one of our first children back in the beginning. ♦

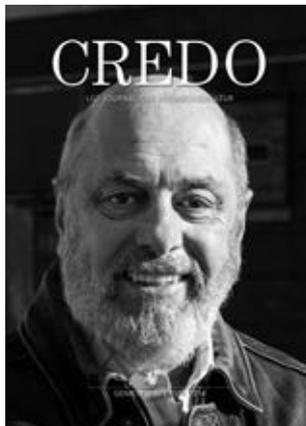
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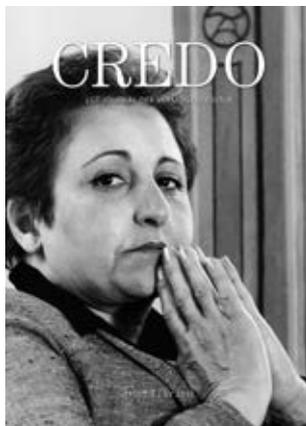
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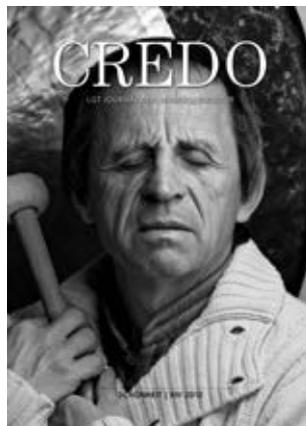
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LGT Marketing & Communications

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Lilo Killer, Zurich

Design concept, coordination

Thomas von Ah, Zurich
Chris Gothuey, Zurich

Translation

Syntax Translations Ltd, Thalwil

Printer

BVD Druck+Verlag AG, Schaan

Lithographer

Prepair Druckvorstufen AG, Schaan

Energy efficient and CO₂ compensated print.

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