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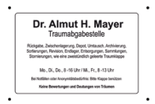

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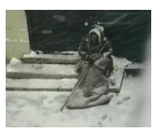

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Translated by
Alexander
Booth
&
You Nakai

Museum der unerhörten Dinge is a "Literary Cabinet of Curiosities" curated by Roland Albrecht, which displays unique things and their unheard (of) stories, all categorized according to weight, and holds the record of being the most visited museum in Berlin (if one offsets the number of visitors to the square meters of the exhibition space). *Museum of Unheard (of) Things* is the catalogue raisonné of the museum, assembling its entire current inventory, translated into English for the first time.

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Museum of Unheard (of) Things

Roland Albrecht

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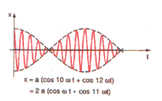

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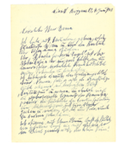

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by
Roland
Albrecht

Museum of Unheard (of) Things

[ANY 02]

Museum der unerhörten Dinge is
a “Literary Cabinet of Curiosities”
founded and curated by Roland Albrecht,
located between house numbers 5 and 6
on Crellestraße in Schöneberg, Berlin.

The museum displays unique things
and their unheard (of) stories,
all categorized according to weight,
and holds the record of being
the most visited museum in Berlin
(if one offsets the number of visitors
to the square meters of the exhibition space).

Museum of Unheard (of) Things is
the catalogue raisonné of the museum,
assembling its entire current inventory,
translated into English for the first time.

It intends to grow as the museum collection expands.
At the present moment (Fall 2015) it contains 78 items.

Museum of Unheard (of) Things

Roland Albrecht

Translated by Alexander Booth and You Nakai

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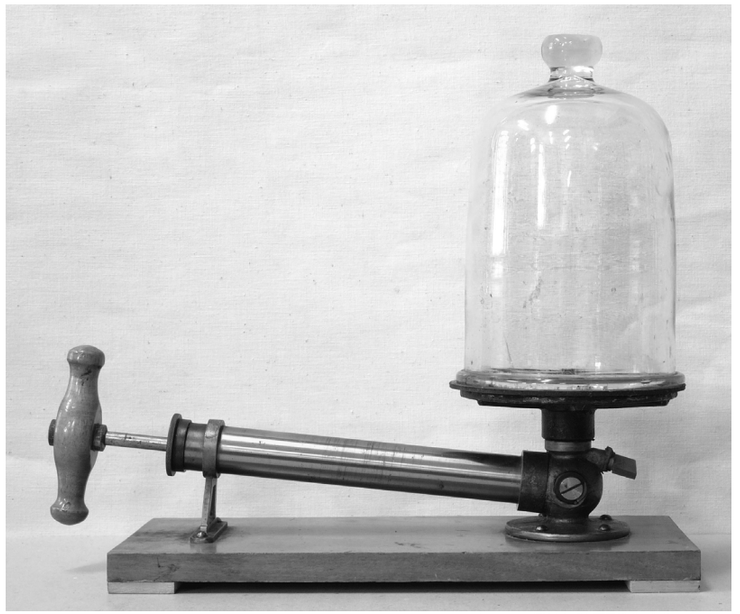

The Void and the Spontaneous Decay of the Vacuum

or

New Proofs of God

The question of the void has occupied humankind since time immemorial and indeed concerns the question "where do I come from, where am I going?" It is the question about our existence, about the inescapable fact of death that plagues us. The void implies the question of being and thereby the question of space, for a void can only be conceived of spatially and a being fills up a space.

The void is a place of nothingness, a place filled with nothingness.

Aristotle solved the problem of the void by saying the following: The void is a "physically unfilled space, but one which is capable of becoming filled." He rejected the presence of the void, since the space in which we exist was an already filled space where the void did not occur and could not be included. He concluded, "Since the void is not the cause of any effect in nature, the emptiness cannot be affixed." In short, what is not there is not and is therefore not worthy of concern.

This opinion was commonly supported by most philosophers from Thales to Plato, as Plutarch writes in Chapter 18 of the first book of *The Doctrines of the Philosophers*. Democritus, Demetrius, Epicurus, et al., recognized the void to be present in its infinite potential. The Stoics were convinced that the void existed not within the world, but within infinity outside the world. They argued: If there is a filled space, there must also be an unfilled one.

Christianity transferred the insights of the Greeks onto their worldview and, with them, the problem of the void and nothingness as well. Furthermore, nothingness was a place of limitlessness, and there was also the opinion that this question could not be posited to begin with. Christianity took over the unfathomable empty space of the Greeks, replaced their world of the gods with their world of God, filled it with angels and countless numbers and kinds of armies, and placed God in his tripartite nature in the middle. Thus the space outside the world of things was not empty, but full. Opposition was not long in coming.

The incomprehensibility of this world of God caused the mystics to once again begin speaking about the void. The medieval mystic Meister Eckhart said, "The sinking into the supreme deity is basically just a descent into the abyss of nothingness." The other opinion insisted, however, that nothingness was nothing, or at most a hell, a descent into a void, absolute extinction. God revealed himself in the world of things and therefore was not to be equated with nothingness, otherwise things would be themselves and not the revelation of God.

With the advent of the Enlightenment the question pragmatized itself and became increasingly materialized. The question became: what would happen if you could produce nothingness? As Descartes would say about emptiness, which he rejected as non-existent:

> If someone asks what would happen if God were to take away every single body contained in a jar, without allowing any other body to take the place of what had been removed, the answer must be that the sides of the jar would in that case have to be in contact. For when there is nothing between two bodies they must necessarily touch each other.

At the end of the sixteenth century the mayor of Magdeburg, Otto von Guericke, became interested in nothingness. He saw nothingness as a place of wonder and the absolute:

> Everything that is, is within nothingness. And if God were to bring the fabric of the world, which he created, back to nothingness, nothing would remain but that nothingness, the uncreated, just as it was before the beginning of the world. For the uncreated is that which has no beginning, as nothingness is that which has no beginning. Nothingness encompasses all. It is more precious than gold. Strange is its growth and decay. It is more refreshing than the sight of the light, more noble than a king's blood, it is equal to the heavens, higher than all the stars, more powerful than a beam of lightning, it is complete in itself and thoroughly exhilarating. Nothingness is full of all wisdom. Where nothingness is, the power of kings fail. Nothingness alone knows no suffering.

Otto von Guericke was a man captured by the Enlightenment Age: only that which existed was of interest to him, and that which was conceivable could also exist—if it did not, it was to be invented or discovered. If nothingness were conceivable, then it also had to be capable of being produced.He undertook experiments in which he pumped the air out of two compressed hemispheres and thereby invented the vacuum. At an imperial diet in Regensburg he demonstrated the force of vacuum at his own expense by having eight brewery horses each stretch one side of a vacuum ball, which proved that all the power from two-times-eight horses was not enough to separate an empty ball. Only when one freed the ball from the vacuum, the emptiness, and again filled it with air could it be separated by any children's hand.

Based on Guericke's experiments, and with his discovery of vacuum and air pressure, the motor could later be invented, and airplanes could be flown; and because of his calculations of nothingness, rockets can be shot into space today. The natural sciences split away from philosophical reflections and no longer considered the question of the void. The only thing they desired was practical application.

However, the philosophers and thinkers stuck to their question about nothingness and once again either put it on par with the Divine, with the absolute, or denied its existence outright. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: "No living atom comes at last to naught! / Active in each is still the eternal Thought: / Hold fast to Being if thou wouldst be blest." G. W. F. Hegel: "...the Nothing, the first, from which all being and the multiplicity of the finite emerged." Franz Grillparzer: "One cannot conceive of nothingness, for thinking always remains and any idea about nothingness is then really just as an abstraction from the object." Pier Paolo Pasolini: "Whoever desires nothingness, desires power." Martin Heidegger: "Man is a placeholder of nothingness." Karl May: "You null, you nothing, you hole in nature."

In recent years, scientific research and philosophical reflections have once more engaged in a debate about nothingness. In physics there is the unexplained phenomenon of "the spontaneous decay of the neutral vacuum." This means that before an absolute vacuum can be attained, particles are formed in this near-vacuum and disintegrate right before the final one. For this very reason up until today no absolute vacuum has ever been produced. Where these particles come from is a complete mystery; it seems as if they do indeed come from out of nothingness.

There are two theories about this "spontaneous decay of the vacuum" and the origin of particles coming from out of nothingness.

The first theory: if an absolute vacuum could be produced, it would be an empty and godless space. But since a godless space can and must not exist, this space spontaneously disintegrates before it can emerge.

The second theory: if an absolute vacuum could be produced, this empty space would be the seat of God, or even God himself. Each and every person could install a vacuum pump at home and pump out God according to need, desire, and mood. God cannot allow this arbitrariness in his availability and therefore prevents his becoming through the decay of the vacuum into absolute nothingness.

And so the natural sciences, which stepped up to prove to God his limitations, through its efforts to produce a nothingness, in the end, point back to God.

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How the Ahoy Came to Seafaring

or

The Contribution of Sealess Bohemia to Sailing

In 1634 Igor Cleppr from the Bohemian town of Kutná Hora went to sea, and in no time at all his Bohemian greeting and farewell of "Ahoy" rapidly spread to become an independent word for invoking ships in the language of seafaring.

Even as a child Igor Cleppr had a great love for the sea. Again and again he secretly crept into the Baroque Catholic church of his native town to look at the painting of a large ship in distress being rescued by the gracious mother of God. Igor Cleppr's parents belonged to the Hussite faith, so it was not easy for him to go unnoticed in a Catholic church.

In the spring of 1634, just as the month turned into May and Igor Cleppr turned seventeen, he packed his sack, said his goodbyes, took his walking stick, and made his way to Hamburg to be hired on a ship.

Hoeg Dilsen, the captain of the Pride of Deventer, was just preparing the paperwork in order to set sail the following day with a favorable wind. They would be going to Antwerp. It was just a simple cargo trip, but he needed a few quiet, yet strong, hands. Igor Cleppr seemed the right boy for the job.

Igor Cleppr's incessant "Ahoy" quickly earned him the nickname "The Ahoy."

Already within half a year "Ahoy" was heard on other ships. Within three years "Ahoy" became the standard sailor's word for ship greetings and farewells. At the First Conference for the Unification of Civilian Ship Law in Antwerp in 1642, held on the occasion of the shipwreck at Glasgow in 1640, "Ahoy" became the official term for invoking ships.

Igor Cleppr returned to his beloved Kutná Hora in 1652, and everybody marveled at his whale tooth and tamed monkeys. After his death, the whale tooth was given to the Catholic church in Kutná Hora and can still be seen there today.

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Peter Moms, *Contributions of Countries to Ship Sailing*, Munich, 1898.
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The Wasp Honeycomb Collection Point in Kröte

If you ask an art historian specializing in the Baroque about the town of Ludwigslust, first he will speak about the local papier-mâché sculptures, then describe the papier-mâché manufacturer, and finally begin to rave about the Ludwigslust Carton Company.

But very few indeed will know about Gottfried Keiser—Keiser spelled with an E.

Over 200 years ago Arthur Gottfried Keiser of Kröte was a key player in the refinement and transformation of waste paper into art and into sculpture. And, in fact, he is responsible for one of the most important contributions to improving and stabilizing the famous Ludwigslust cardboard: thanks to him, the sculptures could be weatherproofed for the first time.

Under the rule of the art-loving, educated, and god-fearing Frederick the Pious (1717-1785) Ludwigslust, 60 kilometers from Kröte, became a center for the production of papier-mâché sculptures.

Frederick the Pious, Duke of Mecklenburg, moved his residence from Schwerin to Ludwigslust eight years after the death of his father, Duke Christian Ludwig II, and immediately began to turn the old castle into a Baroque palace, to organize the village like a chessboard according to mathematical formulas, and to combine the palace with a magnificent Baroque garden in the French style with many water systems. It is no wonder that the whole castle is known as the "Versailles of Mecklenburg."

Frederick the Pious was engaged in a long-standing feud with Frederick II, King of Prussia. Prussian soldier recruiters regularly intruded into the ducal country to enlist young men, often by force. This angered Frederick the Pious so strongly that on the one hand he entered into an alliance with Sweden and let Swedish troops fighting against the Prussian king pass through Mecklenburg; and on the other he bought back the subjects the Prussian military had kidnapped for great sums of money and set them free again. Legend has it that he spent so much money on the ransom of his stolen subjects, that he had no money left for his castle's expansion nor its decoration with massive sculptures made out of marble or fine woods and metals. The only thing he could afford was papier-mâché sculptures, and thus he soon established his own carton manufacturer.

The papier-mâché sculptures of Ludwigslust quickly became very famous, world famous in fact, and the sculptures made out of old, recycled paper became a major export across Europe.

Early on the Ludwigslust carton was suitable only for indoor installation; however, people soon started using a refined, secret recipe and coating it in high gloss for outdoor installation thereby making it fit for parks and resistant to any kind of rain. To this day only specialists and connoisseurs know that the Ludwigslust sculptures installed in Baroque gardens throughout Europe are made out of cardboard.

This method of making the sculptures weather resistant remained a mystery until very recently, for the recipe had never been written down. In 1835 the demand for cardboard products declined so strongly that the factory was closed down and the knowledge of the papier-mâché recipe lost.

In the Prussian Secret State Archives there is a note mentioning that Kröte, which had six farmsteads in 1776, delivered large amounts of wasp nests to Ludwigslust. A citizen of Kröte named Arthur Gottfried Keiser, Keiser with an E, was responsible for this delivery and is said to have delivered up to 1,000 nests annually. Gottfried Keiser ran a "Wasp Honeycomb Collection Point" where, for a small payment, people could drop off their unwanted wasp nests. He had set up a special wasp-breeding apiary in his barn with around 100 nests. A marginal note in the document states, however, that the reason why the people of Ludwigslust used the wasp nests was unknown.

In 2008 an expert team of restorers from Holland led by the paper restorer Erik Fens succeeded in beginning to unravel the mystery of Ludwigslust carton. They showed that wasps' honeycomb was processed

in every single layer of the cardboard sculptures. Which is to say that in each and every sample they examined they found high concentrations of different material from wasp nests.

That the writings on Ludwigslust can be found in the Secret State Archives in Berlin is due, on the one hand, to the aforementioned hostility between the two Fredericks, as one can easily see; but on the other hand it is also due to the secret that the recycled, printed paper concealed. The Prussians knew that the recycled paper used for the sculptures in Ludwigslust was not only bought from outside, but that it was also their own—in other words, the outdated files, documents, and notes from the ducal firms. The Berliners therefore repeatedly bought Ludwigslust sculptures not because they wanted to exhibit them—recourse to cardboard sculptures was unnecessary for the Prussians—but to take them apart and then reassemble the paper pieces in order to uncover Frederick the Pious's official secrets.

Thus we know more about the business of Frederick the Pious thanks to the restoration of old Ludwigslust papers in the Prussian Secret State Archives than from what is contained in the files of the royal archives in Ludwigslust itself. And we also know about the "Wasp Honeycomb Collection Point" in Kröte.

And where is Kröte exactly? In Wendland, 120 kilometers southeast of Hamburg, in the municipality of Waddeweitz, near the tiny villages of Dickfeitzen and Clenze.

Literature:
Peter Karl, *Paper Spies: On the Being of the Agent*, Hannover, 1961.
Robert Mayer, *Paper, Wasps*, Hamburg, 1957.

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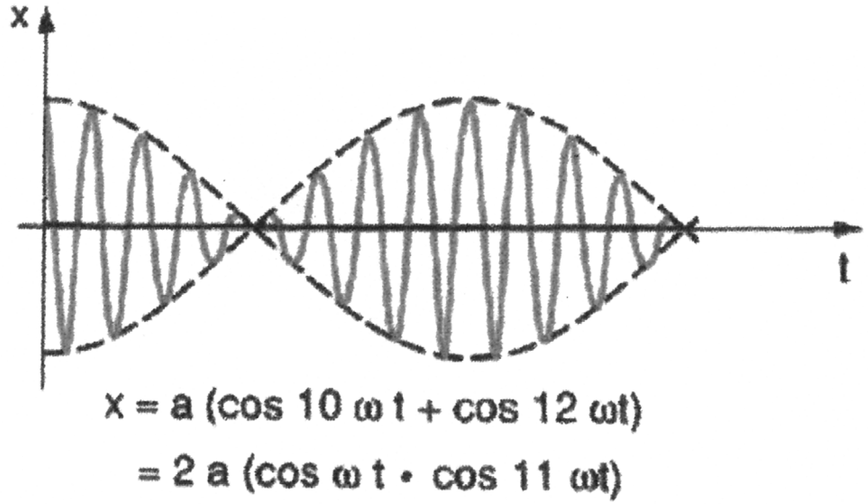

Bruno Retlau and His Tone-Neutralizer or The Audible Silence of Anti-Sound

Destructive interference, also called anti-noise, arises when a sound, tone, or noise—whether pleasant or disturbing—is eliminated. In other words, when a real existing tone or noise is rendered inaudible by another one. The original source of the tone, as well as that of the newly generated one, is not heard.

This physical phenomenon can be explained as follows. Each and every tone and sound is an oscillating wave the depth of which is called amplitude. Now, if an anti-amplitude—in other words, an identical counter oscillation—is applied to the first oscillation, both waves come into balance, are neutralized, and thus are no longer audible. The tones block each other so that no further sound waves can emerge. What is obtained is silence in the truest sense of the word—an audible silence, so to speak, for both the original tone as well as the newly created opposite one.

This audible silence, however, is fundamentally different from simple inaudible silence. In the latter there is no tone, sound, or noise—no amplitude deflection has been made. It is simply an absence of tone. In audible silence not only is a tone present, but it has been doubled, for a new sound, equal in strength and quality, has been set against the original one, albeit in negative form. A doubled sound is virtually present, although neither the original nor the newly emerged one can actually be heard.

Bruno Retlau (1900-1984) was the first person to show interest in this phenomenon. Retlau lived at Number 7 Methfesselstraße in the district of Kreuzberg in Berlin. His friend Konrad Zuse lived two houses away. Bruno Retlau did not live with his parents as Zuse did, however; he had a small independent apartment on the ground floor. But both were somewhat crazy, extremely self-confident, and stubborn engineers. The one wanted to build a general-purpose computer, the other a machine for pure, interference-free audio recording and playback. Zuse had abandoned his promising career in engineering at the Henschel Aircraft Factory where he had met Retlau, ten years his senior. Zuse's parents were skeptical of their son but nevertheless allowed him to tinker with his computer in their living room. Bruno Retlau, on the contrary, had a very small fortune with which he could live more poorly than well. He gave up his job at the Henschel Aircraft Factory a year after Zuse in order to devote himself entirely to the issue of sound recording and playback.

To this day the Methfesselstraße in Kreuzberg is a cobblestone street leading up to a slight, natural hill, which is a rarity in otherwise flat Berlin. Right at the top there stood the old Schultheiss Brewery, which has since been shut down. At one point a real estate agency wanted to convert the brewery site into outrageously expensive apartments and lofts, but they filed for bankruptcy during the first phase of construction so that only an unfinished building remains.

Be that as it may, today no beer carriages rattle up and down the Methfesselstraße as they did every day when Zuse and Bruno Retlau lived there. Many of these beer carriages had iron-banded wheels, which made a fair amount of noise, and the heavy horse-carts with their fittings clattered constantly. This racket annoyed Bruno Retlau to no end. He was highly sensitive to sounds, so he sent petitions to the district office of Kreuzberg to have the road tarred so that the biggest and fiercest vibrations might be absorbed. Nothing happened. His friend Zuse, who lived in Apartment 10 on the third floor, also resented the vibrations, which could be felt even in his flat. And so, both decided to take matters into their own hands.

Zuse wanted to install a device in his apartment that would work against the vibrations. It would be a kind of a centrifugal gyro system oscillating in the opposite direction of the vibrations in the road. Today a similar technique is used for bridges and high-rise buildings. However, he was so busy with his computer that, in the end, his plan amounted to little more than a few drawings and calculations. Things were different for Bruno Retlau. The noise of the beer carriages was difficult to investigate and analyze. Following the theories of Paul Lueg (published in 1933), he undertook attempts to neutralize the noisy street sounds by countering the original sound oscillations with their opposites.These calculations were the first tasks Zuse gave his primordial computer to execute. After Zuse and Bruno Retlau compared the results of their handwritten calculations with great interest, they found out that both the computer as well as Retlau had made mistakes.

With time, however, Bruno Retlau got better at neutralizing sounds, and he sometimes even managed to produce a fairly concentrated and acceptable silence. He installed microphones on the Methfesselstraße, which decreased the sounds produced by the beer carriages. He directed these original tones in a kind of "anti-scope." This device measured the parameters—amplitude, phase, and frequency—of the real wave and generated a new wave with opposite values, which was then sent to large loudspeakers that projected the anti-wave at the coaches. The problem was that electrical impulses had to be processed faster than sound so that the artificial anti-wave could reach the original tone and eliminate it in time. At the trial stage the strangest things happened. At one point only high and painful sounds could be heard, at another the brewery vehicles sounded extremely wood-like. And sometimes the whole street squeaked obnoxiously or simply growled.

To this day some of the street's older residents tell stories of strange noises that could be heard in the Methfesselstraße as well as an almost frightening silence that would occur now and again where you couldn't even hear your own words, let alone the aircraft from the nearby airport of Tempelhof which provided the background noise that people had come to depend on.

During the war Bruno Retlau engaged in homeland service, as he was deemed unfit for service at the front. He came to the town of Grafenau in the Bavarian Forest, settled there, and married the daughter of a cinema owner. All of his equipment as well as the records of his Tone-Neutralizer were destroyed in the 1944 bombing of Berlin. Bruno Retlau enjoyed the silence of the forest where sounds were not as mixed together as they were in the big cities.

He never returned to his hometown.

He lived with his wife Judith at the Kino Delphi. He wrote to his friend Zuse in 1974:

> ...I enjoy the silence of the woods and congratulate you on your success and the belated, but well-deserved, recognition you are receiving today. I still fondly remember our attempts with my crazy calculations and your machine. I, for one, am glad to no longer have to concern myself with sounds...

The inhabitants of Grafenau recall how the sounds and music in Kino Delphi were so intense that people always felt they were sitting right in the midst of actual events. That hissing one remembered from all other cinemas was missing.

Bruno Retlau died in 1984. His wife ran the cinema for the next three years. In 1987 the Kino Delphi was closed, and a branch of a chain drugstore moved in but not before selling all the cinema paraphernalia to a scrap dealer.

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——, *Anti-Noise and the Entertainers*, Berlin, 1982.
Hugo Mayer, *The History of Destructive Interference*, Munich, 2000.
Kreuzberg District Office, Commemorative Plaque in the Methfesselstraße

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The Mystery of the Black Feather

or

The True Life of Artist Fellows in Wiepersdorf

Carl-Johann sat at his desk, nearly a skeleton, already ten pounds lighter than just a few days before. Around him lay empty low-fat cottage cheese boxes and beside him a black chicken feather. "Oh my," he said with fear and surprise, "it's you again. I'd forgotten that it was already Wednesday." At first the cleaning lady, grown patient through multiple insights into the private sphere of others, said nothing; in fact, she did not even look irritated for a second, but this in turn irritated Carl-Johann. How could she not have noticed that he was on the trail of the mystery of the black feather?

He had found the black rooster feather just a little while earlier during a tour of the village and shortly thereafter saw a whole flock of white chickens in a yard. He immediately remembered a shrine he had seen dozens of years before in a basilica high up on a mountain above a bend in the Danube River in Esztergom, Hungary. A black chicken feather embedded in silver, framed by precious stones. Carl-Johann had nothing to do with religion and did not understand it, having been raised as the only child of parents who were purely interested in the here and now. At the time he wondered how people could have ever come up with such an idea, embedding a chicken feather in silver. He later learned that the feather represented the impurity of creation but that impurity also belonged to the white of purity, of virginity, and that one could not exist without the other. The origin of such feather worship was that great Spanish pilgrimage route to the tomb of St. Jacob where a miracle had taken place.

From the moment he found the feather, he could not stop thinking about this. And so he immediately interrupted his work in the hopes of tracking down the feather's secret. He wanted to both know and to learn just what kind of feelings, and in what kind of ways, would make people worship a black chicken feather. The veneration of the black chicken feather had begun in Santo Domingo de la Calzada along the so-called "Camino." So that he could come closer to the pilgrims who were starving, praying, and hiking en route to Santiago de Compostela, Carl-Johann intended to enter into a state of deprivation by following the fast which had been developed by a certain Professor Müller. And thus, as a first step, he bought a lot of low-fat cottage cheese.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century the veneration of the black chicken feather spread throughout Europe. Chicken cages displaying white hens and roosters were set up in many cathedrals, and these hens and roosters were not allowed to have a single black feather. If they did, it was plucked, for only a white chicken symbolized the unity and virginity under which sign the miracle of Santo Domingo de la Calzada had taken place.

The plucked feathers were highly sought after by the faithful for symbolizing impurity and showing that purity first had to be plucked before it could become really pure, that even within purity sin had its place. At first people made fun of such devotion to plucked feathers, but when they became more prized than the white hens and roosters themselves, folks began to throw the black feathers away or to hide them. Very soon quick-minded businessmen began to profit from expensive, certified feathers as well as cheap, uncertified ones. The whole thing became ever more unsettling to the clergy and so they slowly began to remove the chicken cages from the churches once again. The custom has survived until the present day only in Santo Domingo de la Calzada, for it was in this pilgrimage town that, with the active help of St. Domingo, the miracle originally occurred.

Seeing as that Carl-Johann could not make the pilgrimage himself (lacking all the prerequisites as he did—the faith, the devotion, the idea of redemption), he wanted to starve himself and thereby experience castigation. Prof. Müller's cottage cheese diet, which he'd heard warnings about on the radio, could put him in this state of hunger, and through that state of hunger he might get an idea of redemption, or at least redemption from starvation. The cottage cheese diet demanded that the fasting person eat only one container of cottage

cheese per day, spread out over four times, and that they chew precisely twenty-four times for each spoonful. The salivary enzymes in the mouth would do most of the digestive work.

Carl-Johann strictly followed the specifications, counted the number of chews while eating, and consumed nothing other than cottage cheese and water. Day by day he felt hungrier. Soon he began to feel that he was focusing more and more on himself, and less and less on his environment. The only thing that found its way to the center of his attention was the shorter eating process and the lessening of intestinal activity. After four days he felt very close to the pilgrims indeed, sensed the consciousness of the starving, and the delivery of his very being. He often thought about the pilgrim couple Philips from Saities who had belonged to the diocese of Cologne.

This pilgrim couple had set out in 1465 in order to pay tribute to the great St. James, accompanied by their wonderful son Marcus. One July evening, they got a hostel in Santo Domingo de la Calzada. The maid of the hostel liked the handsome son so much that she repeatedly tried to get his attention. He, however, did not react; therefore the rejected girl retaliated by hiding a silver cup in his luggage and in the morning accused him of theft. The cup was discovered and the summoned judge sentenced the innocent boy to death by hanging. In sadness and despair his parents continued on their way to the Apostle's grave.

Upon their return, they passed by the executioner's place and saw that their son was still alive, healthy, and in good spirits even though he still was tied to the hangman's noose. What they did not and could not see was that St. Domingo was beneath him, supporting him on his shoulders. They immediately rushed to the judge who was sitting down to eat a roasted rooster and a roasted hen on the plate in front of him. When he heard the story of their son, he laughed out loud. "Your son is as dead as the chicken on my table! The hen will not cackle, nor the rooster crow." But at that very moment the two animals jumped up from his plate and immediately began to sprout feathers. The cock crowed loudly several times, and the hen scratched and cackled to herself. "In Santo Domingo de la Calzada the chicken crowed after being roasted"—the saying goes today. The boy was immediately released, and the maid was hanged in his place.

Ever since then a vaulted niche decorated in honor of this great miracle and known as "El Gallinero" (the chicken coop) has stood in the Cathedral of Santo Domingo de la Calzada in the right wing of the transept. There, up to this very day, a white hen and a white rooster are kept. Every three weeks they are replaced, and each is thoroughly investigated to make sure it has neither black feather nor fluff to disturb its purity. Opposite the chicken coop hangs a piece of wood from the gallows with the sign: "Esta madera es de la horca del pelegrino" (This wood is from the gallows of the pilgrim). The miracle with the chickens became so popular that, by virtue of the event, the rooster was later named the national animal of Spain.

Carl-Johann was very close to attaining the feeling that such legends create when the cleaning lady came into his room, and, after a long silence, said to him clearly: "You look famished. Go to the kitchen. There's something left over from lunch today that you can warm up." Carl-Johann knew that he had to leave his room for two hours, and the cleaning woman's clear, contrary, and negative tone made him go into the kitchen. And indeed a wonderful and warm dish awaited him there, which he ate with great pleasure: marinated chicken with hoisin sauce, vegetables, and rice.

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On the Beginning of Light and On the End of Vegetarianism

In 1969 the great Fluxus artist and engineer George Brecht (1926-2008) made the proposal to relocate England to the Caribbean for five years in order to democratize the average amount of sunlight exposure between continents. He made drawings to show how this could be done and also found a nice location for the UK to be anchored. The plan, however, was not carried out.

In his proposal George Brecht referred to Geo-Cadence research, a geospatial theory of harmony in which it is assumed that all nature strives toward harmony and balance. High-pressure strives toward low-pressure, alkaline strives toward acid, and so forth.

It was only with the establishment of Geo-Cadence research at the end of the twentieth century—to which, it must be stated, the Bielefeld sociologist Dietmar Badger contributed considerably—that the laws of Geo-Cadence were detected in almost all phenomena, and the tectonics of the Earth's crust became comprehensible.

The continental plates of the north strive for the warmer south, and the southern plates aim for a bit of the cooler northern regions. Already Alfred Wegener (1880-1930), the discoverer and pioneer of plate tectonics, had suspected that a goal-oriented force had to lie behind continental drift.

On the basis of this science of balancing, of harmony, which is very similar to the Asian idea of balancing forces, one can understand why Kröte, that quiet and resilient town in Wendland in the North German Lowlands, had remained on the equator for such a long time.

The small village of Kröte with its thirty inhabitants lay on the equator for almost 150 million years. From the Cambrian to the end of the Devonian Period, in fact, long before the supercontinent of Pangea arose, Kröte lay on the equator and intended to stay put. It belonged to the small but autonomous continent of Baltica and, even when all the earth's plates moved and the continent of Baltica gave up its independence to form the continent Laurussia with North America, Kröte continued to cling on to the equator.

Kröte was located on the southwestern continental shelf on a lagoon by the ocean. There the ocean would have been heard; if there had been fish, one would have seen them swimming in the waters; if there had been animals on the land, they would have peacefully come and gone along the beach. But, instead, it was a bare, sandy, rocky, and desolate place. No palm trees grew in Kröte, not a single plant greened its shores. Nothing at all existed in the whole dry world just then. The only plants that were there grew in the sun-flooded water.

And it just so happened that on the beach of Kröte some plants had to choose whether they would die out on account of the lagoon which was constantly drying up or adapt to the new waterless, arid, and airy way of life.

Kröte's decision was a long time in the making, a few million generations in fact, but then, suddenly, the earth was green, plants evolved out of the water, changed shape, and their stalks grew in size from small to huge. Horsetail forests emerged. Clubmoss forests.

But the greening of the world was not the only thing to emerge from the Bay of Kröte. Following the Geo-Cadence theory, the continent of Baltica would by that point have drifted to the north in order to cool off and to obtain harmony. But that did not happen. The expanded Geo-Cadence theory, however, holds that what becomes compensated is not only heat, but social affairs as well. Here from Kröte the greening of the world emanated in a wondrous manner. But something else was needed, something which could neutralize the beautiful and compensate for the harmony. Thus emerged the eye, with which radiation was converted into light, and with which sight was made possible.

Previously there had only been cell organisms plodding along, bacteria and micro-organisms that drew their power from exposure to the sun and from sediment being washed about hither and thither and occasionally, when in their blindness encountering other cells, snapping shut to eat them. But then the first creatures to be endowed with eyes arose, compound eyes, which are still common among insects today. The first known eye appeared in the trilobite.

At that point it was all over with coziness. It was now possible to see the splendor of the green earth, true, but sight also awakened greed. Potentially delicious others could be detected, were found to indeed be tasty, and, on top of it, very nutritious. Vegetarianism was thereby out. The tasty ones now had to quickly obtain eyes in order to be able to avoid the craving ones or at least to be able to flee. Some grew thick armor as protection, others grew large teeth to be able to crack the shells. A spiraling movement of rearmament was built and established. "Thou shalt not crave thy neighbor…"—that was a much, much later development.

Now a balance had been achieved, the beautiful green compensated for the mechanism of eat-or-be-eaten. Kröte had lain on the equator long enough and in all respects had imposed a lasting effect upon the Earth; it could now drift to the north.

It took another 300 million years for Kröte to get to the place where it is today.

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Why the Ear-Slitting Surgeon Mathias Gotthilf Lauphner Is Also Called the "Father of Plastic Surgery" or How the Correction of Ear-Slits Helped Middleclass Women to Attain a Second Beauty

During the first great imperial legal investigation in 1485 it was discovered that, after having expiated their deserved punishment in a particular region, many wrongdoers, rogues, and thieves would move on to other cities and areas where they were unknown in order to continue their dubious activities. For this reason people increasingly began to brand such riff-raff or to cut their earlobes with one or more slits. As a result, these people became marked and visible to all.

This method of ear-marking, however, already had a long and successful disciplinary history in Christian seafaring. Defiant, contentious, and peace-disturbing sailors would have their obligatory golden earring torn violently from their earlobes so that only a painful ear slit remained. In the case of the sailor's drowning, his ripped-away ring was originally worn to guarantee the body a Christian burial once it washed anonymously onto shore as, being made of gold, it would cover the funeral expenses. But without these earrings the drowned body would be buried on the beach where it was found. The prospect of such an un-Christian end terrified everyone. Furthermore, an earmarked man would no longer be hired on any ship. Even in civilian life people would quickly note a mark on the ear. When you encountered such a "slit-ear rascal" you immediately knew whom you were dealing with: a ne'er-do-well up to no good.

This successful method of punishment soon spread throughout the free cities of the north. Scammers, swindlers, and false preachers were punished in this way "so that they would immediately be recognized as such in other places too."

However, the further south one went, the more unusual this form of punishment became. There was, you might say, a sort of natural slit-ear border. Most often ear-slitting was imposed to the north of the Main River but rarely, if ever, to the south of it.

Opponents of this kind of punishment argued that such injuries could also occur from accidents at work—for instance, from woodcutting or horse-shoeing—or from diseases known to disfigure ears. One text from 1488 described fifty-six possible ways the ear could be disfigured through injury. How were people to be able to distinguish brave men from evil ones without mistreating the former? A pamphlet from 1510 demanded, "as, however, one cannot do an evil person wrong, for the sake of justice, it would be better to just hang him immediately..."

For all the rightly or wrongly marked people help, however, could be found in the small Swabian imperial city of Memmingen.

Mathias Gotthilf Lauphner, born in 1498 in Lindau, resident barber surgeon in Memmingen, specialized in skin lesions. His masterful art of stitching with fresh catgut and fixing with resin glue so that after healing no visible scar remained was unparalleled. In fact, he mastered this art so well that he was once accused of witchcraft; but, as it turned out, the plaintiff had simply not paid his own bills, and so the charges were dropped, the plaintiff convicted, and he himself was physically marked as a result.

Memmingen was proud of their famous barber surgeon, otherwise known as their slit-ear surgeon. Indeed, people came from all around to be treated by Mathias Gotthilf Lauphner.

It must be recalled that it was strictly forbidden to recompose an ear that had been slit by court order; however, fixing an ear that had been injured in a work accident was considered good and just as innocent citizens were to be protected from the inconveniences that a slit-ear would justifiably give them.

In order to register for ear-slit correction surgery with M.G. Lauphner the patient had to submit a notarized letter from two independent notaries proving that the ear had indeed been injured in an accident. Furthermore, the accident had to be described in detail and officially confirmed witnesses had to be named.

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At that time Memmingen had the highest density of established notaries in all the southern German cities (and you could be sure that the most magnificent houses in town belonged to them).

M.G. Lauphner employed twelve assistants at a sufficient wage who were then allowed to start their own businesses after seven years of training.

The success of his art resulted in him being increasingly urged to apply the art of surgical correction to aging women in the city as well.

And this he did. After his first tentative trials on the neck, he greatly improved his method and began to venture into corrective operations on the visible areas of the face. When the mayor's wife proudly appeared one day at Sunday mass with near-unwrinkled face, M.G. Lauphner became swamped with new registrations.

This, however, resulted in the religious authorities' immediate objection, for they felt it was arrogant for man to change what God had created. Such vain embellishment was the expression of old beliefs, of the ostentatious Catholic, they said, and could not be reconciled with the new, pure, reformed faith.

M.G. Lauphner, who unfortunately did not record his art in writing, did nevertheless pass on his knowledge and skills to his disciples and apprentices and thus the art of fine skin corrections that emerged from Memmingen spread all throughout Europe. M.G. Lauphner died in 1576, highly regarded and respected—i.e., wealthy—in Memmingen.

In 1597, the surgeon Gaspare Tagliacozzi from Bologna described for the first time the technique of plastic and reconstructive surgery, referring expressly to the students of Master Lauphner from Memmingen. Dottor Tagliacozzi specialized in truncated noses, which he fixed through a complicated, and rather painful, process. At that time the punishment of truncating noses was applied to miserable adulterers and delinquent prostitutes.

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0.002g

How Curt Friedrich Ernst von Watzdorf, the Hussar of Wiesenburg, Pulled His Belt so Tight That It Tore or How a Figure of Speech Became a Survival Strategy

At the beginning of the twentieth century two new phrases appeared in everyday German: "to tear one's belt" and "to be in a state of shock." Both terms come from the language of the military and both terms describe a psychological process. "To tear one's belt" means "to pull oneself together." The person in question is not to indulge his feelings, his momentary emotions, but is instead to overcome and orient himself towards what is "higher" rather than that which is fleeting. It is an appeal to oneself to deny one's own tenderness for the purpose of attaining something better.

The word "shock" describes a condition in which "tearing one's belt" does not help, where feelings and experiences can no longer be organized, where the "shocked" person can no longer orient himself, where all previous experiences and coping mechanisms have failed. It is a state of great mental upheaval that is often associated with somatic responses.

Not coincidentally both terms first appeared during the First World War. Traditional medicine could no longer deny the power of the psyche described by Sigmund Freud as it had managed to do so well previously. With the recognition of a psyche, however, for the first time progressive doctors could describe the state they had previously observed in railroad collisions: the sudden, total change of a person, without any external traumatization, following an accident. The doctors observed the same symptoms in soldiers during wartime and described the condition as "shock." They took the term from a battle formation of the Middle Ages. A "shock" was that living wall of spear-carriers that would walk toward the enemy in close formation. The impact of two shocks mutually protected by shields was often so great that the staggering soldiers fell over without having even been stung—and this condition began to be known as having been "shocked."

During the First World War for the first time soldiers were designated as unfit for battle due to a "state of shock" and returned to the home front. The condition, the notion itself, was filed for the first time, and in large numbers, under this name.

The phrase "tearing one's belt" became popular around the same time as the notion of "shock." Indeed, some medical historians see it as a reaction to "shock." "Tearing one's belt" was mostly used by doctors who thought little of "shock" and such things that appealed to the outlandish psychic life of the soldiers. They were of the opinion that the soldiers who suffered from so-called "shock" were only effeminate cowards. One simply had to "tear one's belt" and return to a usable shape, even if only to die to the glory of the German fatherland in one of the trenches. That end was preferable to the feminization that would doubtlessly occur in an asylum where that cowardly body would have opportunity to rest and live on dishonorably while the enemy grew stronger.

"Tear your belt" was first heard in Germany from fathers returning from the war. They introduced it so that for their families, and especially for their sons, the lost war would continue and—at least privately—be won. The phrase itself originated with a regiment of Prussian Hussar Guards who had in reality not played any role in the recent war at all, seeing as it had been the first industrially led one in which attrition warfare became more decisive than the Hussars' prowess.

The commander of the Prussian Hussar Guard Regiment during the Franco-German War of 1870-71, Curt Friedrich Ernst von Watzdorf, invented the process of "tearing one's belt," a method that he had employed quite successfully upon himself and later propagated to his subordinates.

Curt Friedrich Ernst von Watzdorf was a person of subtle and delicate feelings. "Oh, if only I had just two souls within my breast," he liked to paraphrase Goethe repeatedly, but he was also a true warhorse when it came to leading his regiment.

One of his main passions was the Wiesenburg Castle he had inherited in the High Fläming region and, in particular, the gardens and the pheasantry he had begun there. His enthusiasm for plantings in his garden at Wiesenburg drove him across Europe on the search for new and increasingly rare seedlings, which he then handed over to his talented forester Carl Gebbers for cultivation in the English style. Today his garden is regarded as the most beautiful between Wörlitz and Potsdam. In fact, many connoisseurs prefer his garden to others due to its diversity, sophistication, and peculiarities.

A second—and life-defining—passion of von Watzdorf's was his love, albeit an unrequited one. His beloved, as is often the case, had been promised to a man of higher standing. Von Watzdorf had met the "Württemberg princess"—whose name to this day remains a mystery—at a young age in Kannstadt (known as "Bad Cannstatt" since 1030) where they promised each other eternal love and mutual fidelity. In fact, his decision to rebuild the Wiesenburg Castle was for her; to give her, the princess who would be marrying below her station out of love, an adequate home.

However, one day a secret letter arrived from the Württemberg court informing him that nothing could come of this love, for the princess was not free to decide whose wife she would be. She did not belong to herself, as had become customary amongst the lower classes, but to the well-being of her gender and, in any event, had been engaged for a long time. He was to refrain from any further feelings towards her. The letter had been written in the ordinary tone of command as befit the high nobility speaking to the lower and had been signed by one Walter Ulrich. Von Watzdorf destroyed the letter as instructed in the postscript.

Franz Hardenburg, with whom von Watzdorf connected through his third passion, that of serving His Majesty as Hussar, wrote in his memoirs:

> My friend Kurt [referring to Curt Friedrich Ernst von Watzdorf] was silent for three days, did not eat any food, and staggered upright as those fatally wounded in war occasionally do who then show no respect for the flag, only to honorably fall over shortly thereafter. The letter seemed to have hit him like a bullet in the field, or a sword blow in battle. It seems to me that it was then that his subsequent illness, which he hid from me for a long time, began...

Fourteen days after von Watzdorf acknowledged having received the letter, he had to attend a scheduled military exercise at the nearby town of Jüterbog. He was worried and scared. How could he appear attentive and stand up straight before his regiment as their role model? How could he ask his subordinates to be powerful during the exercise when he himself could only stand there tottering, hunched over and dejected, sunk into himself and suffering?

He put on his uniform—he had lost weight over the previous two weeks—pulled his belt tight, ran the narrower strap across his upper body, and looked in the mirror. He looked flabby, and his belt hung forlornly down.

There was no way he could show up like that. Reporting sick was not an option—a von Watzdorf had never called in sick. He palmed his belt smooth and pulled it tighter; then he suddenly became angry with himself and, in so doing, noticed that he had automatically straightened himself up, that he had come to attention as a reflex.

This was the first time a man had ever assumed correct military posture by tearing his belt and had felt better thereafter because of it; regaining control of himself again, overcoming his softness and effeminateness, once again becoming a man, strapping, upright, ready and tough, assertive with himself and with others.

Von Watzdorf overcame the subsequent four-week exercise rather well. Any time he felt depressed, every time his beloved inadvertently crept into his thoughts, each time his garden began to take shape in his mind,

he pulled his belt tight and immediately found his mental and physical bearing change. This constantly reappearing, and unsettling, tenderness was set straight; he stood tall and once again became a Hussar, a master of the sword, and an exemplary leader of his soldiers.

He decided that what had helped him was also to help his soldiers. And so in due turn at morning roll call people soon began to hear his cry "tear your belts!" on a regular basis and all would stand straight as a pin.

Back in his castle he discussed the latest plantings with his botanically-minded forester, planned the latest modifications with his architect Hense, and rejoiced over an ever more prosperous pheasantry, which by 1875 could already boast more than 450 pheasants.

And yet, he suffered from his unrequited love and, for that very reason, vowed over and over again to transform his castle into something truly special, to make his garden magnificent. A place of love, beauty, and form as a testament of his affection for the princess of his heart. But every now and then, when he was overtaken by anxiety, overwhelmed by beauty, form, and love, he would put on his uniform and pull his belt tight in order to once again become his own master.

But then, one day, a slight tremor began. He was diagnosed with a neuralgic nerve disorder. His nervous trembling and subsequent sporadic paralysis of a nonspecific nature were considered incurable. One day it was the hand, the next it was the leg, then the thigh would suddenly begin to itch for days, or half of his face would go numb.

Before his fellow Hussars he would pull himself together at ever-shorter intervals. Nevertheless, he enthusiastically took part in the victorious war against the French between 1870-71 and was duly celebrated. What could not be seen from the outside, and what he himself did not even perceive, was a growing fatigue from the increasingly necessary pulling of his belt.

His nerve disorders grew steadily worse and more and more noticeable, so one day he received a bravery medal and bid his beloved Hussars farewell. Nonetheless he remained a consultant Hussar of the guard until his death.

As his illness got worse, he took to using a cane. He repeatedly tried pulling the belt even more tightly, but it had ceased having the desired effect. He became very active in the renovations of his castle and the expansion of his garden, and even when he could no longer leave his bed, he still gave daily reports and managed to see the method of belt-tightening recorded in a textbook on modern military service.

He died, too young and too soon, in 1880 after a long illness. In his final, intense discussions with his priest, he is said to have spoken repeatedly about the advantages and disadvantages of belt pulling. When on his deathbed they wanted to give him his belt, however, he waved his hand and said: "Let it be, it has already been pulled enough" (which was followed by a long pause). "My belt is torn, alas, it was pulled too much, too much," and he fell asleep exhausted. His servant looked puzzledly at the belt and, sure enough, noticed that the leather patch that had long held its parts together was torn.

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0.002g

The Olive Oaks (Quercus Olivae) of Wiepersdorf or Were the Crossing Experiments of the Baron Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde Successful?

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"It must work out!" This was the brief message that Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde (1848-1891) wrote on a postcard to Baron von Grudtwitz in the autumn of 1891, just four months before his own death. Von Grudtwitz immediately understood this short, almost desperate message full of defiant conviction. The two had met on a trip to Italy near Lake Como.

Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde, who died at a young age, was the grandson of the poet-couple Bettina and Achim von Arnim. He took over the management of their familial estate in Wiepersdorf in Berlin after completing law school in 1870. As a young man he had already felt attracted to the fine arts, and so he decided to study art history in Berlin that same year. After being admitted to the course of studies, he felt that he not only wanted to deal with art, but to create it and to be called a painter. And so he went to Munich, the then capital of academic painting, to study historical paintings. In the early summer of 1872 the twenty-four-year-old painter traveled to Italy for the first time and immediately fell in uncompromising love with the beautiful country and its treasures of art. During this first trip to Italy, he decided to convert his estate in Wiepersdorf into a very modern neo-Baroque style and to devote his garden to Italian sculptures.

He brought back three Italian vases from this trip. In 1877, after the expansion and cultivation of his triaxial studios on the north side of the manor in Wiepersdorf, while on a new journey to Italy (now already his fourth) he purchased a statue of Jupiter and several more vases. In order to give his sculptures a worthy environment, he built a sweeping terrace, lowering the front of the structure, and created a middle bed so that his existing and still expanding sculptural decoration might find a dignified, staged, and prestigious frame.

Inspired by the great landscape gardener Fürst Pückler, whom he both knew and worshipped as a teenager, he began to plant trees, paying particular attention to the visual axes in his Wiepersdorf Park. He was especially enthusiastic about oaks and in particular those that existed in Italy: the evergreen oak (*Quercus ilex*) and the sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*).

Between the years 1888 and 1889 Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde built a one-story orangery on the southern side of his park to grow olive trees of the varieties Cerignola, Ligurine, and Kugano. But he desired not only to breed olive trees but to cross them with the native oak. The newly created tree would be named the Olive Oak (*Quercus olivae*). The aforementioned letter to Baron von Grudwitz refers to this very endeavor, and it was thus that Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde spread his convergence theory to his followers.

This theory maintains that, in order for us to recognize their significance, plants must be observed by their outer appearance because a close examination of plants and the precise detection of the inner value systems would result in having to take into account the traditional historical significance, accordance, lineages, and relationship of plant species. This theory arose in opposition to the scientific exploration of nature which had by then established itself and condemned it as cold, dissecting, and ahistorical rather than analytical.

Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde recognized great similarities between oaks and olives. Not only were the fruits amazingly similar, but he also found that both trees were well over a thousand years old, and that they both were known for their great mythological significance. The Germanic tribes had consecrated the oak to the thunder god Thor and in Greece it was sacred to the lightening tosser Zeus. The branches of the olive tree have been used as a symbol of peace since time immemorial and the oak branch as a symbol of mourning for fallen heroes. Both trees are revered as trees of life and the world.

Furthermore, the fruits of both trees are sought after as food, one for humans and the other for pigs. A tasty oil can be made from the fruit of the olive while from the fruit of the oak a tasty, coffee-like drink. Because of these and other clear and unequivocal accordances, Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde was certain that crossbreeding, though difficult, would indeed be possible. He considered the sessile oak and Liguria olive as appropriate candidates for such experiments.

He began his first experiments by trying different parallel crossing methods. He crossbred through the pollination of flower pollen, root grafting, truncal spreading, and, most promising of all, fruit integration. The first seedlings he feverishly awaited arose from truncal spreading and pollination and looked like any normal oak seedlings. He cherished and cared for five of the most seemingly robust before putting them in open land in the fall of 1890. In February 1891, Achim, the baron of Arnim-Bärwalde, died without any heirs. His eldest cousin Erwin von Arnim (1862-1928) took over the property and brought the garden to completion in accordance with the existing plans.

Erwin von Arnim, who continued to live at his castle in Zernikow, allowed the villagers of Wiepersdorf to collect the acorns and feed them to their pigs. This unwritten law turned into a common law and has remained so until today. The five seedlings of the crossbreeding experiment grew into large oaks that survived many storms, some very cold and frosty winters, poverty, hunger, and, last but not least, the Russian occupation of the castle and the expropriation of the manor.

Nevertheless, the peasants of Wiepersdorf continued to collect the acorns in the garden no matter who happened to be in the castle or what kind of weather there was in order to feed them to their pigs. In 1956 an agricultural cooperative to breed pigs was created more or less voluntarily.

The local pigs continued to devour the acorns from the garden, which, however, was now officially called "The Recreational Area of the Intelligentsia." The pork of the agricultural cooperative of Wiepersdorf, which from the outset was particularly tasty, was considered the best in East Germany and designated as being above average in all socialist gourmet guides. The meat was described as mild, spicy, pleasantly salty, not too dry, and was thus honored repeatedly with medals and other awards. At state receptions in Berlin, pigs from Wiepersdorf were requested regularly.

The cooperative pig farm was liquidated in 1992 and discontinued in 1995. In the neighboring village of Werbig, Hybrid-Pig-Breeding Ltd. has since been trying to revive Wiepersdorf's tradition but, to date, has not come anywhere close to reaching the quality of the Wiepersdorf pigs.

In the autumn of 2003, as part of a cataloguing of oak trees in Brandenburg, the oaks of Wiepersdorf Castle (today an artist residency) were examined. Professor Bengas of the Institute of Digital Plant Systematology in Potsdam noticed that some of the mature acorns of the sessile oak there were surprisingly black. The investigations could not detect any deviation from already known sessile oaks. Only once a DNA analysis had been arranged did it emerge that the doublehelix DNA structure of these black acorns had a purine that was foreign to the sessile oak. Through data matching, this purine was detected in the "Liguria" type of olives. Since then an argument has erupted among experts as to whether Achim von Arnim–Bärwalde's attempts at crossbreeding were successful or whether these small changes in DNA should even be considered a crossbreed at all. Furthermore, should the five oak trees in Wiepersdorf now be referred to as a new species, that is, as olive oaks (*Quercus olivae*)? Or was it all an accident, a whim of nature that cannot be repeated?

Every autumn the acorns of the Wiepersdorf oaks continue to grow in the castle garden but are seldomly collected by the villagers anymore. Only now and again one of the artists staying at the castle, lost in his or her thoughts, will slip or roll on one of them and so arrive head over heels to other thoughts.

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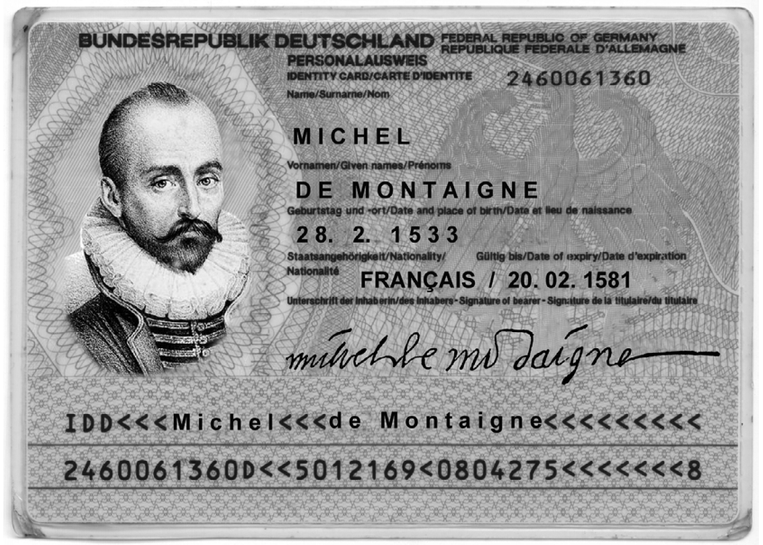

From the Gift-Portrait to the Passport Photo

or

Mssr. Michel de Montaigne's Modern ID Card

"The Germans are very fond of coats of arms; in every inn you will find hundreds that gentlemen who have lodged there have had painted on the walls; and all the windows are decorated with these emblazonments."

his remark was penned by the great French philosopher, humanist, skeptic, and founder of the literary art form of the essay Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) on the occasion of his stopping in Augsburg en route to Italy.

For any inn such coats of arms were the greatest honor and ornament. In those days it was customary for a gentleman who had been satisfied with his accommodation to leave behind his coat of arms in painted form. These then were proudly displayed as a means of showing future guests who before them had gladly spent time there.

At that time a person's identity was determined by a coat of arms and by their clothing. The blacksmith from Celle was recognized in Brunswick as a blacksmith from Celle because of his typically Cellian clothes as well as their being marked with the insignia of his profession. Even the person's name was of only limited importance in terms of how he was addressed—the blacksmith from Celle was usually only addressed as "blacksmith from Celle." The coats of arms of the higher classes were rather clear and showed that the person came from a higher class and that they belonged to a particular gender. Those who had to go on trips exhibited certified letters on their coats of arms and on their clothes so that people would recognize their persons. For the most part, such signs of identity were issued by border officials and cost a fee.

As travel began to increase in Europe in the sixteenth century, roads got increasingly better, coaches more convenient, and attacks on travelers less frequent. People everywhere grew curious about traveling, not only for business, but to get to learn about things outside of their own surroundings.

This increasing desire to travel in turn resulted in an increasing number of coats of arms presented in inns, as described by Montaigne above.

In order to stand out, however, certain very wealthy gentlemen began to leave behind gift-portraits. These gift-portraits would depict them next to their personal coats of arms. Since the preparation of one's own portrait was an expensive and time consuming task, only the wealthy and influential could leave behind such images in appreciation.

Indeed, we owe our current knowledge as to the appearance of many important contemporaries of the time to the existence of such gift-portraits.

On September 5, 1580, Michel de Montaigne departed with a large travel group from Beaumont, in the north of Paris, en route to Rome. His intention was to kneel before the Pope, to have his bladder trouble treated in Lucca, and then to return home to his tower in order to withdraw back into writing.

Throughout the trip the group repeatedly suffered long delays related to the preparation of the required documents. This harassment was conducted for many reasons. At one point, because of plague prevention, they were informed that a health certificate had to be prepared right then and there, and that the officer in charge was ready at the checkpoint. Another time, in order to make it easier to track down a group of criminals, complicated ID papers had to be prepared that by that very evening would, however, no longer be valid. Censuses were also very popular, and accurate information regarding the reasons for the trip had to be presented as well as officially confirmed. All in all, however, Montaigne observed that these measures seemed to serve only one purpose: to get money out of the traveler's pocket.

Michel de Montaigne began his journey with fifteen gift-portraits, which he would leave as additional gifts in those inns he had found particularly comfortable. Today, two of these portraits remain in the old German imperial city of Augsburg. One was left behind at the Zum Morgenstern Hotel, the second entrusted to the engraver Julius H. Greiderle.

At a dinner honoring Montaigne and his fellow travelers, served by seven uniformed waiters and consisting of at least fourteen types of local wine, Montaigne learned what was being planned and discussed in the city. This appealed to him very much. He heard, among other things, that thanks to the initiative of Augsburg, the free cities of the German states were considering making travel easier by means of a unique personal identification card that was to be recognized in all cities. This card was to be richly and abundantly decorated and thus difficult to imitate and was to list the person's most important data so that they could be distinguished from all others.

This important document was also to include a portrait of the designated person that was to correspond to reality as much as possible and thus also be done without any of the usual attempts at beautification. This personal-document was to be issued and authenticated by the cities themselves and thereafter to be recognized in all the German states while providing free transit and obligatory protection.

Montaigne immediately requested such a pass, and the councilors referred him to the engraver Julius H. Greiderle who was just then designing a pattern. Montaigne's secretary gave the engraver one of the former's gift-portraits so that the so-called "passport picture" of Mssr. de Montaigne could then be applied to the card.

Shortly before his departure on October 19, 1580, the City Council handed Montaigne his card, complete with his full name and a very lifelike portrait. Montaigne thanked and congratulated the councilors of Augsburg for this Personal ID. He was filled with pride to be the first person with just such an ID card because, he knew, the future was to belong to them.

As usual, however, the imperial cities could not agree on a single ID card. Each city wanted their own, and the princes boycotted the idea altogether. So, after four rounds of negotiations, the whole thing was shelved.

It was not until over 300 years later, in the wake of World War I, that such an ID card was introduced. People were given a piece of paper describing them in every possible way and upon which had been placed an image of their faces using the new technology of photography.

Michel de Montaigne's German ID card was heavily damaged in a devastating housefire in 1885 but was reconstructed in 2005 by the restorer Meike Mentjes in Berlin.

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How a Waving Cat Lost Her Body but Her Arm Did Not Lose Its Effect

Effect

Haru Yamada strolled through the early afternoon street feeling dejected and withdrawn. It was the third job he had lost in the last six months. Before that he had been a clerk in a shipping company for seven years until the company was sold. The new owner had only kept the driver.

Sunk into his empty thoughts and feeling rather hopeless and useless, he kicked anything that got in his way to the side. What was he supposed to say to his wife, how would his son look at a father who could not find any work, how was he supposed to go on? He kicked whatever was in his way to the side, not out of the aggressive need to make something else atone for his predicament and give him a clear path, but so that at least his feet would have something to do, so that they would not be like him: jobless, depressed, a good for nothing. How would he ever find a job?

Once again he felt like kicking something, carelessly, blindly, and it was then that he caught a glimpse of the single waving arm of a cat—*maneki-neko*—a bodiless arm lying in the dirt road. Yamada stood there mechanically and abruptly, without thinking or paying attention, and not very perceptive about what it was he was looking at. "Ah," he thought, "who threw away this waving cat's arm here? How lonely it must be." He bent down and put it into his pocket. It was not a beautiful arm; it was scratched, broken, dirty, and bitten. No doubt it had remained unnoticed for days, if not weeks, there on the road. Very faintly, in the far corner of his eye, Haru Yamada saw a Persian cat slowly turn a corner and disappear.

A few days later, once he had told everything to his wife and hinted to his son that he had no job and that he no longer knew how to proceed, he received a call from a vegetable wholesaler who inquired whether he could help them out. They wanted to know if he would have the time to assist with bookkeeping for five weeks.

His wife found the arm of the waving cat in her husband's jacket pocket and, smiling with amusement, placed it in the living room closet behind a glass door.

Yamada's new job at the vegetable wholesaler was so satisfactory that, after the initial five weeks, he got a permanent position and after a year and half became a senior buyer. Mr. Yuto Hatake, the owner of "Shinsen Yasai"—which simply means "Fresh Vegetables"—was not so young anymore; as he was very happy with Haru Yamada, he entrusted him with more and more work. In his sixth year Yamada became Mr. Hatake's assistant, and the latter increasingly withdrew into retirement. Over the following years, Haru Yamada singlehandedly led the company with great success. He introduced new operating structures that allowed the company to grow even more.

When the company already had over one hundred employees, supplying the whole area with fresh vegetables, the old Mr. Yuto Hatake summoned his employee Haru Yamada to talk to him about the future. Mr. Hatake said: "Yamada-san, I am now too old for the business. I have no children, and I have taken you on as a son. I want you to take over the company now."

The first thing Mr. Haru Yamada placed on his new boss's desk was the arm of the waving cat. It had been lying under a glass case on a yellow cushion. He was convinced that he owed all of his happiness and wealth to this waving cat arm alone.

On his 70th birthday he handed the company over to his son and worked together with one of the leading architects in Japan to design the plans for the buiding of a large Shinto shrine in honor of the arm. Today, many years later, this shrine attracts thousands of people annually who bring their devotion to the auspicious, disembodied arm of the waving cat, and ask for happiness and prosperity.

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Events

Hayato had already been locked in his room for half a year, refusing to go to school, refusing to even go to the door of his parents' house. One day, however, when no one was at home, he slipped out to a nearby park. Hayato was not thinking about his fifteen-year life; he would soon be sixteen, but that didn't matter to him, because nothing did. He sat on a bench and stared of into space, but could not do anything. He did not even feel bored; even that was too exhausting. He just sat there and sometimes held his head in his hands. If someone had come over and seen him, they would have thought that the young man was thinking about something, mulling over something—homework, maybe. As he sat there, disinterested, a cat crept to him, slipped around his legs, rubbed against him, and squeezed itself between his feet. Still Hayato did not respond.

Suddenly the cat began to talk. "You're Hayato. I see you often from the tree outside your window as you sit in your room. You seem not to understand the world of humans in the same way I don't understand the world of cats. Are you here in the park every day now?" Hayato did not answer. The cat waited a moment then said "See you later." She rubbed against his left leg one more time, and left.

Over the next few days Hayato avoided looking out his window, even slightly. After seven days, when once again no one was at home, he went back to the park and sat down on the bench. It was not long before the cat snuggled up to his legs and began to speak. "I don't understand cats. I've travelled far and wide in my life and have met cats from all continents. I've observed the Japanese ones here very closely, but have understood them the least. I'm a Persian cat and am always left alone—they don't even notice me, even though they meddle in everything else, including the affairs of humans. At some point I'll tell you what I've been through." She rubbed Hayato's left leg again, went behind his back, and disappeared into the bushes.

Three days later, as Hayato sat down on the bench, the cat dashed up to his legs and told him about her cat life. Hayato came now almost every day. He never said anything, but the Persian cat did not seem to mind. She never introduced herself to him, just as he never uttered a single word. She told him about cats from all over the world, how they were all self-willed, self-contradictory, solitary, and yet, at the same time, how they wanted to be together with others but how they never cared about anything. How they could not endure changes and, being pedantic, rejected everything new just to jump immediately onto something new.

One day the Persian cat talked about Japanese cats. She said that normal cats could suddenly change into cat monsters, into *bakenekos*, and steal dead people, occupying their spirits and directing them like zombies. She spoke about *nekomatas*, cats that had a split tail, walked on two legs, and were very, very evil. And about how the fire-cat *kasha* stole human corpses before they were buried, then dragged them down into hell. Above all, she told him just how much *kasha* hated *maneki-neko*, the waving cat who brings luck and prosperity—and especially its eternally waving arm.

Then one day the Persian cat told Hayato about a fight she had seen. Two evil monster cats, a *bakeneko* and a *nekomata*, instigated by *kasha*—who never leaves her fiery chariot—ambushed and attacked a *maneki-neko*, the bearer of luck. They cursed the *maneki-neko* for being arrogant and insinuating, and demanded that she stop waving her paw. Incited by their own speeches they became increasingly violent until, with a roar, they pounced and tackled her. During the fight *bakeneko* and *nekomata* became even wilder as kasha egged them angrily on from her car. They tore the *maneki-neko*'s fur and, in a frenzy, began to shred the auspicious cat to pieces. When they stopped, only the ever-waving arm lay on the ground. But they were not finished: they proceeded to scratch, bite, spit, and pee on it, they smothered it with dirt, and tried to maltreat it as much as possible without breaking it completely. They were afraid of destroying the luck-bringing arm, for were they to do so, they would suddenly revert back to being the normal cats they once had been.

Once they had calmed down and *kasha* had driven off in her chariot of fire, the two monster cats also went their separate ways. The arm, however, remained lying alone in the street. The last thing the Persian cat said was that it was then that she saw a sad man come along, pick up the hand, and take it away with him. After rubbing against Hayato's feet, as always, she disappeared into the bushes behind him.

That evening after the Persian cat had told him this story, for the first time Hayato sat at the dinner table with his parents again. The next day he went back to school, and continued to go throughout the entire year.

Now and again he would sit down on the park bench for a moment while on his way to school, but the Persian cat never appeared again. The other cats he met did not speak with him, or, if they did, he did not understand them.

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Inner-Snails (Gastropodes Interiores)
Genus: Early Acidic Water Snails
(Protogastropodes Aquacidophiles)
23-136 Million Years Old

Inner Snails lived from the Jurassic through the Cretaceous Period in a fateful symbiosis with dinosaurs. Their precursors are suspected to have existed in large selachiis, and their presence in the first Coelacanth and amphibians has been proven.

It was originally believed that the fossilized snails inside the bellies of fish and Coelacanth had accidentally been swallowed while eating. It was only when the same snails were also found in increasing numbers in land animals, for example in the Melanosaurus, that closer attention was paid to them, and thus the amazing symbiosis between the dinosaur and the inner-snail was discovered.

Today inner-snails are divided into the following categories:

1. Inner-snails with vegetarian hosts (a hard and very calcareous shell);
2. Inner-snails with carnivorous hosts (a tough though flexible-cartilaginous shell);
3. Inner-snails with flying hosts (a thin, porous, and extremely lightweight shell);
4. Inner-snails with swimming hosts (a jelly-like, almost transparent, but fixed shell).

It is assumed that all of the over 600 different types of dinosaurs hosted inner snails. One can imagine the function of these inner snails from the size of the dinosaur's stomach.

The stomach size of a Brachiosaurus or Apatosaurus is huge: 4-6 square meters and filled with enormous amounts of gastric juice. The dentures and masticatory organs of dinosaurs, however, were not particularly well built, not even among the carnivorous dinosaurs (they could tear meat, but could not chew), and so they simply swallowed their food or, more accurately, gulped it down in a more or less un-chewed state. The aforementioned giant amounts of gastric juice allowed for the decomposition of their food and ensured the dinosaurs' diet.

The primary disadvantage of this huge amount of gastric fluid was the algae that would form in the constantly full stomachs (gastro-acid algae). The algae easily proliferated in these climatically warm and unlit spaces and thereby prevented the dinosaurs from ever feeling hungry or properly digesting the small amount of food that did come into their stomachs. Enter the inner-snails which settled in the dinosaurs' stomachs, fed on the algae growing there, prevented their overpopulation, and enabled the dinosaurs to feel hungry and to feed themselves.

This mechanism was discovered in those dinosaurs which did not grow old and died young; one could observe that they had suffered from diarrhea and vomiting and hence lost their snails. Unrestrained, the algae proliferated at a rapid speed. Each and every species of these dinosaurs that died young was without exception skinny to the bone, which leads one to conclude that they all starved to death due to an absence of inner-snails.

Some experts even believe that in the wake of the general shift of vegetation that occurred during the Cretaceous Period there was a change in the acid balance of the dinosaur's stomach, which led to the extinction of inner-snails and, consequently, to that of the dinosaurs themselves.

Literature:
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The History of the Callot Figures of Wiepersdorf

The essence of a castle lies in its mysteries, legends, and ghosts, for every castle conceals a secret. In addition to the many accessible rooms, there are always the inaccessible ones, not to mention the parks, the castle ponds in which there are always corpses, the large dusty floors beneath the roofs, their shelves containing frightening mummies, the inaccessible, confusing corners, from which a groaning can often be heard. These all contribute to what is hidden, and what is hidden is the bearer of secrets. One secret of the castle at Wiepersdorf is its five Callot figures.

Each and every visitor to the castle garden at Wiepersdorf at some point stumbles across the five figures of the crooked, dwarf-like people—two females and three males—standing in a semicircle. The origin of these figures remains a complete mystery to this day. The only thing that is known is that the painter Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde—to whom the castle owes its present appearance, and who was not only a historical painter, but also a collector of sculptures—erected these five Callot figures alongside a number of Italian Baroque figures, and this fact has been proven by numerous letters.

Callot figures are named after the great French draftsman and printmaker Jacques Callot (1592-1635). Jacques Callot revolutionized etching through newly developed techniques and turned it into an art form. He was the first person to depict the atrocities of war—the Thirty Years War to be precise—in impressive, realistic, and shocking ways. In 1616, during a stay at the Tuscan court of Cosimo II where he worked as a court artist, Callot created the famous twenty engravings “Varie figure gobbi” which depicted dwarfish cripples blowing bagpipes, fencing, scuffling, etc.

One hundred years later, as the Baroque approached the Rococo and became more and more sophisticated, these engravings of crooked, grotesque dwarfs were used as templates for producing sculptures and were implemented in three dimensions. These figures, which people always referred to as Callot figures, became a trendy phenomenon. Every castle that considered, or wanted to consider, itself of any worth had to have these figures erected in their gardens. For example, Weikersheim Castle in Franconia has more than twenty characters, each of them representing an allegorical virtue. There are also counterfeit Callot figures in Kremsmünster, Gleink, St. Pölten, Griellenstein, Castle Neuwaldegg, and Neustadt on the Mettau, just to name a few. Some of today’s most famous figures are the twenty-eight, approximately 1.30 meter large figures that Archbishop Franz Anton von Harrach (1665-1727), born in Milan, had erected in Salzburg’s Mirabell Gardens. They are assumed to be the first figures of this kind.

The tale of these figures is very similar to that of the kidney-shaped tables developed approximately 200 years later: no one knows who designed them, nor where they first appeared. Suddenly they were simply there, spread throughout all the apartments, and then they were gone. In a similar fashion the Callot figures emerged, enjoyed great popularity, and then disappeared after a period of disuse, so that one can regard them as having been made only by the prevailing taste of the times.

Over time the Callot figures grew ever smaller, and this led to the emergence of simple dwarf statuettes. In 1744 the first porcelain gnomes were made in a Viennese porcelain manufactory. Fifty years later, the first garden gnome series was being manufactured by the Derba Company in England. And just ten years after that, the dwarves with the phallically pointed caps that are so popular today appeared.

In any event, the most famous collection of Baroque Callot figures stood at Kuks or Kukus Castle in Bohemia. More than forty dwarf figures were assembled on the local racetrack by the riverbank and accompanied visitors on their way up to the hospital where the figures were replaced by large, Roman allegorical sculptures on the likes of virtue, frivolity, despair, affectionate fornication, and so forth.

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Kuks Hospital had been established in 1692 by Franz Anton Graf von Sporck (1662-1738), one of the earliest philosophers of the Enlightenment. This hospital specialized in the increasingly widespread "French disease" or "Galante disease" as Casanova referred to it. In fact, Casanova twice stayed in this special clinic for several months in order to have himself cured.

The Callot figures of Kuks were talked about throughout all the European courts, not only for being midgets, but for the obscene emphasis and display of their genitals. Dwarves with oversized penises and women with exuberant breasts posed in tempting, explicit positions next to other figures with their buttocks exposed. These representations demonstrated the joys and voluptuousness of sensuality but also served to admonish viewers of how unbridled devotion to bodily pleasures could lead to diseases that were, in fact, the very reason for having to stay at the hospital in the first place.

In August 1740 the Elbe River flooded to an unprecedented degree. Fifteen houses in the village and the entire racetrack were washed away, and the castle was so badly damaged that all subsequent attempts to repair and renovate it came to naught. In 1901 the castle was completely demolished. As for the Callot figures, only two that had been standing in the vicinity of the hospital remained; the others disappeared into the rushing waters of the Elbe.

In all the courts of Europe people spoke at length about the disaster and in particular regretted the disappearance of the small, picturesque dwarfs. The cleanup took years.

In 1755 a dubious Bohemian sculpture dealer named Luthwer Webker (1712-1764) began to sell Callot figures in secret. Those who heard the description of these illegally sold figures immediately realized that they had to be the lost figures of Kuks. This sculpture dealer had paid a fair sum of money to farmers and fishermen along the Elbe River ensuring that they pass on the figures to him once they washed ashore.

The problem for the dealer, however, was that only courtiers were viable as purchasers, and they were familiar with the figures and considered it not just criminal but inelegant to make such illegal purchases. If the origin of the sculptures had been Italy or Greece, it would not have been a problem, but something stolen or illegally obtained from a Central European court was considered undesirable and was frowned upon, so people were anxious about having them installed at their homes. Bavarian Prince Elector Maximilian III Joseph (1727-1777), known as "the Good" and the person responsible for introducing compulsory education in Bavaria in 1771—the first Germanic state to do so—, came under suspicion of having erected an illegitimate amorous sculpture taken from Schönbrunn Castle in Vienna in his Nymphenburg Palace in Munich. Although experts immediately refuted this suspicion, and only a vague resemblance was actually attested, the rumor remained attached to him so that he was excluded from the most illustrious balls for a number of years. If even one as good as Prince Elector "the Good" felt a great craving for such a dishonest gem and succumbed to it, then there was no choice but to store the piece in secret so that the public would not be able to see it.

And thus Saxon Elector and King of Poland Augustus II (1676-1763), who was known as "the Strong," instructed his architect Friedrich Borm to secretly and anonymously purchase the Callot figures so that no whisper could ever arise suggesting the figures were in Saxony. Through intermediaries and strictly concealed operations seven perfectly preserved figures were brought to Pillnitz Castle and installed in a difficult-to-access basement dungeon. Two figures were from the group of "Frivolous." In his many visits to Pillnitz Castle Elector Augustus II "the Strong" allowed himself to be led to the figures and, when it was time to leave the room again, he always said goodbye to the female figure standing next to the door, grabbing her by the nose. On one of these visits the nose broke off, and he put it in his pocket. This nose must have become his constant companion. It is reported that during difficult negotiations the Elector took the stone nose out of his pocket, put it in front of him, and said, "To make this decision, one must have a good nose." Over the course of time this phrase "having a good nose" became an idiom in German. And today this stone nose can be seen at the Electoral Estate inside the National Archives of Saxony in Dresden.

As the growing bourgeoisie began to spread and construct even cuter dwarf figures, interest in the Callot figures within the Central European courts decreased—they were now regarded merely as an amusing variety of past-time.

In 1870 Pillnitz Castle was expanded and the jousting building was remodeled into an orangery. In 1876 the shelved and forgotten Callot figures from Kuks Castle were rediscovered. People quickly recalled the origin of the figures and under no circumstances wanted them set up in Pillnitz as their origin could still potentially cast a shadow over the Saxon court. People were afraid of destroying them or once again returning them to the Elbe, so they looked for a decent buyer.

It was discovered that Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde had received a considerable inheritance from his stepmother, a wealthy Brentano, and that he wanted to turn Wiepersdorf into a proper castle. A learned history painter, he traveled through Italy and bought vases and statues to give his palace a Baroque appearance. Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde purchased this group of figures, but on the strict condition that he would never disclose their origin. As no written contract was involved, he was able to buy the figures at an especially low price. For safety reasons, the sellers allowed the figures to be slightly altered in Saxony by a local stonemason.

In 1881 these seven figures were delivered to Wiepersdorf. Baron Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde placed them in front of his studio window in order to always have them in sight. He immediately had the broken nose repaired, but it snapped off several times, for, afraid that it might not be holding, he had adopted the habit of repeatedly checking the figure and shaking it.

Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde was determined to keep the origin of the figures a secret, so whenever he was asked where he had purchased the flashy dwarfs, he said that they were bought on one of his many trips to Italy; or, at other times, in Upper Austria. And it is precisely these two false variations on the origin of the Callot figures in Wiepersdorf that have whizzed through literature ever since.

There is no doubt at all that these figures were of great significance to Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde. In a letter to Mrs. von Gudengut written on December 5, 1884, he explained:

> Now I have them, my seven. My grandmother Bettina told me many times as a child that her husband, my grandfather, from whom I got my name, grew up with similar figures at Zernikow Castle, but that they always gave him the creeps. And the fact that there are just seven of the dwarfs reminds me of how close our family once was with Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. I only just recently was able to visit their grave at the cemetery of St. Matthew. The new street there is also undergoing a fierce amount of construction.

In 1883 Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde commissioned Reinhold Begas (1831-1911), the highly revered and patronized Prussian court sculptor who had been the last pupil of Christian Daniel Rauch (1777-1857), to create 24 centimeter miniatures of his seven dwarfs. Reinhold Begas seemed the most appropriate person for this job as, under his watch, the revival of the Baroque soared to unimagined heights. Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde wanted his figures "naked," for he intended to paint them himself.

In a letter to Baroness von Brüttel he wrote, "Prof. Begas breathed so much life into each of the little ones that they do not appear to be copies—they are self-standing, small beings." And later in the same letter, "From the estate of the ingenious chemical researcher Friedhelm Ferdinand Runge of Oranienburg (1794-1867) I

was able to procure artificially produced colors that seem suitable for my seven dwarfs..."

The first figures were painted in July 1874. The Frivolous was the first figure to lose its "nakedness." The painted figures are described emphatically in the letters of many visitors to Wiepersdorf Castle.

After the death of Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde in 1891, his cousin Erwin von Arnim took over Wiepersdorf. The first thing he did was have the "salacious" figures, as he called them, disassembled and removed. It bothered him that such obscene figures stood so close to the church. Where the "salacious" ones were thrown away is not entirely clear. There was credible evidence that it was into the castle pond. In 1912, during a search for a missing child, people poked the pond with long poles, and it is reported that at one point they pushed against a hard object quite deep in the mud. The search operation, however, was called off when the child, a twelve-year-old girl, was found safe—she had been with an aunt in the neighboring village of Merz.

The seven small Callot figures remained. Up until 1945 they stood in a studio, which was used as a reception and banquet hall. Frau. T., who worked as a maid in Wiepersdorf Castle from 1939 to 1989, revealed the following in a 1992 interview with Vera Nolte:

> I always found the small figures in the hall to be very cute; the big ones in the garden I liked less. There were formerly six, and later five, of the big ones; the small ones were always seven in number. I often set the little one with the naked breast to the side when we had visitors. I once heard a conversation between Clara von Arnim and her husband Friedemund, who was lord of the castle, in which it was mentioned that the figures be entirely disposed of. Frau von Arnim, however, insisted that all the figures remain together, and that if they received a visit of a sensitive nature, the figures could be set aside as they had always been. The other figure with the naked bottom stood in front of a curtain, so you could not see it from behind anyway. The figure that was put away always went into the big duck terrine standing in a large glass cabinet. Since this terrine had many cloth layers, nothing inside was ever damaged.

In 1945 the castle was plundered badly and after serving temporarily as the Russian headquarters, was cleared for demolition. Shortly before the scheduled demolition in 1946, "Poet Foundation e.V." became the newly established owner and plans to destroy the building were dropped. During a reconnaissance of the building, among other things, it was discovered that not only had many manuscripts disappeared, but that the seven small figures had also been lost. The big ones were found overturned in the park.

The seven small figures stood in the officer's casino of the Red Army in Jüterbog until 1957, and in 1964 were transferred to the House of Officers in Wünsdorf, where they stood in a room for art works until 1994. With the departure of the Red Army from Wünsdorf, these figures were brought to Serov at the outer eastern edge of the Urals, where they now enjoy great popularity in the local military museum. Since military art treasures are specifically excluded from the negotiations on looted art, their return is impossible.

The remaining six large Callot figures have long inspired those writers seeking relaxation and tranquility for their work within the castle. The line in Sarah Kirsch's poem *Wiepersdorf*, for example—"The stone images smile—I go"—refers directly to the Callot figures. Anna Seghers, who enjoyed a permanently reserved room in the castle, states in her 1975 novella *Stone Age*, "Six stone dwarves stood. One uglier than the other. One even had its pants down—what a ridiculous sight." Even if the story takes place in South America, this passage clearly refers to the Wiepersdorf dwarf with the naked buttocks.

In the general renovation of the castle that took place between 1974 and 1980 all the figures, including those of the dwarfs, were brought to Berlin for restoration. The foreign trade imperium of Schalck-Golodkowski was aware of this and, during an inspection, confiscated the aforementioned dwarf of the bare buttocks. They were certain they would get a particularly good price, as it was a rarity. It was sold in 1978 in the west, and

from 1980 to 1992 could be seen in the front yard of a bungalow in Böblingen. Since 1992 it has been on view at the privately funded BESM (Böblinger Erotic Sculpture Museum). The remaining five figures were brought back to their original location and now stand, as they did during Achim von Arnim's time, below the studio window, inspiring many a contemporary scholar and visitor to wonder just where they are from.

The female dwarf, however, likely located in the castle pond, still awaits rescue.

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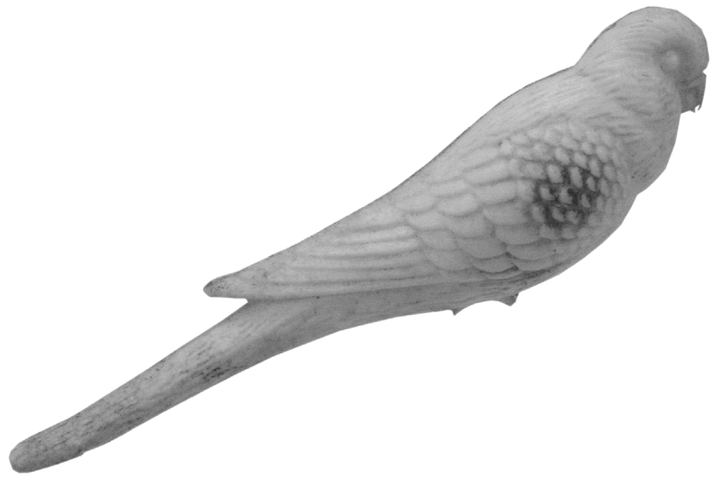

The Canary Birds of Fraxern
or
How the Harzer Roller Found Its Voice

At the World Championship of Songbirds held in Riebelhausen in the area of the Ruhr in August 2002 the bird Klausi won first prize with 90 points. Klausi belonged to the genus of mountain scooters and had made his way through the various disciplines of singing—hollow rolling, gnarling, water rolling, and swaying—just as brilliantly as he had clucking and whistling. In spite of the ever growing popularity of ring tones, they were not assessed due to the fact that many breeding clubs do not recognize them. The Ü-O and the GLK-BLK consonant clusters of Klausi's cluck were particularly impressive, but even there he could not be given more than a top score. There was a bird was who almost handled the consonants W-G-D-L-H-R and B better than Klausi, but he fell short in all other disciplines. The newly crowned world champion belonged, like all the other canaries involved in the championship, to the approximately one-hundred-and-fifty-fifth generation of canaries kept in captivity.

When Isabella I of Castile married Ferdinand II of Aragon following a jointly won battle against the Moors on October 19, 1469, her kingdom became united with her husband's. She remained the ruler of Castile, however, and played a decisive role in the expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula, while her husband—also known as "the Catholic"—more through chance and to all intents and purposes unaware, let Christopher Columbus discover America. One of their wedding presents turned out to be a number of these beautifully chirping, cute-looking, little birds. Indeed, the ladies of the court liked these merry birds very much and even fell downright in love with them.

These birds were named Canary Birds after their place of origin; they were also known as Sugar Birds and in Latin were called Serinus Canarius. A warship brought the first bird from the strongly contested archipelago in 1402. It was only in 1496 that the last of the islands, Tenerife, was finally conquered by the Spaniards, in the process so thoroughly destroying the culture of Guances that only a very small part of it—whatever the destruction happened by chance to spare—can be seen today.

In their home on the Canary Islands one can find the 12-13 centimeter sized birds with their 6 centimeter long tails and 7 centimeter long wings living in freedom in the shady forests up to a height of 1,500 meters. Like the finches of the Galapagos Islands they have developed into a unique, special species of bird thanks to the remoteness of the islands and pertain to the order of sparrows, the finch family, and the subfamily of gimpels.

In no time at all in the European courts it became fashionable to own a canary. There they were considered more valuable than silver or gold and through their vividness also demonstrated the transience of wealth as well as the mortality of possessions. Many men had their women portrayed in paintings with a canary on their finger as their only jewelry. Over the following decades, this motif of "Woman with Canary" developed into a commercial painting genre in its own right.

The chirping birds were kept in golden cages, and aviaries in landscape gardens were decorated with precious ornaments. In fact, the great royal garden architect Buyeau de la Baraudeerie even considered the canary aviaries to be the chief ornament of any landscape garden.

The breeding of these prestigious canaries lay in the hands of Spanish monks, and they sold only males. The male birds also chirped in the most beautiful and delightful way, thus marking their territory as well as their presence to females. As the monks only sold males, they enjoyed an absolute monopoly on breeding for almost two hundred years, which made any breeding outside of the monastery walls impossible. They kept the sales figures very tight in order to maintain a high price for these much sought-after birds. All attempts to cross the birds with other finches and gimpels failed, so the ordinary shares were dominant.

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The canary trade was an important economic resource not only for the monks but for the whole of Spain. And thus the Spanish court, enjoying a rich supply of birds, had an immense interest in maintaining its monopoly.

The greed of the European courts grew infinitely in the seventeenth century, and increasingly more people wanted to participate in the business. Some princes from north of the Alps set high rewards for the transfer of one or more canary chicks. Far-sighted contemporary economists issued urgent warnings about developments like that in Holland where on February 5, 1637, with the abrupt end of the so-called "tulip mania," many respectable and wealthy merchants lost all their assets from one day to the next and ended up beggars. All attempts to obtain female canaries were unsuccessful, and so the compartmentalization of the singing canary breed seemed perfect. In some writings from that time it is often reported that the monasteries of the "Bird Cowls," as people called the monks, resembled besieged castles, as there were always strangers hanging around in the hopes of catching an escaped female canary.

Abbot Anton "the Good," who built a Capuchin monastery in 1679 with generous donations from Haller councilor Peter Tasch and other benefactors, was so bothered by the monopoly of his fellow believers that for years he did everything he could to disrupt their monopoly of canary breeding. After all his efforts of obtaining a female canary in a friendly manner proved unsuccessful, in 1699 he sent five young, daredevil lads—Johann Rupert from Matrei in West Tyrol; the brothers Conrad and Joseph Streiter, and George Kammerlander, all from Imst; and Christopherus Kathan from Vorarlberg—to procure one. Before they headed out, he instructed them in the art of aviculture and bird transport.

The five crossed the Alps with a letter of recommendation from the abbot in their luggage. They identified themselves as pious Tyroleans from Imst wishing to enter a Spanish monastery because they found the northern ones too cold. They were firmly determined to immediately head back once they had a female canary. The first monasteries rejected them, but at the fifth, where they appeared in person, two were allowed to start working as servants immediately; the other three were employed part-time in a nearby monastery as handymen.

After a year they were ready. They secretly kidnapped some male and female birds and took off. They crossed the Pyrenees, travelled up the Rhone Valley, passed Lake Constance, and the first stop they made back in their homeland was at Vorarlberg in Fraxern, where Christopherus had come from. All along the way they were afraid that Spanish monks would follow them and seek revenge or at least destroy their canaries.

To prevent this from happening, they left some canaries at Flaxern, had Christopherus' parents swear to never tell anybody about the birds, and continued on to Imst.

What the boys did not know was that the Spanish monks were not pursuing them; they did not realize how many servants had been disappearing from one day to the next, nor that the monopoly had already been broken for some time, and on a large scale. English traders had secretly imported wild birds from the Canary Islands and in Southern Italy a whole load had escaped from a ship in distress at sea so that the birds were now living in the wild. Some of these birds had even ended up in breeding cages. The ever-increasing availability of canaries caused their price to fall rapidly.

In England and Italy a distinct form of breeding developed. In Italy they put a lot of emphasis on the shape of birds and their posture, especially the head position, while in England they bred the birds to have highly colored feathers, and in Imst it was always about what the birds could do, especially in terms of song. This differentiation of breeding goals has remained up until today, so that one can still distinguish between signing, posing, and colored canaries.

In Imst the miners from the local iron mines adopted the birds and kept breeding them to use as early warning systems for gas influx and as a source of entertainment in the pits. Imst became the center of singing canary breeding and the birds became a significant trade factor.

The canaries in the small, remote mountain village of Fraxern also continued to multiply so that soon almost every farm had its own chirping bird. For their part, however, the farmers did not place much importance on any particular differences or peculiarities. One could therefore consider these birds as the only natural, pristine birds in captivity. Be that as it may, what the farmers noticed was that the birds felt very comfortable and at home at an altitude of over 1,000 meters.

A particular feature about the sunny mountain village of Fraxern was, and still is, that they grow about twenty different kinds of cherries, an absolute specialty for that altitude, and that those cherries are very tasty indeed. To this day, when it is cherry season, people come from all around to taste and buy them.

These cherries were placed in the birds' cages, and they pecked at them with such pleasure that, when in season, they became their exclusive diet. At other times they often received softened cardoon-seeds from the so-called safflower. This artichoke-related thistle, which was once a popular staple, is now known almost exclusively in western Switzerland or among hard-nosed, organically-inclined folks.

When ore exploitation in Imst decreased considerably at the end of the eighteenth century and new unexploited ore veins were found in the region of the Harz, many miners moved to the new mining areas and took their birds with them. A small group of miners from Vorarlberg remembered the canaries in Fraxern and took the birds with them to the German low mountains, settling near the newly excavated Catharina Mine in Saint Andreasberg.

What the miners quickly heard was that the birds they had brought from Fraxern had a clearer and purer singing voice than the ones they knew back in Imst. In the nineteenth century, the Andreasberg canaries from Fraxern were so trained in their singing that people gave them a special name: the Harzer Roller.

A professional Harzer Roller breeding business developed in St. Andreasberg so that, at times, more than one-hundred-thousand birds were exported annually around the world—especially to the United States, but to Australia and South America as well.

In the US a large-scale study of the singing canary was conducted in 1998, and it was discovered that the glottal of all Harzer Rollers was characterized by exceptional flexibility. It is thought that this could have been caused by a unilateral diet over tens of generations containing food rich with organic acids, sugars, and pectines—in other words, cherries and cardoon seeds.

Today, canary breeding no longer plays a significant economic role anywhere, and there are no longer any professional canary breeders. Instead, breeding takes place at the level of small animal breeding clubs. In the Andreas Mountains there is a beautiful Harzer Roller Museum with gorgeous singing mountain scooters. In Fraxern the last natural canaries died during a cold winter in the mid-nineteenth century so that the chirping canaries displayed there today are actually re-imported ones.

One final word. Before you think there might be a roasted canary wrapped up in bacon hidden somewhere when you hear the name of Harzer Roller in a culinary context, remember that it is only a certain type of cheese belonging to the genus of stinky cheese and is in reality quite suitable for marinating:

* 2 packages of Harzer Roller
* 4 garlic cloves

* 1 red chili
* 2 bay leaves
* 1 sprig rosemary
* 1 sprig thyme
* Extra virgin olive oil for refilling

Cut the peeled garlic in slices, cut the chili in half and remove the seeds. In a glass container, alternate the individual Harzer Roller roll-fills with layers of bay leaves, thyme, and rosemary leaves, garlic and chili peppers. Fill it up with olive oil. Leave it in a cool, dark place for at least four days. The cheese tastes especially delicious when it is drizzled (before eating) with a few drops of good wine vinegar and garnished with some onion rings. The cool, picked Harzer Roller will be ready in approximately two weeks.

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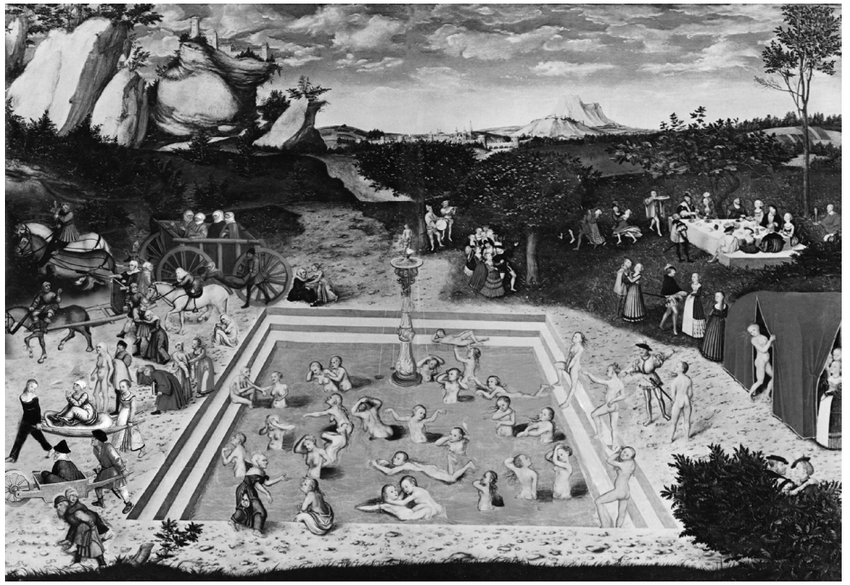

"The Fountain of Life":
On the Newly Decoded Sub-Image (Pentimento) of the Highly Acclaimed and Famous Painting "The Fountain of Youth" by Lucas Cranach the Elder

At twelve o'clock noon on February 26, 2011, the latest results of research on a sub-image of the famous painting *The Fountain of Youth* were presented to the amazement of the expert audience. For the very first time the previously invisible sub-image was shown in front of the original image in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, and a lecture was given on its history and discovery.

The sub-image of the painting *The Fountain of Youth* was studied at the radiation department of the Charité Hospital complex using various imaging procedures like computer tomography, mass spectrometry, O2 decay analysis, etc., and shown to be an accurate, sharp, colored picture beneath the overpainted image.

The hidden sub-image shows the exact opposite of the visible image: it depicts the process of aging. In this picture there are no longer any old women rejuvenating themselves in the fountain—the young ones who are entering from the right instead emerge as mature, old women from the left.

The narrative of the painting moves from left to right and demonstrates the growth and decay of life. Since going from left to right aligns with our habits of seeing, the aging of the young can be perceived, but the rejuvenation of the old, which proceeds from the right to left and is thus diametrically opposite to our habits of seeing, cannot. The old, at the left, thanks to their many years of lived experience, can see how their former selves, on the right, once were; but, on the contrary, when we are young, we do not know what we will be like at an old age. Thus one can only look backwards and never forward. Looking into the future, there on the left, is forever obstructed.

The structure of the sub-image shows how Cranach the Elder dealt with life and aging in those years. And the inscription on the back of the painting can be understood from this perspective:

Fresh bread shall quickly turn you red,
Ripe bread alone will make you full.
Old bread waves from the land of the dead.

The master's sayings from those years that have been handed down to us by his assistants now can also be understood in a new light: "He no longer wants to paint the nude, he only wants to paint the image of the old"; "Life begins young and ends wrinkled, no doubt about it"; or "I want to try and paint the process of aging, a very important life-path."

His personal data suggest a confrontation with aging and death. His wife, with whom he had five children, died a few years before the creation of the painting. In 1544 he tendered his resignation as deputy mayor; his friend, the reformer Martin Luther, whose best man he had been, had died earlier in the year. It is understandable therefore that the year 1546 found Cranach pondering life, the process of aging, and death more than just a little and that he thus painted a corresponding image.

At the first presentation of the painting Elector and Duke Johann Friedrich I of Saxony rebuked Cranach the Elder, thundering, "He should re-paint this ugly image, I do not want to see it ever again. Away with him." Now even this comment, which had remained enigmatic until the present day, is explainable.

And so Cranach the Elder had to paint over the image, turning it into a true *Pentimento*, a real image of repentance. He painted *The Fountain of Youth* over *The Fountain of Life*. Cranach the Elder was accustomed to painting images to fit the liking of his clients as well as to re-painting them. And yet, his anger must have been extreme, for he never painted a profane theme again. After *The Fountain of Youth* only altarpieces emerged from his workshop.

In *The Fountain of Youth*, however, Cranach the Elder left some indications that have only been understood today with the discovery of the sub-image. Venus and Cupid in the center of the image are not only gods of love: Venus is also the administrator of the list of death and Cupid the god of an infantile self-love and the idea of eternal life. The woman fleeing from the rejuvenation process in the upper right-hand part of the pool and turning away in disgust can also be understood better, as can the woman who must be persuaded to stay in the pool.

Thanks to the discovery of *The Fountain of Life*—as the sub-image is now called—a whole new era of research on Cranach the Elder has begun.

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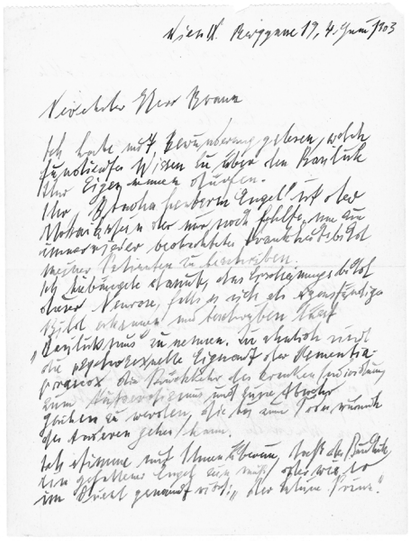

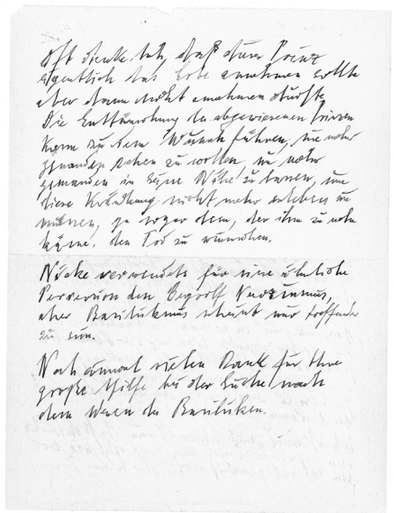

How Sigmund Freud Distanced Himself from the Basilisk or On Basiliskmus and Narcissism

On December 16, 1908, Sigmund Freud wrote to his Berlin proconsul and chairman of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Association, Karl Abraham, "in regard to the treatment," i.e. psychoanalysis, "of a person suffering narcissistic withdrawal, one must make sure that he is not all of a sudden mirrored too much. A simple reflection can have fatal consequences for these people; not only will the patient immediately terminate treatment, no, he will also often feel himself disintegrate. Diligence and the highest degree of caution are required. [...] The mirror method must be used in very sparingly in order to avoid an MM-effect..." The wildest rumors have surrounded these lines ever since. Different interpretations and conjectures twine around the "MM-effect."

A newly discovered letter of Freud's dated June 4, 1903, and addressed to the folklorist Braun in Memmingen (MM) now reveals the secret:

> Vienna IX, Berggasse 19, June 4, 1903
> Dear Mr. Braun,
>
> I have read with admiration the amount of in-depth knowledge you have on the basilisk. Your "draconic warrior behind the angel" is the piece of the puzzle that was missing for me to describe a repeatedly observed medical condition in my patients. I am considering calling the appearance of this neurosis, if it can be seen as an independent condition, as "Basiliskmus." Your description of the liberating effect of the mirroring of your Memmingen basilisk on the delinquent who, due to a prenatal life disappointment, lives alone in seclusion so as not to ever be hurt again (though he is himself not capable of contributing to this goal) was a revelation. This pathogenic characteristic of an encounter with mirroring seems to me highly suitable for healing the fears of self-chosen solitude. The uninhibited aggressiveness of driving forces belonging to this perversion seems to me truer of the Basilisk than Narcissus gently contemplating himself in the watery mirror image. I thank you again for your great help in the search for the essence of the basilisk. I would love to accept your kind invitation to visit your certainly very beautiful and venerable former imperial city of Memmingen. I will allow myself the opportunity in the near future to travel to this area, though my work in Vienna regrettably claims my constant presence.
>
> In the highest esteem and gratitude,
> Your devoted Freud

But just what—or who—is this basilisk that so fascinated Freud? The basilisk appeared for the first time in documents 600 years before our present time. The oldest descriptions refer to events in North Africa. There is evidence that it has to do with the drops of blood that fell from Medusa's head as Perseus flew over the desert of Libya with that severed head in his hand, his own head covered by the helmet of invisibility he had received from the Stygian nymphs. The basilisk is there described as being a particularly toxic creature, one that could kill with its glance and was depicted as a snake with a crown on its head.

The Crusaders were responsible for bringing the basilisk to Central Europe. Here its appearance and doings were adjusted to the customs and habits of the local people. The size of the basilisk is between 15 and 50 centimeters, and its weight between 1.5 and 10 kilograms. It is not so large and certainly is not a dragon as so often assumed. And yet, though small, it is powerful. In Europe it has a serpent's tail, a rooster's head, legs, and wings with which it cannot fly. Overall, it is rather immobile.

The mystic Hildegard von Bingen thought a lot about basilisks, and her description of the creature has become a standard:

An old rooster lays an egg.
A toad feels fertilized and sees the egg.
She will fiercely love and care for it,
and will now incubate it with her own eggs.
Then her eggs will die next to those of the basilisk's.
Now, with only one egg, the toad's love for the rooster's egg increases.
She loves this leftover egg like she never loved her own.
Then, when the time comes, she recognizes her unjust passion
and flees before the brood hatches.

What a sad fate. Madly loved before being born but then abandoned, lonely, without a partner. Abandoned and anxious it now sits alone in holes, wet basements, and cisterns, always careful not to be seen but with the desire to be both marveled at and admired by all, forever on guard that the disappointment never happen again, the abandonment never again be repeated.

The real tragedy of the basilisk is that it does not, it cannot, ever know the reason for its drama. It knows nothing about it, for it never learned anything from either its father, the old rooster, nor its stepmother, the toad. It senses its lonely despair deep in its unconscious and acts from those deep abysses. Anyone who comes too close will receive a look so poisonous that they will immediately be fatally wounded and sink to the ground. Here, similarities to narcissists are very strong, indeed almost identical. The narcissist also suffered early childhood disappointment and subsequently withdrew into his or herself; the focus of their love is always themselves alone, they avoid the treasured object, hurt those who come too close, and suffer alone in their relationship-anxiety. The similarities in speech regarding the two are also many—people are often accused of "the evil eye," "the poisonous gaze," of "looking evil"; we have also heard "if looks could kill," and of someone with "a deadly expression."

It is certain that, as a Viennese man, Sigmund Freud knew the basilisk, for the story of the basilisk is rather well known in that city. In Vienna, at 7 Schönlaterngasse, today a house plaque commemorates an incident that occurred on June 26, 1212, when a basilisk robbed the consciousness of young Hans, apprentice to the master baker and landlord Martin Garbibi. Hans, however, did not die, which was extremely unusual, and which is also why for a long time people doubted the veracity of his story. But the reports he made in front of a venerable investigation committee were convincing. Thanks to him we have a detailed account of the appearance of a basilisk. Almost every old European city has a similar story.

Even today in Basel every August 4 people think about August 4, 1474, when an eleven-year-old rooster was executed by court order because he had laid an egg. The autopsy that followed revealed another two basilisk eggs inside of him. And so he was burnt together with his eggs. Basel derives its very name from the term "basilisk," and its coat of arms is carried by a basilisk known to have caused mischief in that area around the time of the city's foundation.

Naturally what interested Freud most was how to get rid of basilisks; in other words, how a person plagued by narcissism could be treated. A common and rather effective method was holding up a mirror to the basilisk, which, upon seeing itself, would then commit suicide. It is said that Alexander the Great and his soldiers once had to cross a valley overrun with basilisks. Alexander ordered their shields to be so shiny that they would reflect everything. And so huddled together, secured from all sides by the mirrors, they safely made their way through.

In Memmingen one convict who had been sentenced to be hanged got his freedom because he risked his life when expelling a basilisk. It was a trade. He completely surrounded himself with mirrors and went into the basement inhabited by a basilisk. The basilisk infected himself with his own gaze and died on the spot, and the convict became a free man. Similar mirror-based basilisk killings have been reported from many cities like Warsaw, Zwickau, Vienna, Magdeburg, and Basel. Freud mentions these "mirrorings" in his letter to Karl Abraham.

Just why Freud became so interested in the legend of the Memmingen basilisk remains unknown; we have only the recently discovered letter. The reasons for which Freud retained the concept of Narcissism without introducing that of Basiliskmus are also unknown. It is, however, very likely due to the fact that he was a great friend of the world of Greek myth and saw many things anticipated there; though it is equally likely that the theory of Narcissism was simply far too advanced to be easily replaced by Basiliskmus.

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The Only Remaining Piece of Amber from the Legendary Amber Room in Königsberg Castle

Mika Lotowosch (*1) recalls: “Yes, back in 1975 the building (*2) was not yet completed, and it remains unfinished to this day. (*3)

“No one knows why. It might be related to the excavations that I participated in from 1975 to ‘76. According to one rumor, the foundation would not hold. Back then, between 1975 and ‘76, we dug up the all the subsoil just to find the legendary Amber Room. If we could’ve found the whole thing, or even just a part, undamaged, that would’ve been a real triumph. And we did find real amber during the excavation. Tons of it. But, unfortunately, it was all unusable. I know now that it was melted amber. The resin had become soft and liquid-like again, like it had been before. Today it looks like any normal, inferior, impure piece of amber that you can find anywhere along the coast. Our bosses didn’t believe that that could be the Amber Room we’d been looking for, but today I know without any doubt that it was. But back then nothing could be what they didn’t think it was.

“Without any particular plan in mind we dug up the site, really turned it back and forth, over and under. We had only one condition: everything had to be kept top secret, we had to leave the room undamaged, and prevent the building from collapsing.

“Two years later, once we had ransacked everything, the last bits of the salvaged amber, together with the building debris, were removed and dumped into the Baltic Sea off the Curonian Spit. They dumped it far off the coast and it got strewn along the entire shoreline. You can’t see the castle or the discovered amber anymore. If you could find some amber, it would probably just look like any other kind. But I think that some high officials knew darn well what’d we found, they just didn’t want to admit it.

“When everything was gone they ceased excavations, and no one talked about it anymore. I did research on my own. At first secretly, then later “behind dark glass,” as they say in Russia. To this day no one wants to know about it officially. I was interested in what I was doing back then, and I found out that there, right there where we had discovered all those pieces of inferior-quality raw amber, that was the place where the complete Amber Room had been installed.

“The then head of the municipal ministry slipped me some documents which were in German. Now, old Kulsowitsch, a professor of German who—as he can’t live on his official salary—looks after German tourists who have come to have a gander at their old home, translated these texts for me. These documents make clear that the room was not taken apart and reconstructed elsewhere but simply undone and stored in the basement. The former German city administration had officially announced that the room had been removed and several other versions of the story went around suggesting that it had been sunk in a mountain lake somewhere in southern Germany.

“Near the kitchen you could go down into a dark cellar where they used to store excellent wines, wines that were a hundred years old and more, wines that weren’t intended for everyday use. And down there there was a door that opened to another cellar even further below with a barrel vault. Very few people knew about its existence. And that was where they had brought the disassembled, boxed-up Amber Room. The plans of the city castles available to me revealed that, in addition to the large entrance door, this basement room had a small door which led to a spiral staircase that wound through the entire castle. And this was to become the tragedy of the hiding place.

“In mid-March 1945 the fifth firestorm that raged over the fortress city of Königsberg engulfed the entire castle. In this fire, which almost completely destroyed it, the basement functioned just like a vent in an oven, and the cellar vaults were scorched accordingly. Professor Ilian Karpv believes that some kind of highly com-

bustible material like rolls of film, heavy oil, or something, must have been stored in the kitchen because the vaults flamed like a blast furnace and the barrel vault was like firebrick. The cellar itself did not burn, nor did the amber, but the temperatures must have been so hellish that the amber, as well as the iron, melted. The amber flowed like honey across the shelves, clumped onto the floor, then softened again, dripped into the cracks, melted…the plaster exploded and mixed with the softened amber mass, the stones burst, the clay floor exploded and turned to dust, in turn swallowing the flowing amber and becoming one with it. In the end the vault must've collapsed.

"There are reports of soldiers who testified that, even fourteen days after the fire, they could not enter some parts of the castle, the temperature was just too high.

"And that's precisely the part of the cellar where we found huge amounts of amber with dirty inlays, which, as I already said, were just thrown away like garbage. I sorted out a whole bag of these at the time. I think that every single one of us who participated in the excavations did the same thing. We thought to ourselves: 'Why dig around the Baltic Sea for the same thing we can take from here?' At the same time, I was inclined to believe that this could perhaps be the Amber Room we'd been looking for…why else would so many pieces of amber be in a single place? While only inferior pieces of amber showed up in all the excavations, why so many in a pile, and together with the debris of the castle? 'That can't be a coincidence,' I thought to myself, and so I collected a whole bag full of it."

Here the statement of Mika Lotowosch ends.

Notes:
(1) Mika Lotowosch is one of the few "real Kaliningradians." Born in 1955 in Kaliningrad to parents who had been relocated from the borderlands of the eastern Urals by their own free will. He is now inquiring about the city's history, a process which was previously illegal.
(2) In 1971 they began to construct "The House of the Soviets" upon the remains of the city castle, which was detonated in 1969. It remains unfinished to this day.
(3) 1999.

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