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A CHANCE TO DO SOMETHING

Welcome to Germany? Not really: For asylum seekers it is usually hard to find a job. An organization from Dresden tries nonetheless to give them the chance to show their skills and share their knowledge by letting them run courses.

Milena Zwerenz

Chocolate chip cookies lie on a plate on the table, tea cups painted with little flower ornaments have been placed next to it. The temperature in the small room requires heating, on the street in front of the window, autumn is playing with orange leaves. It is a Thursday evening some time in November. Approximately fifteen people have appeared to KAMA Dresden e.V.'s meeting at the Wächterhaus, an empty old building, in Löbtau: asylum seekers, club members, interested people.

In case you were wondering: KAMA is an acronym for "Kursangebote von AsylbewerberInnen, MigrantInnen und Asylberechtigten", including (mostly) free of charge cooking, language or handcrafting classes. The association is a relatively new one. It was just founded by a handful of students in April of this year. Franziska Kollasch, 24 years old and one of the founding members, explains what the project aims at: "If you are an asylum seeker, you are always the one asking others for help. We try to change these roles and to put asylum seekers for once into a more powerful position". Asylum seekers and migrants are supposed to get a chance to show and share their skills.

Until September of this year about 80,000 applications for political asylum were filed in Germany. This shows that the association touches upon an important issue. Originally, however, the association's idea comes from Vienna where KAMA Vienna is already an established project. Since October, Dresden's KAMA association is also officially registered. The club is financed by donations, the rooms they rent usually cost nothing or little money and the club members work as volunteers. Franziska, for example, actually studies at the TU Dresden to become a teacher in English and French. For her, her voluntary work completes her daily life: "I will not deny that I also spend so much time helping asylum seekers because, in the end, it leaves me with a good feeling", she confesses.

KAMA's plenary session at the Wächterhaus still lacks a little of structure. There are no power-point-presentations or handouts that evening, but everyone is nonetheless motivated to help organize the next courses. *"We as asylum seekers are not here without reason"*

So far, the group has arranged a couple of cooking classes but it intends to extend its offers. Eddres, a refugee from Afghanistan whose English sounds almost perfect, for example, plans to give a lecture on Afghan politics or – why not? – considers teaching Arabic swear words to Germans.

A woman in her mid-thirties is sitting next to him. Esma, an asylum seeker from Serbia, has already run two cooking classes for approximately ten people, most of them students. Her menu consisted of Pita, Proja, Cupavci – Eastern European recipes. "For me, it is important to show that we as asylum seekers are not here without reason but that we can also contribute something to society", she says and reaches for a chocolate chip cookie on the table.

Esma came to Germany one and a half years ago. Her husband is very sick, most of the day she has to take care of him. For her, it is almost impossible to find a job anywhere. Even though German law technically allows asylum seekers to work if they have stayed for more than nine months in Germany, they still need a so called work permit ("Arbeitserlaubnis") for every job. However, asylum seekers are usually the last ones to be chosen for a place. Normally, unemployed Germans, EU-citizens or foreigners with a different status are preferred for available positions.

Of course, the concept of the KAMA association cannot replace a real job. But, at least, it offers asylum seekers the chance to do something. "I thought that maybe I could teach a class in slipper felting", Esma suggests later that

evening. Everyone else in the room reacts enthusiastically, Franziska smiles as well: "Slippers would make a great Christmas present". A girl seated in the opposite corner of the room proposes to help Esma with the organizational tasks. The two women quickly exchange phone numbers. Part of KAMA's idea is to provide a German mentor ("Kurspaten") for every class. Their tasks range from assisting to organize a room, a date and material for the class, mediating between the course participants and the teacher and creating a nice atmosphere during the course. Therefore, KAMA always looks for interpreters of any language in order to simplify the communication between class participants and the course director.

The weather outside the building in Löbtau has gotten worse. Raindrops are falling through the darkness of the night. Inside, the cookies have left small crumbs on the tabletop. Eventually, the plenum comes to an end. For the near future, KAMA Dresden wants not only to offer courses on a regular basis but the association also plans to improve its homepage's layout. An easy-to-use booking system could help course teachers and mentors to organize courses more easily. At the same time, participants could get a better overview of the upcoming classes. For Franziska, the association's ultimate goal is clear. She hopes that "asylum seekers come to us on their own and that the whole project becomes a sure-fire success".

If you are interested in getting involved, visit KAMA Dresden e.V.'s homepage for more information kamadresden.blogspot.de.

DRESDEN: HOW THE OTHER 7 % LIVE



More than 100,000 years back in time, tribes trekked through wide- open spaces, settling wherever the conditions were given to comply with their basic needs – providing food and protection.

Back then, migration was simply the travelling of long distances in search of a new habitat with better conditions. Then, borders and states came into formation, built to control and limit migration. The terms immigration and emigration occurred and from there on, the place, or state, you were born in determined your living conditions and the relation between different states regulated if you were free to leave one state and to enter another.

Interview, E. F., 25 years old, from Kabul, Afghanistan

Luisa Gebauer

Where do you come from and what have you done before coming to Dresden?

I am from Kabul in Afghanistan. I was a student of B-Com, Bachelor of Commerce, in Pakistan before. At the age of four, my family and I went to Pakistan and, after fourteen years, we came back to Kabul. I have been working in a private institute in the finance department of the university. I also did translations in conferences. From English to Pashto and English to Dari. Due to the politic situation, we had to flee the country.

How was it like to be on the run?

It took six months to get from Afghanistan to Germany. I crossed many borders of different countries. We were about fifty people of different origins and different ages: families, young boys and young girls. We reached Germany in October. First, I arrived in Newmünster, near Hamburg. Over there, I called my cousin and he took me to the police. That is when I first was registered.

Dublin II

This enactment of the European Union regulates which EU-state is in charge of the asylum procedures of a refugee. Usually, it is the state a refugee first sets his foot on. Hence, mostly Italy and Greece, as they represent external frontiers of the EU, are made responsible. Germany and other countries, which are situated in the middle of the EU, are thus not easy to reach since the enactment of 2003. It also allots, that if a refugee continues his escape, for instant from Italy to Germany, he or she will be send back to the country of arrival.

Nevertheless, you were not allowed to stay in Hamburg, although you had family there?

No, my sister lives in Hamburg, my brother lives in Aschaffenburg and another brother lives in Canada, in Toronto. It is not in our hands. It depends on the government.

The “Königsteiner-Key“

The “Königsteiner-Key“ regulates the asylum seeker’s distribution to the different administrative districts according to their tax

revenues and population.

What were your expectations regarding your future life in Germany?

Actually, I did not plan to come to Germany. To me, it did not matter if it was Germany, Sweden or another European country. My mother and I first arrived in Latvia where the human rights for refugees were really bad and my mother, who is ill, did not receive any medical aid. Therefore, we decided to travel further. I had no expectations because I did not expect that I would have to leave my country and become a refugee. I also had the opportunity to go to Canada and to work for my brother, but I did not want to go and I also did not want to leave my mother behind. There are some people in Afghanistan whose dream is to come to Europe, but it was not my dream. I had my own car, my own job, my own salary, my own house and good friends. Therefore, I was happy with my mum. My dream is to go back to Afghanistan when the circumstances are better.

For how long have you been to Germany?

I have been in Germany for eleven months. Before coming to Dresden, I spent three months in Chemnitz and after that, I was transferred to the refugee camp in Dresden. Now, I live in one room with my mum. Overall, there are about sixty people living there, all of different origins.

Are you able to communicate with them?

Yes, actually, besides English, I can speak Dari, Pashto, Bengali, Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, a little bit of Russian and a little bit of Arabic and the language of Bangladesh as well. Therefore, I am able to communicate with the people from Tunisia, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. There is even someone from Kabul, where I am from. In addition, I attend a language course in order to learn German.

Can you describe your living conditions?

I am accommodated in a residential called "Sozialamtwohnheim", a

four-floor building, in Dresden, Buchenstraße. I live at the first floor, in a single room that I share with my mum. However, we have to use the toilets situated on the second floor. There is one kitchen and one bathroom on every floor. We also have a laundry that is open on Friday.

So do you feel comfortable there?

Well, no. We have neither internet nor cable TV, so that we can watch the German channels. I mean, watching German TV can contribute to learning the language. In addition, international news programs, like BBC, would be a source of information about what is happening in our native country. Three times already, we sent a letter to the "Sozialamt" asking if they could provide such things if each of us paid five Euro per month.

You told me that your mother is sick. Is she getting any treatment?

I guess what my mother needs is not a treatment what she needs is family. We have some cousins living in Hamburg and when she is over there, she feels better. There, she can go outside she can talk to

family members, whereas here in Dresden, she is in her room all day long. She speaks neither German nor English.

However, you are not allowed to leave Saxony, are you? How often is she able to go there to see her family?

Yes, we are only allowed to leave the region for fourteen days a month. The rest of the time, we have to stay in the administrative district.

Do you know the reasons?

Well, I think the government is afraid that refugees would move to the West of Germany, because they are not satisfied in the East. In Dresden, there are no working opportunities and people might be more tolerant in the West.

Restricted Residence

Asylum seekers and tolerated residents in Germany need a permit from the immigration authorities if they want to leave the borders of the federal state in which they live to visit friends or family. In most of the German Federal States, this includes the whole state. In Saxony, people are restricted to the administrative

districts of Dresden, Chemnitz and Leipzig respectively.

Have you experienced intolerant behaviour?

Yes, my very first day, I had to give blood for a medical test and I did not really know where to go so I asked a woman on the street for the way and she responded: "Scheiß Flüchtlinge". I was just guessing that this meant something like "Sorry, I do not know". When I came back to the camp, I asked the security person what it meant and, although I first had to laugh, later on I became a little depressed and sad about her reaction. When taking the train, nobody wants to sit next to me even if there is an empty place.

Are you in touch with some Germans? Do you feel to be treated equally?

Yes, but whenever I meet Germans, especially girls, I have the feeling that they think I want something from them. That I would be able to use someone to get a visa, for my benefit. They expect me to behave like this.

Are you able to work in your profession? Are you allowed to work?

After one year in Germany, you get the permission to work. You will get a paper from the "Ausländerbehörde" and then you can use this paper to apply for a job at the job centre. However, you will only get the job if there is no other European citizen who could do it as well.

Even if you were better qualified?

Yes, even if you are an engineer. There is only a five percent chance that I will get a job. I have been struggling all my life to become an educated person and there is simply no chance that I can work in my profession. I do not want to take money from the government. I could work to provide for my living, but instead I have to feel like a beggar.

Is it problematic for you to understand all the laws and restrictions in the German legislation? Are they translated into your language?

That is definitely a big issue. The people who have to deal with refugees at the "Sozialamt" and the "Ausländerbehörde" often only speak German and Russian. They tell you to speak in German, but after staying in Germany only for three months that is simply impossible. There is no translator provided.

Does that mean refugees have to sign papers they do not understand?

Yes, a lot of them just sign papers without understanding them. But I always ask to give me at least one day to read the papers and to have them translated by a friend.

Is there anything left you want to say?

Yes, I just want to utter one wish. I hope for a Dresden where people do not think negatively of the refugees. We just came here to save our lives. I would like that some inhabitants of Dresden

changed their behaviour. If they cannot give love, than they should show at least respect and tolerance. We do not expect them to solve our problems, we are able to do that ourselves.

E.F. is just one of hundreds of refugees in Dresden. Most asylum seekers in Dresden and Saxony are from India or Pakistan, North African counties, Russia, Serbia and Macedonia, Afghanistan or Iran – countries in which people have to suffer from war, persecution, hunger, discrimination and violence. These conditions are provoked as well by German policies.

He hopes that one day, he will be able to return to Afghanistan – a land that experienced 35 years of war.

Further information:

kamadresden.blogspot.de

namf.blogspot.de

www.bamf.de

www.refugeesinternational.org

SHOULDN'T WE BE AN ENLIGHTENED SOCIETY?



From a global standpoint, being German is not necessarily an advantage, unless of course one is working in fields like engineering or technology. But considering Germany's difficult historical past, the prejudices nowadays against Germans, in general, are not justified; however, recent events reveal they are not entirely mistaken either.

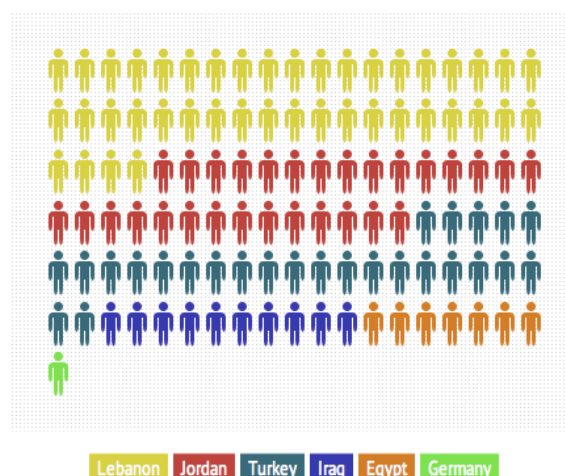
Being part of a generation that has no direct affiliation with the malpractices of Nazi criminals of the past, Germans today present themselves in a new light abroad. Although the majority of Germans are successful in doing so, ignorant individuals remain and feel the need to "march" to the beat of a different drum. Once more, right wing extremists found another platform to promote their inhumane principles – this time against the refugee movement by acting as pseudo aides in the matter of "civil defense." Saxony, a federal state known as a stronghold for right wing radicals and intolerance, made negative headlines recently as Leipzig radicals gathered to demonstrate against a local shelter for refugees.

Retrospect: *In 2013 Germany agreed to an obligation to grant asylum to an additional 5000 refugees. People in dangerous and desperate war situations had to flee their countries, including Syria, Palestine and Afghanistan, to find protection in countries safe from bombings, massacres and famine. Several emergency accommodations were therefore arranged throughout Germany to guarantee quick support.*

Refugee - a word that is associated by a number of Germans with a negative connotation, which at most causes a side effect of temporary compassion. Even in politics refugees became a political football during campaigns for the 2013 ballot.

Discussions about how many refugees would be allowed and where best to locate them soon emerged on the political agenda. Since a rich country like Germany was willing to grant asylum to a *swarm* of 5000 people in need, the right wing extremists has now come to our defense to protect us from *wild, barbarous* children and women...?

Countries receiving refugees



Unsurprisingly, the research done at the centre of the NPD party remains incomplete. The fact is the majority of refugees, arriving in Germany families, mainly, children and women. So the argument being spread and planted into ignorant citizens heads that our children are in danger from threatening refugees living among us seems a bit farfetched. "Child Protection instead of asylum seeker!" – a motto that not only attracts offense, but also makes matters worse by alluring numerous civilian initiatives that partner up with right wing extremists in order to get rid of refugees.

These groups fear an increase in crimes like robbery, drugs and rape with the arrival of refugees in their neighborhood. Not only are these prejudices discriminative and on the verge of slanderous remarks, but they are also the evidence of a lack of education and/or interest in current global conflicts. A refugee is not looking to do harm in another country. In fact, just the opposite is true. In many cases a refugee is simply fleeing death in his or her own country in hopes of finding peace elsewhere.

Reality: *Since 2011 the Syrian regime led by Baschar al-Assad has been fighting its population in a civil war, caused by a protest against the violent dictatorship in control. Over a period of 2 years 150,000 people have died, 4.25 million internal refugees and 2.3 million refugees overseas have escaped the steady threat. The use of chemical weapons against civilians caused a worldwide response. At transitional camps human trafficking, bombing and deficiency of water are a daily occurrence.*

The widely spread misinformation of extremists, that refugees would head off to rob the town as soon as they get into Germany is an easily used argument to fan fear in the public. Refugees that have just arrived in a country that is completely diverse to the standards they are used to, are more likely to be found within their accommodations. It takes time to adapt to a lifestyle and certain habits of a different culture and especially to accept an unknown future. Germans should be welcoming and offer them a chance to be part of society rather than force them to become outsiders.

It is shameful enough that the party NPD is continually able to fuel fears in the public by claiming that foreigners could harm our children. To be allowed to demonstrate in front of the refugee's accommodations is a scandal and a disgrace to the German people. To what degree is our constitutional right to freedom of assembly bearable? One ray of hope is the counter-demonstrator, as each welcome the refugees in Germany and carry on donating food, clothing and toys for the children. Every citizen of Germany should take pride and feel the urge to be part of an act of solidarity against far right ideas that, sadly, continue to germinate in our society.



A NEW BEST FRIEND FOR EVERYONE

Why and how Google is trying to find out all about us

Nathalie Wesp

In September 2013 the US court gave Google permission to extend its online library by scanning books and another headline stated that the Google glasses are now free to preorder. However, the undoubtedly biggest uproar was caused by the revelation that the NSA managed to obtain free access to Google's data centre traffic by circumventing high-standard security measures since 2009. Eric Holder, the US attorney general, declared that the PRISM program was only used in Europe if it was "reasonably believed" that the "foreign target" was suspected of having links to terrorism or cybercrime. But for this exact reason, companies are legally obliged to comply with requests for users' communications under US law – without informing the person affected, so why is there a need to collect data secretly?

More importantly, what information, and in what detail could Google provide to the NSA about each and every one of us? How does the data kraken work and what methods exist to maintain one's anonymity?

In Germany, Google holds a market share of 94% and one internet user out of seven would not know what alternative to use if Google was down. There are 5500 search engines worldwide but especially in the Western world, Google is the dominant one. Several reasons why can be found in an instant: minimalist layout, search results in a split second and various additional free services such as Google Maps, Google Scholar and Gmail, to name just a few. Nonetheless, there is a price we pay: we accept constant advertisements, as well as the storing of our personal data.

The search engine does not only influence the way we gather information, but also affects our interaction with others: confronted with a problem, we are likely to seek Google's help as many times as we would ask a friend or doctor for advice.

Whenever we use the services of the company founded by Sergey Brin and Larry

Page in 1998, we leave a trail of personal information, which is used to display personalised ads. Advertisements on TV or in newspapers can only assume their target audience, whereas Google can effortlessly detect a person's interests by analysing search history, watched videos and visited websites. The more we reveal about us, the better search results are displayed because two users typing in the same phrase does not necessarily mean they are looking for the same answer. However, Google aims for more: the so-called Programmable Search Engine (PSE) is supposed to give the right answer to questions such as "What should I do today?", "Which job should I take?" or "What name to give my baby?". Former vice president of Google, Marissa Mayer, once stated that Google is supposed to become a best friend, who knows the most intimate details in the same way a "real" friend would.

Of course it is not said that Google will achieve its goal in the near future, but the company is working ambitiously towards it. Whenever we use services such as Google Docs, the upload function of Picasa, or Gmail, our documents, pictures and emails are stored on several of the hundreds of thousands servers located in secret places all over the world. Based on a simple search request, Google can derive the following information: What did the user search for and what websites did she/he visit, Internet Protocol (IP) address, language and type of browser, time and date, cookies.

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Cookies are external text files which are saved on our computers as soon as we click on a website. From this point on, software protocols our surfing behaviour in order to display the right ads. At best, cookies make surfing easier, when websites remember passwords or identify us as the person that bought a certain book, for example. In the worst case, cookies are used to store data about a user’s private internet behaviour and sends it to an addressee without permission. Since Google’s takeover of DoubleClick (a company providing Internet ad serving services) in 2007, 93 of the top 100 websites collect data on behalf of Google.

Despite a considerable amount of information collected by our search requests, Google does not necessarily know who we are yet, but, in general, it does not constitute a difficulty to find out. Whoever has a Google account or uses Gmail can be identified by name, place, age etc. Moreover, who has not looked up their full name out of curiosity? Eventually, every single search request can be assigned to one individual user and it is proven that the majority is surprised by how much of one’s personal life Google knows.

There is no doubt that Google is in possession of something very valuable: millions and millions of people’s most intimate details. This data, sold to other companies or gotten into the wrong hands, could result in fatal consequences for the

individual. Naturally, the majority of Google users will not provide usable information, but there will still be a decent number of people whose close analysis will reveal their worries, health or addiction problems, as well as if they cheat on their partner or have secret passions.

It would be interesting for employers to find out about things their current or future employees do not talk about. Criminals could decide between breaking into a house whose owner is on holiday, and blackmailing a person holding secrets. Given the necessary information, it would be very simple to trick or threaten others.

We need to learn how to manage our privacy on the internet. We have to be able to decide when to remain anonymous, and when to reveal our identity. But in order to do so, we do not only need to be aware of Google’s methods to store data, but also how to circumvent them. The most obvious option is using another search engine, which does neither store IP address nor other data, such as *Ixquick* or *DuckDuckGo*. A very effective method requiring little effort is the deletion of Cookies from the internet browser. Furthermore, software for anonymous surfing, for example the *Tor Project* or the TU Dresden – program *JAP*, can be downloaded for free.

In the end, it is not about trying to avoid Google or denying the added value a personal web search holds for us. The importance lies in being aware of the techniques used by the search engine to collect data from every single one of the more than five billion requests a day.

A STORM IS COMING...

The shitstorm phenomenon

Lisa Mühsig

The world of the 21st century is connected and people are able to share information in a very quick and extensive way. Social media rapidly became a platform for this exchange where people are able to share their thoughts, discuss certain topics and express their feeling. This is a great benefit as long as it happens in a civilised and fair way. The reality looks different, though, as criticism and discussion often turn into a public outcry on the internet, where arguments mix with threats and insults to reach a critical mass. In Germany, this phenomenon is called a shitstorm.



The new symbol for the shitstorm?
(source: <http://9gag.com/gag/5028233>)

Of course the Germans did not invent the word shitstorm, but started using it in the context of the outrageous protest and expression of opinion on the internet. In 2011, the word shitstorm was voted Germany's Anglicism of the year and, in July 2013, it was even included in the Duden, the most respected German dictionary and equivalent of the Oxford English Dictionary. According to the Duden, a shitstorm is a storm of protest in a communication medium on the internet and involves insulting comments. The shitstorm is not only a German phenomenon, though, but rather an international one, as people from all over the world use social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, to let off steam. Since most of the recipients of this public outrage are big companies, celebrities or politicians

who are represented on social media, the protest strikes them directly and quite effectively. However, the trigger for a shitstorm is almost always an action by the "victims" themselves. It is used as a hook to express discontent and attract attention to the supposed misbehaviour and inequity. In the past few years, numerous people and companies had to deal with shitstorms and a few cases even hit the headlines of newspapers and news programmes on television.

In 2010, one of the severest shitstorms hit the German railroad company Deutsche Bahn. The company offered a cheap ticket for travelling around Europe which customers could only purchase on the Deutsche Bahn Facebook page. What the Deutsche Bahn forgot to consider was that people used the platform not only to buy tickets, but mostly to vent their anger about delays, faulty technology and the handling of bad weather situations. The shitstorm attracted increasing attention and became a huge PR debacle for the Deutsche Bahn.

In the very same year, the food and beverage company Nestlé had to deal with a shitstorm as well. In this case, however, the driving force was the environmental organisation Greenpeace Germany, as they criticised the usage of a good deal of palm oil for the production of Nestlé's KitKat, which supposedly leads to the destruction of the habitat of orang-utans. The chorus of outrage was triggered off by a social media campaign including shocking YouTube videos (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToGK3-2tZz8>). Nestlé wanted to ban these videos and turn off certain websites to stop discussions and protest. The opposite happened and the videos spread like wildfire across the internet, which left Nestlé to deal with damage to its image.

Another very interesting shitstorm occurred on the Facebook page of the German bank ING-DiBa. The trigger here was a commercial showing the basketball star Dirk

Nowitzki eating a slice of sausage in a butcher's shop. According to many vegans and vegetarians, the ad was a tremendous scandal. So they started a shitstorm and littered the bank's Facebook page with countless very critical posts about the consumption of meat. As many customers solidarised with the bank and criticised the aggressive posts, the shitstorm erupted in a fierce discussion about the right lifestyle. The bank took over again and ended the controversy with no harm done to its image.

These are only three out of the numerous shitstorms that occurred in the last few years and it seems as if there are more and more arising every day. This creates the impression that shitstorms are slowly but steadily becoming a part of the social media culture and many people are using this chance to participate in a public outcry and maybe make a difference. Companies and other "victims" of shitstorms often struggle with the consequences and fail to handle the situations the right way. In this case, the best thing to do is to establish an effective crisis communication and let social media experts find a way to avoid shitstorms or to function as a mediator during a shitstorm with regard to damage control. The most challenging thing is to monitor the processes on social media sites and detect any shitstorms before it is too late, but at the same time not to stop every critical discussion, as they can often be very helpful.

WE ARE WHAT WE EAT

The dark side of our food industry and how we can change our consumer behavior.

Katharina Gassewitz

Last year's horse meat scandal alarmed numerous people in Europe and the story continues: A recent *Spiegel Online* article points out that many other food products are under strong suspicion of not being what they are supposed to be. It reveals that the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety issued a report that contains a list of recurring fraud cases, mentioning the wrong labelling of meat and fish, the replacement of certain ingredients by cheaper options, the sale of conventional products as allegedly organic and the wrong indication of weight and date of expiry. In the supermarket, the consumer is confronted with a large variety of groceries, not knowing if they are genetically modified or what sort of chemicals have really been added to them. Is there anything or anyone left we can trust or do we have to produce our own food in order to be able to nourish ourselves in a fair and safe manner?

And there is more to come: Global agriculture is said to be able to feed 12 billion people without problems (cf. Ziegler, Jean in *We feed the world* (film)), but how come so many people in the world are dying of hunger and suffering from malnutrition? The simple truth is that two million kilos of bread are thrown away every year, only because its production dates back two days (cf. *We feed the world*). And if we had a look in a supermarket's waste container once, we would find numerous, still sealed food products which simply exceeded their best-before date. In addition to this, factory farming constitutes another reason for the world's food loss. Firstly, a farmer can nourish about 30 people if he or she grows fruits or vegetables on one hectare of land, but if he devotes it to animals for meat or egg production, the number decreases to five people. Secondly, farm animals consume 60 % of our world cereal production, which could otherwise feed the 923 million people who suffer from

malnutrition. Thus, a meat eater takes up 930 kilos of crop per year, while the amount consumed by a vegetarian is only 180 kilos per year (source of facts and figures: www.vegplanete.com).

Talking about factory farming, we also need to consider the suffering of animals which goes with it. No space, no light, no outdoor access. That is what the animal's life is like, every day. Antibiotics, fattening foods – what it is fed, every day. Some of them cannot even bear up against their own weight any more, suffer from unbelievable pain and from diseases which occur because of this kind of treatment. We can find a good deal of videos on the internet which keep records of the cruelty of factory farming and, still, many people support it by buying this meat in the supermarket. Furthermore, by eating it, they take in the same stuff which is given to the animals before and might catch the same diseases, like swine or bird flu for example.

Now, what can we do? Reducing meat consumption or even turning vegetarian could already have an influence and decrease the mass meat production of today. But even then, we subsist on other groceries, half of them being animal source products like milk and eggs. Are there any other options than going to a conventional supermarket? Do we have to go directly to the farmer to be sure about the quality and the mode of food production?

An association called VG – *Verbrauchergemeinschaft* (Consumer's Association) came into existence in Dresden in 1991 and attracted members during the past 22 years, displaying the number of 7000 associates today. It owns five shops (*Dresden – Mitte* (2), *Dresden – Neustadt*, *Dresden – Striesen* and the just recently established one in *Dresden – Loschwitz* past 22 years, displaying the number of 7000 associates today. It owns five shops (*Dresden – Mitte* (2), *Dresden – Neustadt*,

Dresden – Striesen and the just recently established one in *Dresden – Loschwitz*) where one can buy all kinds of food, but also other organic products like clothes, cosmetics and stationery supplies. Their main objective being the offer of regional products, the VG is provided with goods by around 80 companies and farms within a distance of 150 kilometres from Dresden. These products are labelled with an emblem in order to be recognisable to the customers and, usually, the exact point of origin is indicated with the name of the farm or the company. Apart from that, non-regional organic products are available as well, the certificate labelling them being at least the one following the EU – guidelines. However, they accentuate the sale of *Bio-Verbandswaren* (goods of organic farming associations), naming *Gäa e.V.*, *Naturland*, *Demeter* and *Bioland*, since their regulations for organic farming prove to be stricter.



Advantages of organic products are the ban of genetic engineering, the prohibition of mineral nitrogen fertiliser and artificial pesticides, a lower usage of additives, the protection of land, water, air and natural resources, the preservation of biodiversity, a species-appropriate husbandry, the reduction of energy consumption, the aim of a circular economy with closed nutrient cycles and in general a high degree of transparency when it comes to the production and fabrication of food and other products. Even goods from countries other than the EU, which are sold in the shops of the VG, are subject to these guidelines and just wrong and we are destroying everything that surrounds us – flora, fauna and finally ourselves.

companies and farms abroad are regularly visited in order to insure a fair trade without exploitation. Furthermore, vegetarians, vegans and people with allergies will probably find their personal paradise at the VG selling points, due to their wide variety of vegetarian and vegan food, and products without gluten. As an association the VG organises, additionally to the sale of organic products, public relations activities in order to protect the environment and educate the consumer. These activities include education for pupils, information desks, the participation at the *Tag der Regionen* (Day of the Regions), farm visits and a summer festival.

Regarding the cost of a membership and the purchase of products, it is certainly not as cheap as discount supermarkets or even *Konsum* and *REWE*: a single person has to pay an amount of 20 Euro for the companionship which will be returned if, one



day, he or she wants to quit. In addition, the monthly contribution is 15 Euro and 7,50 Euro for a child. People who are not a member of the VG are also able to buy products, but the price is sometimes twice as high. Definitely, a membership seems to be expensive, but on the other hand, an economic management which is independent of the sales is permitted, since the VG shops are financed by their members' contribution, not by surcharges. Moreover, it seems to be worth it, especially in terms of food quality and the positive effect it has on nature and the economy.

Food is an important part of our life and nobody should economize on that. People should not be astonished about horse meat in their lasagne if they only want to spend 99 cents on it. Western societies and also other countries which adopt our model are more and more focused on efficiency and on saving time and money. But maybe this is just wrong and we are destroying everything that surrounds us – flora, fauna and finally ourselves.



“Perhaps in the back of our minds we already understand (...) that something terribly wrong is happening. Our sustenance now comes from misery. We know that if someone offers to show us a film on how meat is produced, it will be a horror film. We perhaps know more than we care to admit, keeping it down in the dark places of our memory – disavowed. When we eat factory-farmed meat we live, literally, on tortured flesh. Increasingly, that tortured flesh is becoming our own.”

Eating Animals, Jonathan Safran Foer



A TINY TALE OF THE BEARD

“He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man” – William Shakespeare, Much Ado About Nothing

Truth might be found in Shakespeare's statement and yet more men prefer wearing no beard in present times. Reasons for that can be a job with a strict dress code, a girlfriend with a lot of “good arguments” against it and, of course, genetics breeding mischief. Since the late 20th century, the beard has led a miserable life being no more than a marginal phenomenon. It is simply out-of-vogue, a victim of the youth cult.

But the developments of the 21st century are running in the opposite direction. The Hipster, a recent subculture, who have to endure a lot of mockery, can claim credit for triggering an increasing interest in men's facial hair. Drawn on the finger, the moustache becomes presentable even for a woman. The moustache, in the fashion of

Monopoly Man's whiskers, became an icon of the Hipster movement. As a result, the spotlight is on the beard again and its history includes numerous oddities and exciting stories.

Since year one, the beard has been a sign of virility, strength and vigor. Our prehistoric ancestors would not have dared to shave off their beards completely because they believed that the soul was present in the continual growth of the hair. However, during a merry hunting, an overly long beard could be an impediment. After all, it is not very aerodynamic. Archeologists found clam shells, shark teeth and flint blades that had been used to trim beards.

King Camp Gillette would have laughed lustily about such awkward tools. In 1901, he invented the disposable razor and thus made a comfortable shave at home possible. 16 years later, the US government ordered 36 million razors for the soldiers of the US army so that all of them went to war clean-shaven. As the United States emerged victoriously from the First World War, this military fashion was quickly adopted by middle-class men. A short hairstyle with a smooth chin became the symbol of the triumphant hero.

Back in ancient Egypt, basically everyone was shaven as well but for other reasons. The beard was a medium of class distinction and only great pharaohs were allowed to wear it. Similar to a crown, the beard was an insignia of omnipotence and divinity. As those long ornamented chin

beards were of supreme importance, they could not be dependent on natural hair growth and thus were manufactured artificially. The death mask of Tutanchamun (1346 -1336 BC) features an impressive example of such a ceremonial beard. Even women, for example Hatshepsut, wore the ceremonial beard to demonstrate the legitimacy of their governance. This tradition was not carried on. At least, there is no clear indication of a “Merkel Moustache”, yet.

In ancient Greece, a man without a flourishing beard was regarded as effeminate, unsound and cursed. This advanced civilization worshiped the beard as a symbol of life, spirit and wisdom and, therefore, public “shears” were a very common method of punishment. As a matter of fact, the unauthorized touching or defilement of a man's beard could result in execution. The Greek with their complex mythology and vivid mortuary cult believed that Charon, ferryman of the Netherworld, would demand a man's beard as payment for the crossing of the river Acheron. That is why they would not shave a dead man's face unless they begrudged him entrance to eternity. Not until later, they laid coins on the mouth of their dead as a payment.

A sudden onset came with the crowning of Alexander the Great of Macedonia. He enacted a law that prohibited the growing of beards for military-strategic reasons. Quite often a man was defeated in a hand-to-hand combat because of his long

beard. The enemy would grab it and take advantage of the opponent's momentary imbalance to conduct the final stroke. Only philosophers were excluded. The great thinker with an impressive beard is a common image that has survived through the ages. Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Gandalf, they all stand in the tradition of the philosopher's beard. With the expansion of his kingdom, Alexander introduced and established the Greek way of living in many foreign countries. The Romans gladly adopted the clean-shaven face and, yet, in times of mourning, they let their beards grow. The hair of a young man's first shave was sacrificed to a god to symbolize maturity and virility. Even nowadays, the first shave marks a turning point in the development of a boy to a man.

A beard testifies to seriousness and authority, so many emperors and kings until the late Middle Ages were depicted with beards. Hence, it had occurred that Emperor Otto III (980-1002) appeared bearded on his first seal although he was only three years old at that time. Emperor Frederick I (1122-1190), also called Barbarossa (red beard), is said to have had such a spectacular beard overflowing with vitality that it continued to grow after his death.

Since the Modern Ages, the beard gradually has fallen into fashion's trap. Until the early 19th century, it became almost invisible but the resistance movement against the Ancien Régime caused a revival.

Revolutionaries wore a full beard as sign of their unbending spirit and their critique of the government. In the 1960s, the beard reappeared as an expression of protest when the Hippies let their hair and beard grow wildly for the sake of love and pacifism.

After all, the beard is more than a fashionable accessory. It is part of our cultural history, a political statement (Imagine the mask of Guy Fawkes. It would be only half as charismatic without the beard) and a companion of many famous men, such as Charlie Chaplin, Albert Einstein, Lev Tolstoy, Frank Zappa, to name but a few. Of course, the beard assumes many shapes some so extraordinary that classifying them would be too troublesome. Therefore those beards are named after their "bearers", for example, the "lobster beard" of Salvatore Dali which he quite correctly described as "vertical mysticism". Admittedly, the beard does not always quadruple handsomeness, it might be impractical with regard to eating and kissing and yet it is a clear statement of virility and individuality. Its story has just started.

BEHIND THE RED VELVET CURTAINS

An interview with the Semperoper's costume assistant Hannes Föst

It is a sunny Monday morning and I am sitting in a cosy room in the Semperoper's management building. The repertoire of the Semperoper, a world-famous opera house situated in Dresden, contains a huge variety of classic and contemporary opera, ballet and symphonic concerts. Today, I have an appointment with Anke Parma-Hille, the ballet department's costume assistant, who will give me a glimpse behind the red velvet curtains. While I am waiting eagerly, I find myself flicking through a SEMPER magazine and stumble upon some nice interviews. Suddenly, the door opens and Anke enters. With a friendly, apologetic smile, she approaches me and sits down: "Sorry, this fitting took a bit longer." Quoting from the magazine, I ask her the first question:

"What have you got in your pockets?"...

(laughs) Well, pockets aren't enough. I always carry my little bum bag with all the important things. As I have to be available in every room of this building all the time, my mobile phone is indispensable.

Why did you take this job and how did you get it?

Actually, I rather slipped into it. In my job as a stage carpenter here at the Semperoper, I had the chance to observe the costume assistants' work. The direct contact to the artists fascinated me. When a new position was vacant, I thought: "You can do it, you want it!" and simply sent in my application. Although they told me that it would only be in the ballet section, I replied: "Why not. Just give it a try." That was 10 years ago and I'm still happy with my choice.



Always busy: Anke Parma-Hille at work

What does a usual day in your department look like? What are your tasks?

The first thing I do in the morning is to check whether there have been important changes in the cast. Then we make plans for the fittings, which mostly take place after the dancers' training before noon. There are thousands of little things waiting to be done. For example, we also calculate how much of what fabric we need, place orders and send them to the dyeworks; we meet the designers; we organise transports from here to the opera. It's a lot of organization, indeed, maybe two times more than the amount of artistic tasks. All these procedures require a lot of communication with other departments, so you're in steady motion.

What do you personally find so fascinating about your job?

The most beautiful part is that I can be creative while working closely with the artists. The connection between designer and artists really fascinates me. It's challenging but interesting to find individual costumes that suit not only the dancers' body but also their style and character.

I guess it is also wonderful to see the process.

Exactly! From the first figurine you see to the final version, you have to build up a relationship with every new piece, with role names of all the different ballets or different constellation of dancers. Since we have to attend to many tasks in a short time, I'm glad that I can rely on my enthusiastic team! Costume interpreters, costume painters, shoemakers, we all are very flexible and often resort to dry situational humour to take the stress out of certain processes. The most important aspects of my team: humour, team spirit and fun at work.



Dancers in Im anderen Raum © Ian Whalen/Semperoper Dresden

In such a big collection of glamour and glitter, do you have any favourite costume?

With all the decorative elements, the colourful dresses from Coppélia are beautiful to look at. But my favourite... I can't tell. It's every costume that I am working on at a certain point time. If I have managed to make a costume as closely to the designers' idea as possible and they like it, I am happy. On the other hand, there is always a hated object that bothers you from the first day on. Something that the designer is never satisfied with. Whatever you change, it just doesn't want to work out!

Let's talk about the recent premiere Nordic Lights. Would you like to tell us some intriguing details about the performance -and costumes?

With pleasure! The evening started with the strong Im anderen Raum, my personal favourite. Everything formed a fluent unit. To spice up the simple linen suits and dresses, the original cloths had been sprayed and crumpled. Those are things where dressers would rather reach for their iron but we, in our department, say: "Don't iron, this is how it's supposed to look!" Furthermore, the dancers wore a funny construction, a horse's head consisting of white stripes. It took us very long to find material flexible enough, the appropriate position, size... This is one example of our little "hated objects" I just mentioned. D-Day drew nearer, it had to work, and -it worked (laughs)



Dancers in Im anderen Raum © Ian Whalen/Semperoper Dresden

Surely, there are many changes right before the premiere?

In the case of Nordic Lights, definitely. Not right before but we had only one day in advance. Originally, only the primary cast should have performed but Jón Vallejo hurt himself and Jiří Bubeníček, who is much taller, had to fill in for him. The dismantling of the jacket was easy because in every costume we have enough range to make them tighter or looser. Unfortunately, we had only one shirt that just wouldn't fit! Because the shirt had been dyed very shortly before

the premiere, it was impossible to sew a new one that quickly. In the end, we simply took off the sleeves. In such situations you just have to improvise. No dancer has ever entered the stage naked.

Except when it is planned, as in Mats Ek's She Was Black, when the soloist appeared on stage for 5 seconds, wearing nothing but his shoes.

Yes, the red point shoes... (laughs)

Is it true that that opera singers and dancers are arrogant divas?

I would rather say that 99 per cent of them are not. Most of them trust you and treat you nicely when they realize that you are trying to accommodate them. In most cases, their own excitement is responsible for why they suddenly find flaws in their costume. But generally, there are really few people who you couldn't communicate with. At least, these are my experiences.

And that is how the myth has been destroyed...

Admittedly, there was this solo singer once who absolutely did not want to attend a fitting before 9 o'clock. She told us she would only come if we offered some champagne. Since the costume needed to be on stage by afternoon, we did as she demanded. When she arrived at 9, she was utterly astonished. We all drank some sparkling wine and she relaxed: "Now that stimulates my circulation." So the fitting was saved. (smiles) Of course, we have to be very sensitive and flexible.

I'd like to come to my final question: What do theatre, art, and culture mean to you, personally?

As a child, I was taken to the theatre very often, thus, art is deeply anchored in my life. As for ballet in particular, I admire how emotions and thoughts can be conveyed through body language.

I couldn't do it! (laughs) Generally, I regard art as being an enrichment for life. Plays, operas, ballets and concerts cover a lot of topics that accompany life, whether humorous or serious. Whenever you watch closely, you find characters on stage you can identify with. And that is why art has the ability to touch our hearts.

I could not agree more. Thank you very much for this interview. Good luck with the next tutu!

"With the greatest pleasure," she replies and gets up while I switch off the recorder. Busily searching for her mobile phone in her bum bag, she climbs up the stairs towards the dressing rooms -it is time for the next fitting.



Kee-o-kuk, chief of the Sauk-and-Fox

BIASED PERSPECTIVES ON A LOST CULTURE

What many people associate with “Native Americans” today, are certainly sunny afternoons they spent in their childhood playing “Cowboys and Indians”. Not only in America, but especially in Europe, the “Wild West” and the Native American culture have been objects of interest and curiosity for a long time. Throughout history Native Americans have been depicted as the “noble savage”, wise and proud, on the one hand, and as the “evil, uncivilized enemy” on the other. But where is the origin of the pictures and

images we associate with this long lost culture?

Felicia Stolle

Most of the pictures that represent Native Americans today appeared during times in which their culture was already slowly vanishing. The most famous painters of Native Americans, like Charles Bird King and George Catlin, were American and played an influential role in shaping the images of Native Americans that we have today. However, there were also European artists, like Ferdinand Pettrich (1798-1872) who focused on capturing images of the indigenous peoples. An especially interesting aspect of their portrayals is not primarily the unknown culture, but the conclusions that can be drawn about the European mindset of this time.

After he finished his training as a sculptor, the Dresden-born Ferdinand Pettrich followed the advice of his teachers to work on the portrayal of a dying culture: the culture of the Native Americans. This plan in mind, the artist embarked on the long voyage to the far continent and spent the years between 1835 and 1843 in Washington D.C.. It was a time in which Americans were trying to achieve territorial expansions by forcing Native tribes to agree to disadvantaging treaties. Many of the tribes had to accept the decisions of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. In 1843, Pettrich had to leave the US and spent the following years in Rio de Janeiro, where he finished his so called “Indian Museum”, a collection of 33 terracotta-colored plaster sculptures, portraying mainly Native American tribal chiefs. Around 1858 Pettrich moved to

Rome, where he gave the sculptures to pope Pius IX as a present. The “Indian Museum” has been exhibited at the Museo Missionario-Etnologico in the Vatican ever since. The 16 busts, four life-sized statues, nine bozzetti and four low reliefs display the way Native Americans looked right before their world collapsed.

From October 1st 2013 until March 2nd 2014 Pettrich’s “Indian Museum” was exhibited at the Albertinum in Dresden. The temporary exposition “Tecumseh, Keokuk, Black Hawk - Portrayals of Native Americans in Times of Treaties and Removal” focuses on Pettrich’s works, but also includes other artists of his time.

On the occasion of the exhibition, Prof. Dr. Brigitte Georgi-Findlay from the Institute of North American Cultural Studies at the Dresden University of Technology and the ethnologist Dr. Iris Edenheiser from the Dresden State Art Collections organized a public lecture to provide detailed background information for everyone with a special interest in images of Native Americans.



Bust of Black Hawk

During one session of the lecture “Portrayals of Indians – Visual representations of Native Americans”, Dr. Edenheiser explains that Pettrich’s approach to portraying the Natives was not quite unbiased. Looking at his artwork, it becomes obvious that Pettrich was following certain patterns that satisfied specific European preconceptions. Therefore his sculptures can be used as reflecting devices of the European mindset in the 1800s.

Dr. Iris Edenheiser outlines several characteristics of Pettrich’s art: Firstly, the artist depicted the Natives in a rather positive and heroic light. The neo-classical sculptures resemble busts and statues found in ancient Rome, like the “Apollo Belvedere”. However, in contrast to a Roman statue’s gaze, which is never directed at the beholder to show “reclusiveness”, the lowered gaze of the Native chiefs show their discouragement and their despair. Even though their faces do possess individual features, the similarity between them alludes to the fact that Pettrich wanted to portray Native Americans as one ethnicity, rather than individual tribes. According to Dr. Edenheiser, Pettrich tended to ignore the visual differences between the tribes and stuck close to the European ideas of Natives. The terracotta-color of the sculptures can be seen as a reference to the Native’s skin-color. Another difference to their Roman neo-classical “relatives” is the fact that the Natives are not depicted in “heroic nudity”, but instead portrayed with clothing and jewelry. Interestingly, the clothing given to them by Pettrich may not even correlate with what the Natives actually wore. The presence of fringe-applications and bear claw-necklaces that

can be found on Pettrich’s art is not necessarily historically correct, but may serve the purpose of geographical classification into the American continent.



The Dying Tecumseh

The heroic statue of “The Dying Tecumseh”, chief of the Shawnee tribe, is an innuendo to the vanishing world. By sticking to the image of the “noble savage”, Ferdinand Pettrich expresses a guilty conscience, which stands in opposition to the view that the relocation of Native Americans was an inevitable result of the country’s process of civilization. Presumably, Pettrich wants to confront the beholder with the drawbacks of how things developed on the American continent. He might criticize the de facto dispossession of Native territories and Andrew Jackson’s Indian Removal Act of 1830.

Reliefs, resembling the ones from ancient Greece and Rome, depict the negotiations between the Sioux and the Sauk and Fox tribes that took place in Washington in 1837. Pettrich put the leaders Keokuk and Black Hawk in the center of events. The artist added one relief displaying a joint war-dance of the tribes which was rather improbable between the tribes that were at enmity. Furthermore, the buffalo hunt on one of the reliefs was probably imagined, because where the artist stayed, there were no buffalos at the time.

Knowing that the artist’s encounters with actual Native

Americans were rather short, confirms the assumed unreliability of his portrayals. Regardless of the Natives’ heroic depiction, there are also elements of the “uncivilized savage” to be found in his art. One of his Native women is carrying her child on her back. This was something Europeans would interpret as developmentally behind. In addition to that, the “scalping-cult” is included in one of the battle scenes.

In conclusion it can be said, that instead of investigating the Native American culture, Pettrich stuck to his preconceptions of the Natives. He did not fully acknowledge them as different tribes, but considered them to be one ethnicity. The deeply hostile tribes would certainly have disagreed with many scenes created by Pettrich.

Even though the sculptor portrayed the Natives in a heroic and culturally valuable way, and viewed their vanishing as a cultural loss, one message of his art is that their development was clearly behind that of the Europeans. One revelation that can be drawn from this is that Europeans did not show an honest interest for Native American culture, but were searching for ways to aggrandize themselves as the superior culture. Why did Pettrich choose to let his art live up to the present preconception, rather than investigate the Native culture more closely? Was it a subconscious tendency or did he consider the demands of the ones that he wanted to sell his work to? Whatever it was: it can be concluded that even though Europeans were fascinated by Natives, they also enjoyed the soothing thought that they were no longer posing a possible threat.

200 YEARS OF FAIRYTALES AND GERMAN FOLKLORE

Claudia Kuchler

German folklore is well-known, not only in Germany, but also far beyond the country's borders. All around the world people have heard of the sensational stories that include magical figures, witches or speaking animals. Names like Cinderella, Rapunzel or Snow White bring back memories of times long past and adults feel a wave of nostalgia. Children, on the other hand, are fascinated by the protagonists' courage and their extraordinary adventures.



The degree of popularity of such fairytales is a result of the work and research of two German linguists, the Brothers Grimm. Jacob (*1785-1836) and Wilhelm (*1786-1859) Grimm largely contributed to global cultural history by collecting legends and fairytales in the surroundings of Kassel, Hessen. They used both oral traditions and written documents as sources for their research and ultimately accumulated a total of over two hundred stories. The first edition of their collection "Children's and Household Tales" was published in December 1812 which now is the reason to celebrate the bicentenary in 2013. The Brothers Grimm, who grew up in Hessen and studied law at Marburg University, did not only collect German folklore but were also interested in language and grammar. Both brothers worked at the library in Kassel when their first book on German grammar, which additionally contained how German was

related to different languages, was written. From 1829 on, they worked as professors at Göttingen University where they could pass their knowledge on to their students. In the last period of their lives, they devoted their time to writing a German dictionary, which was only completed up to the letter F. However, with their German dictionary, covering definitions and etymology of the words, they contributed significantly to the field of linguistics. Still, what the brothers are most remembered for is, in fact, their collection of fairytales. These fairytales were added to the UNESCO world heritage in 2005 and have been translated into about 160 languages.

The German National Tourist Board (GNTB), with its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, works for the German government in order to represent and promote the country as a tourist destination. In year 2013, the anniversary of the Brothers Grimm's fairytale collection is being used as a basis for one of the annual public relations themes to encourage more travelers, especially culturally motivated ones, to visit Germany. Petra Hedorfer, General Manager of the GNTB, said the legacy of the Brothers Grimm represented a "great opportunity to market Germany globally as a top cultural destination."



In collaboration with the public relations agency of Hessen Tourism, the GNTB developed a program for visitors, including various events and a packed calendar of activities, such as the EXPEDITION GRIMM in Kassel or a Literary Spring festival with workshops, poetry slams and puppet plays. The GNTB not only prepared a schedule of events, but also used the potential of the already existing German Fairytale Route,

which is one of the oldest of the two hundred scenic routes in Germany and which runs from Hanau to Bremen (600km), connecting the birth place Hanau will all important places of the life and work of the Brothers Grimm.

The GNTB not only prepared a schedule of events, but also used the potential of the already existing German Fairytale Route, which is one of the oldest of the two hundred scenic routes in Germany and which runs from Hanau to Bremen (600km), connecting the birth place Hanau will all important places of the life and work of the Brothers Grimm. Additionally, the Fairytale Route links medieval towns and villages that are associated with the stories the brothers collected, such as The Pied Piper of Hamelin or the Bremen Town

Musicians. The route is marked by signs depicting a heart acting as a body of a fairy. In all of the route's locations, thematic guided tours are offered, so that visitors can experience the fairytales themselves.



In Bremen, you can go back in time and see what the city was like in ancient times while Hamelin offers tours with the Pied Piper himself. There are walking routes to medieval castles where fairytale characters wait to greet you. In Sababurg you can explore the castle of Sleeping Beauty where concerts and theatre plays regularly take place. There are fairytale readings for children in the small villages and Mother Hulda accompanies you on a sightseeing tour in Hessisch Lichtenau.

In places like this, Grimm's fairytales really do come to life and children's wishes come true. The Brothers Grimm bequeathed literary treasures that hopefully will stay alive in human memory.

A CULTURE WITHIN A CULTURE

Lisa Laser

Culture is formed and influenced by history, traditions and language and it is usually shared by a community or nation. However, there is a society of people connected to the German culture who has its own language and its own culture. And no, I am not referring to the Turks in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Currently there are 80.000 deaf people living in Germany. But even though they are not able to hear, deaf people are not mute. Their communication is based on visual signs of hands and body, which is also called sign language.

Many people think that sign language is a one to one translation of the phonetic language, simply transferred into signs or pantomimic representation of the meaning of a word.

Far from it!

In 1965, William Stokoe, an American linguist, was one of the first scientists who discovered that signing has its own structure and is indeed an independent language. The grammar and syntax are different from the phonetic language hearing people use and there are differences in every culture. Therefore, Germans use other signs than Americans or French and there are even varieties between regional dialects in national cultures.

Sign language is as complex, poetic and interesting as any other language you might know. Nonetheless, the German sign language (DGS) was only accepted as an independent language in 2002 by the change of the "Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz" (equality act for people with disabilities).

For the community of deaf people, the sense of hearing has no meaning because the accessible communication with sign language is more important. The social cohesion within their society is especially strong as they live in a culture where hearing is a necessity in everyday life.

Therefore, deaf people have formed their own culture within a culture. They express



themselves through poetry, theater, dance, art and literature, very similar to the world of the hearing, just with the difference that they use their hands, mimic and body language to do so. Sport especially play an important role in the deaf culture. The first German sporting events for the deaf have already taken place in 1910 and they now even have regional and national leagues. Since sport is an significant topic for the deaf society, they have their on Olympic sport event. They invented the name "Deaflympics" which is a combination of the words "deaf" and "Olympic".

In order to integrate themselves into a culture where most people are able to hear, deaf people still have to overcome barriers in daily life. To hear the doorbell, the phone or a crying baby, they need visual devices like light signs.

On the one hand, the internet has made visual communication a little easier with programs like "Skype" or "Telesign", for example. On the other hand, appointments with a doctor or the bank, for instance, are more complicated, because the people communicating might not "speak" the same language. An interpreter would be needed on order to master these situations and they are not always available or affordable.

Similarly, entertainment like watching TV is made more complicated when most of the German television channels refuse to guarantee subtitles or to display an interpreter.

Significant organizations for the deaf society have already been founded in 1951; they include the World Federation of the Deaf and the German Federation of the Deaf (Deutsche Gehörlosen Bund). These associations represent the deaf society to the “outside” or hearing world and draw attention to important issues as, for instance, more equality, a life with fewer barriers or simply integration into a society where deaf and hearing people live together.

For that reason, there are demonstrations, festivals and cultural events, like the “Kulturtage der Gehörlosen” (cultural days of the deaf), that are organized in order to attract more attention and tolerance for them and of course to meet and greet about the deaf community.

The expressed solidarity of the deaf could be a role model for the whole German society. Even if the deaf have their own language and for sure their own culture, we all still live in the same country and we should, therefore, appreciate and accept each other more.

In case you are now interested in learning the German sign language, the community college in Dresden offers courses:

<http://www.vhs-dresden.de/>

TAME THE VOCABULARY MONSTER

Lydia Barth

„In the beginning was the Word, ...“, it says in the very first verse in the gospel of John. In fact, by using the Greek word *λόγος* (*logos*), John neither speaks about a particular lexeme in that verse nor about any philosophical principle but about Jesus Christ. However, without going into further theological details, this example reveals the complexity of finding or defining the meaning of a word – not to mention the ability to remember the whole lot of complex relations between millions of words out there.



In the context of university, not only students of the English language, literature and culture(s) struggle with the great number of words they are confronted with in their lectures, homework etc. International students, teachers-to-be who need the Latinum certificate and everyone else studying a foreign language knows the challenges of learning new vocabulary: First, the meanings and appropriate usages have to be found if not provided. Then, they have to be consolidated to, finally, be able to remember this knowledge until having passed the exams or even forever.

Here come the good news: There are many ways for everyone to tame the monster! Linguists, educationalists, experienced language teachers and psychologists developed and examined different vocabulary learning strategies which can help young pupils to seniors to make their vocabulary learning more effective and fun.

In general, a **learning strategy** is a purposeful procedure, i.e. the student has a plan in mind to achieve a particular goal – the learning target. This target should be defined as specifically as possible so that

the student will be able to check the results afterwards (called *self-monitoring*). An example of such a learning target in the context of vocabulary learning could be the following: “I want to learn all vocabulary of chapter two of my coursebook; seven words or phrases every day.” In coursebooks, learning strategies are often introduced in chapters called “learn how to learn” or by short “tips and tricks”-paragraphs.



with Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Based on the knowledge and various theories about how the human memory works, different classifications of learning strategies have been developed. Norbert Schmitt, Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Nottingham, classified 58 **vocabulary learning strategies** and subdivided them into the categories “strategies for the discovery of a new word’s meaning” and “strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered”. This list includes all common and well-known strategies as well as being logically structured and, thus, can be easily used by teachers and students.

One consolidation strategy is regarded as the most efficient strategy and seems to suit every type of learner: the **keyword method**. In her empirical study on the efficiency of vocabulary learning strategies, Dr. Antje Stork, research assistant and teacher at the Philipps University Marburg, lists a number of experiments proving the efficiency of the keyword method. Her own research work shows that this method achieves significant better results regarding short-term memory in contrast to other VLS. Concerning the long-term memory, a higher efficiency of the keyword method could be supposed.

Since this method has been generally proved good by professionals, it is worth to briefly introduce it.

1. How does it work?

Imagine, you are a German native speaker who wants to consolidate the meaning of the English word *bone*.

Step 1: Find a keyword in German which sounds at least a little bit similar to the English word. (e.g.: *Bohne*)

Step 2: Create a mental image of the word in which the English word interacts with its meaning in a lively and bizarre way. (e.g.: Since you can make a soup with beans (*Bohnen*), you could imagine soup with *bones*.)

2. When to use the keyword method?

After having discovered the word's meaning. It works especially well with nouns of the basic vocabulary.

3. Advantage?

The developed recall-stimulus makes it easier to recall foreign-language words. The more connections are in your brain, the faster you can recall something.

4. Self-monitoring:

Example: Try to put yourself in a situation where you can use the new vocabulary – you will find out quickly if you really know the words.

5. Any use in other areas?

Useful for learning facts consisting of pairs, such as paintings and the respective painters, cities and products etc.

Three dogs in a restaurant. The waiter asks: "Can I start you off with a nice soup bone?"

Despite the fact that the keyword method and many other vocabulary learning strategies like the use of semantic maps or the use of physical action when learning a word have been examined through studies, they are not automatically efficient. Every strategy can fail if it is used inappropriately. The reason for this may be insufficient language learning experience (and, thus, the lack of knowledge about one's type of learner etc.), an inconvenient learning environment or simply the wrong application of a vocabulary learning strategy.

The list of books and links shall help to find out more about these strategies and opportunities to undergo some professional training and consulting. (The asterisk marks the books available in the SLUB.)

Books and Articles:

*Schmitt's classification of VLS:

"Vocabulary Learning Strategies." In: *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy*. Ed. Norbert Schmitt. Cambridge: CUP, 1997. 199-227

*study by Dr. Stork:

Stork, Antje. *Vokabellernen – Eine Untersuchung zur Effizienz von Vokabellernstrategien*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2003.

*learning strategies in general, from p. 229:

Ebbert, Birgit. *Effektiver Lernen für Dummies*. Weinheim: Wiley, 2013.

*for teachers-to-be:

Bohn, Rainer. *Probleme der Wortschatzarbeit*. Fernstudieneinheit 22. Berlin: Langenscheidt, 2006.

article about VLS in the ad rem newspaper, p. 12:

http://apps.ad-rem.de/epaper/DMV_ADD_20131106_gesamt.pdf

Consulting and Training:

learning coaches in Dresden: www.lern-kompass.de

learn vocabulary and help others: www.freerice.com

recommended: seminar by Ruth-Ulrike Deutschmann "Lernerautonomie und Lernstrategien im Fremdsprachenunterricht (DaF)" at TU Dresden (German as a foreign language)

pictures: witty-words.com, cookingofchina.com

YOU SAY

Saskia Strangfeld

Just why not?, you say, and send a girl boxing for her life
Afraid of nothing, you say, especially not love
Cowardice it is, you say, to limit yourself by gender
Quit hesitating, you say, and do what your heart tells you
Usurp injustice, you say.

Everything is possible, you say, and dream of free love
Love as thou wilt, you say, no matter what
Ignore the small-minded, you say, or better: help them see
Never wait, you say, before it is too late
Every moment counts, you say.

Cast away the prejudices, you say, throw them out
All they do is hurt, you say, and make other people hide
Relish in diversity, you say, don't let them bring you down
Eventually they will learn, you say, just don't give up
You say a lot that's true, I say.

SHE

Saskia Strangfeld

I knew the pub well, thanks to my frequent visits. It was a lively place and anybody who knew me doubted I actually enjoyed being here. I was a known loner, but the truth was: even though I preferred to be on my own, I always needed the noise. Even for reading, which is why I spent so many nights here, all on my own, ignoring everybody and absorbed in a book. The noise in the background calmed me.

The pub was common on all accounts. Common beer, common food, no special nights ... except for this one apparently. I never saw them coming in. It was only when she let her castanets click next to me that I finally glanced up. Startled, I took in the newcomers: those three men didn't look as if they'd ever been here before; and neither did she. Behind her lay flowers on a chair. Whether they were an admirer's gift or the pub's owner's, I couldn't tell. I didn't get to think too much about it anyway. Her dance had gotten more lively. She'd moved her arms almost tenderly to begin with, letting the castanets click to the beat of the music, but now her whole body began to work its magic. It was as if she were trying to hypnotize me and I was willing to let her do it. Her eyes found mine – again and again and again. They were dark, black in the pub's dim light and when we looked at each other her smile seemed to deepen. It became teasing, suggestive even. I found myself longing for that smile and hoping she would turn away again at the same time. For when she did, I could find the power to fully take her in – her dark, wavy hair that surely must be as stubborn as she seemed to be when she left it open. Her olive skin that shimmered in the heat and warm light. Her blue dress that revealed much and kept even more hidden. I could imagine people around us staring at her barely covered breasts. But I ... oh, I wasn't interested in that. This warm feeling spreading inside me was caused by the curve of her neck that seemed so delicate when she turned her head. It was caused by the way her shawl slid down on one end, leaving one of her arms bare. It was the way I could only guess the lines of her stomach, her hips, her thighs. For once in my life, I didn't want to be alone. I wanted to keep that warmth inside me, wanted to share it – with her, with somebody.

My book lay forgotten on the table, my eyes glued on her, my heart beating a little bit faster each time she saw me, and only me. I don't know how long – or short – she danced, but when she glanced at me one last time before she left, I knew I wouldn't waste any more time dreaming.