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Non-Fiction
Autumn 2025

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Fascinating insights into the dark side of human nature

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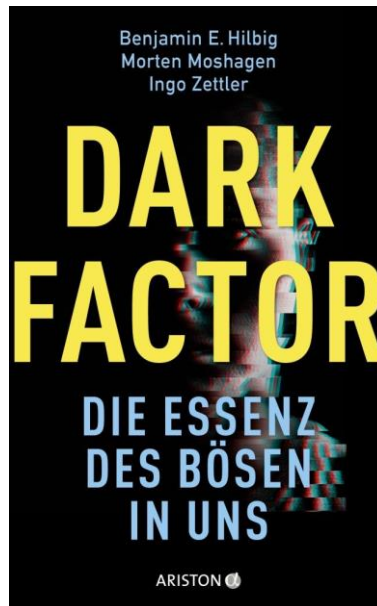
English sample translation
available [here](#)

Sales Sheet available [here](#)

Prof. Benjamin E. Hilbig, PhD, heads up the experimental psychology and personality research group at University of Kaiserslautern-Landau. He specialises in ethical and social decision-making, personality traits and research methods.

Prof. Dr. Morten Moshagen heads up the Department of Research Methods in Psychology at the University of Ulm, specialising in mathematical modelling and socially problematic personality traits.

Prof. Dr. Ingo Zettler is professor of personality and behaviour at the University of Copenhagen's Institute of Psychology and Center for Social Data Science (SODAS).



Benjamin E. Hilbig,
Morten Moshagen,
Ingo Zettler

The Dark Factor

[Dark Factor - die Essenz des Bösen in uns]

What Makes Us Do Bad Things

Ariston

256 pages

15 b/w illustrations

October 2025

What do people with a tendency to steal, incite hatred, bully and lie have in common? Studies conducted over the past 10 years by international teams of researchers suggests that what they all share is a quality called 'the dark factor'. It exists in each of us to a greater or lesser degree, and can actually be measured. For the first time ever, "The Dark Factor" provides comprehensive answers to some key questions, based on data obtained from more than 2 million people. What makes us do bad things? What do our negative personality traits – such as narcissism, psychopathy and sadism – have in common? How do gender, age and level of education affect the dark factor, and how does it, in turn, shape our relationships, career choices and political views? Does it lead to success and happiness, or is it more likely to make you lonely, or even ill? And can its levels change, or is it a case of 'once bad, always bad'?

- The D-Factor: The general tendency to maximize one's individual utility – disregarding, accepting, or malevolently provoking disutility for others –, accompanied by beliefs that serve as justifications

- An analysis of the nine classic personality traits: egoism, malice, Machiavellianism, moral disengagement, narcissism, psychopathy, sadism, self-centredness and excessive entitlement

- Click here for a link to the Dark Factor test: www.darkfactor.org

An eye-opening analysis of the rise of autocracies, focusing on economic aspects



Michael Sauga

Springtime for Tyrants

[Frühling der Autokraten]

How they come to power, how they differ from each other, and what their rise means for democracy

Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt

304 pages

September 2025

Michael Sauga, born in 1959, studied economics and journalism in Cologne. From 1987 to 1999, he was editor at *Wirtschaftswoche* and *Focus* in Düsseldorf and Bonn, joining *Spiegel's* Berlin HQ in December 1999. Since 2008, he has occupied a series of leading positions on the economics and politics desks, and was head of the magazine's Berlin HQ from 2016–2019. He now writes books on economics and politics.

Economics expert and *Spiegel* journalist Sauga explains why economic progress does not create more democratic societies – and why the current victory parade of autocrats and populists is down not to right-wing pressure, but to the behaviour of the political elite.

"Springtime for Tyrants" examines the attributes that autocratic regimes in Hungary, Serbia and Turkey share, and in what ways they differ. How are they structured, and what strategies do they pursue? What are their successes and failures? It quickly becomes clear that autocracy is a political system of much longer standing than democracy, and given the right conditions, even highly industrialised nations – from eastern Europe to South America – can turn into one. In this keen-eyed analysis, Sauga explores long-standing assumptions about how tyrants are made, and offers fresh insights into how to bolster European democracy.

- For readers of Anne Applebaum, Catherine Belton and Steven Levitsky & Daniel Ziblatt

The highly acclaimed author's new book about a restless region



Natalie Amiri The Middle East Complex

[Der Nahost-Komplex]
Of People, Dreams and
Destruction

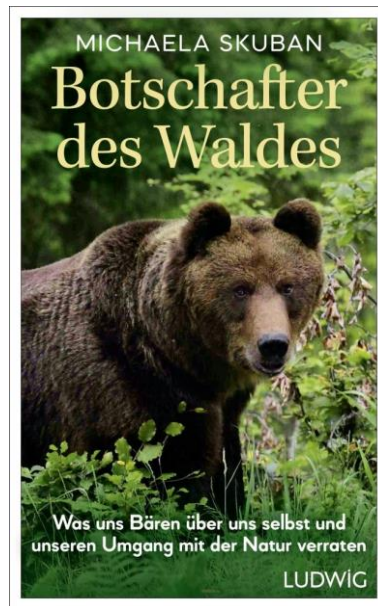
Penguin Verlag
416 pages
October 2025

Natalie Amiri, born in 1978, is the child of a German mother and an Iranian father. She has a degree in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies from the Otto Friedrich University in Bamberg. After graduating, a German Academic Exchange Programme grant took her to the universities of Tehran and Damascus. She has presented ARD's *Weltspiegel* since 2014. In 2015, she became head of ARD's Tehran station, but in 2020 the German foreign ministry advised her not to return to Iran, for her own safety. She was named political journalist of the year by *Medium Magazin* in both 2022 and 2024, and has won numerous awards. She is the author of the bestselling books "Zwischen den Welten" ('Between worlds', 2021) and "Afghanistan" (2022).

Natalie Amiri is known for her sober reporting from the Middle East. For her latest book, the award-winning author has travelled across the entire region. Here, she lets Gaza's children speak, talks to the relatives of murdered Israeli hostages, meets Kurdish women in Kobani in Syria who are resisting the IS, and interviews Marwan Barghuthi, described as the Nelson Mandela of Palestinians, in an Israeli prison, and also talks to former UN chief prosecutor Carla del Ponte and Holocaust survivor Margot Friedländer. In this book, she manages to do something that seems impossible these days: she negotiates different worlds, and awakens our sympathy for all sides.

A book that helps us understand where the Near and Middle East is headed with a massively weakened Iran, and which ultimately takes an uncompromising stance on one side—that of the people.

Spirited and social, boastful and shy – the fascinating life of bears



Michaela Skuban

Woodland Ambassadors

[Botschafter des Waldes]

What bears teach us about ourselves and our relationship with nature

Ludwig

336 pages

52 b/w illustrations

August 2025

With inset

Michaela Skuban studied biology in Munich and is passionately interested in the human-bear relationship. She spent 16 years in Slovakia observing the creatures living in the wild, and helped set up its national research programme. After a spell observing bears in Tyrol, she has now returned to Slovakia.



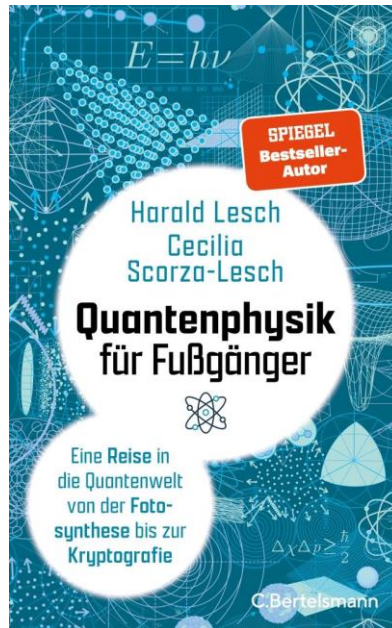
Brown bears are the largest predators in Europe. They are not only incredibly dangerous, but astonishingly sensitive to their environment. "Woodland Ambassadors" takes us on a journey deep into the world of these fascinating creatures. Based on her many years of experience as a bear researcher in Slovakia, Skuban introduces us to some of the individuals she observed there, and what they reveal about the life of these furry giants – from wild boar hunter Adriano to wise old lady Anna...

In this book, Skuban combines scientific insights with gripping tales to shed light on the secret life of these unique animals. Of course, their existence has partly been shaped by humans, and no other animal shows so clearly the consequences of our ever more aggressive incursions into nature. Most importantly, what we can learn from bears is how to treat our environment with the respect and care it deserves.

- Michaela Skuban is a specialist in bears and wildlife. She studied biology and lived in Slovakia for over 16 years to research the local bear population.
- She is a sought-after media expert. Her perspective is that of a scientist who, with her nuanced view, mediates between animal rights activists, farmers, hunters, and the general public.

A fascinating, accessible introduction to the practical applications of quantum physics

**SPIEGEL
BESTSELLING
AUTHOR**



Professor Dr. Harald Lesch, Dr. Cecilia Scorza-Lesch

Quantum Physics for Amateurs

[Quantenphysik für Fußgänger]

A journey into the quantum world, from photosynthesis to cryptography

C. Bertelsmann

160 pages

31 b/w illustrations

August 2025

Harald Lesch is a professor of theoretical astrophysics at the Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, and one of Germany's most famous scientists. He has presented several accessible and hugely popular science programmes over the years, and written and co-written many popular and bestselling books.

Cecilia Scorza-Lesch has a PhD in astrophysics and is public engagement coordinator for the department of Physics at Munich University. She has won among others the German Astronomical Society's Neumann Prize for Education, the EU Scientix Prize and the Kepler Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Quantum physics – the theory of how light and matter behave – is an important scientific field that never fails to astound. Unfortunately, for most of us, notions like Schrödinger's cat and teleportation remain mysterious abstractions. But without quantum physics, we wouldn't have modern computers, photovoltaic cells, lasers, CT scans or smartphones, and it even plays a crucial role in secure communication. Concise, accessible and eye-opening, "Quantum Physics for Amateurs" celebrates 100 years of quantum physics by explaining the basics, and showing us just how quantum-based technology is shaping our everyday lives.

This is an expanded and updated edition of "Quantenmechanik für die Westentasche" ('A pocket guide to quantum mechanics', 2007).

A knowledgeable and comprehensive AI guide by the renowned expert and IT professor

**SPIEGEL
BESTSELLING
AUTHOR**



Professor Dr. Katharina Zweig

Does AI Know That It Knows Nothing?

[Weiß die KI, dass sie nichts weiß?]

How to use chatbots and AI agents, where they go wrong, and what to watch out for – an accessible introduction

Heyne Hardcover

272 pages

100 b/w illustrations

September 2025

With b/w images throughout

Katharina Zweig studied biochemistry and bioinformatics in Tübingen, and is now an IT professor at the University of Kaiserslautern-Landau – where she created the first and currently only socioinformatics degree course in Germany. She is also regional AI ambassador for Rhineland-Palatinate and founder of an AI consultancy. In addition, she advises various government ministries. In 2019, Heyne published her bestselling "Ein Algorithmus hat kein Taktgefühl" ("Awkward Intelligence"), followed by the 2023 bestseller "Die KI war's" ("It Was the AI").

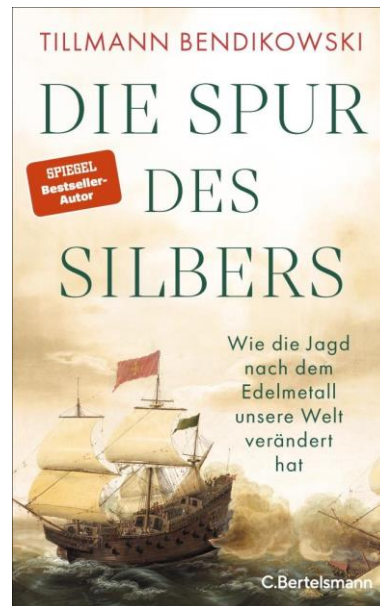
How exactly do ChatGPT and other large language models (LLMs) work? Do their intellectual abilities already exceed ours? Or are they merely parroting what we have taught them? In "Does AI Know That It Knows Nothing?", Zweig – a multi-award-winning IT professor and Germany's leading AI communicator – explains what LLMs can and can't do. Can they actually summarise, compare, analyse, evaluate and correct our mistakes? How do we best utilise them? She also explains what we need to watch out for when it comes to AI agents – programmes that can autonomously perform tasks on behalf of humans. Whatever we do, we mustn't hand over our decision-making to AI.

- Previous books by the author sold to: Korea (Nikebooks) and USA/World English (MIT Press)

- **Katharina Zweig is Germany's top AI expert, honored with the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for her outstanding work on AI and its impact on society.**

How our globe became global: a history of silver, from the Middle Ages to the present day

SPIEGEL
BESTSELLING
AUTHOR



Dr. Tillmann Bendikowski
On the Silver Trail

[Die Spur des Silbers]
How the hunt for the precious metal has shaped the world

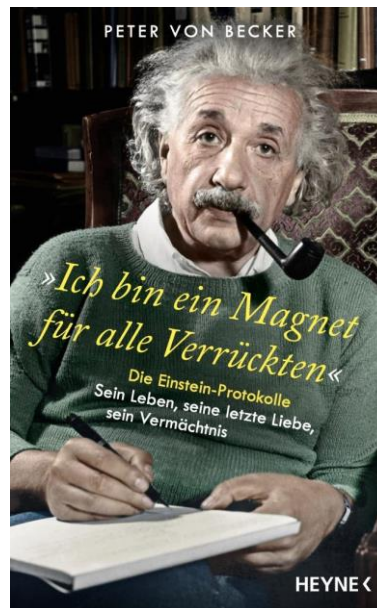
C.Bertelsmann
256 pages
September 2025

Tillmann Bendikowski, historian and journalist, is the head of the Hamburg media agency Geschichte. He writes for the print media and radio and supervises the organisation of research projects and history exhibitions. Since 2020, he has regularly appeared as an expert on NDR television's history series '*Das! Historisch!*'. His publications include, among others, "Frederick the Great", "Summer 1914", "War of Religion", "A Year in the Middle Ages", "1870/71: The Myth of German Unity" and the bestselling "Hitler Weather: Normal Everyday Life Under a Dictatorship".

Silver is soft and adaptable. For centuries, this legendary element has brought power and wealth, but also exploitation and terrible suffering. In short, silver has made our world what it is, and still shapes it today, both as raw material and as a repository of value.

In the spellbinding "On the Silver Trail", Bendikowski pursues this precious metal all over the world, and along the way tells us fascinating stories of royals, slaves, conquistadors, pirates and merchants. From mines stripped by Spaniards to slavery and the 'silver fleet'; from a global trade that created untold wealth but also misery and starvation, to silver looted by the Nazis – it is only through the history of silver that we can begin to really understand our world today.

Albert Einstein's last thoughts on science, politics and love: an intimate insight into the mind of a genius



Peter von Becker
"I'm a Magnet for All the Crackpots in the World"

[»Ich bin ein Magnet für alle Verrückten«]

The Einstein Papers: His Life, Love and Legacy

Heyne Hardcover

256 pages

September 2025

With several photos

Rights sold to: Russia (AST)

English sample translation available [here](#)

Peter von Becker is a journalist and author living in Berlin. He has contributed to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Zeit* and *FAZ* among others, and was co-publisher of *Theater heute* magazine. He also spent eight years as features chief at the *Tagesspiegel*. He has written novels and poems, and wrote the script for the popular international documentary series *Das Jahrhundert des Theaters* ('A century of theatre').

A long-hidden treasure trove has finally come to light: during Einstein's final years, his friend Johanna Fantova wrote down everything he said to her – and thanks to this unique record we are granted an unprecedented insight into Einstein's thoughts on everything, from science to politics and love. His wit and wisdom shone brightly until his death in spring 1955, and his conversations with Fantova create a panorama of a bygone age that is remarkably topical. As he discusses divisions in US society, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, rearmament and impending war between East and West, and Germany's role in the world as the Nazi era casts its long shadow – whatever the topic, Einstein's prophetic genius gets to the heart of the matter, now as then.

In this book, von Becker also tells the astonishing tale of Einstein's late love, uncovers the mystery of what happened to Fantova, and assesses the legend and his legacy all the way to the present day – with some fascinating and surprising discoveries along the way.

- Countless biographies have explored Einstein's genius—but few let him speak for himself.
- The Einstein Papers of an unprecedented, intimate look into the man behind the legend.

Press:

"What a find!" *Süddeutsche Zeitung*

Music makes us happier, healthier, smarter and nicer – and we need more of it in our lives



Ullrich Fichtner
The Power of Music
[Die Macht der Musik]
How music creates a happier,
fairer society

Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt
256 pages
November 2025

Ullrich Fichtner was born in 1965 and is a *Spiegel* reporter based in Paris. With three Egon Erwin Kisch and three Henri Nannen prizes to his name, he is one of the most award-winning German journalists. His latest book, "Geboren für die großen Chancen" ('A future of opportunities') was shortlisted for the German Non-Fiction Prize.

Music has an extraordinary effect on us: it can give us goosebumps and butterflies, it can make our hearts beat faster, it can cheer us up and make us sad, can bring our stress levels down and ease pain. Not just that, but the latest findings from neuroscience and brain science show that it can have a positive impact on our health, psyche and social skills, and help develop and reinforce cognitive skills in both the young and the old.

In "The Power of Music", the multi-award-winning Spiegel reporter and music aficionado demonstrates that music has huge tangible benefits. Using his wide-ranging experience with music and musicians in all genres around the world, as well as the latest scientific studies, he reveals how and why music is so important both for us individually and society at large, how it works, its enormous potential as a social tool, and how it can help us live a healthier, happier, more peaceful – in short: better – life.

SPIEGEL
BESTSELLING
AUTHOR



Bas Kast
In Praise of Discomfort
[Lob des Unbequemem]

C.Bertelsmann
80 pages
October 2025

Bas Kast, born in 1973, studied psychology and biology in Konstanz, Bochum and at the MIT in Boston/USA. He works as a science journalist and author. His *"Diet Compass"* (2018, awarded the Knowledge Book of the Year), in which he compiled the proven findings on a healthy diet, was hugely successful, with more than one million copies sold and translations into over 20 languages. In *"The Nutrition Compass: The Cookbook"* (together with Michaela Baur, 2019) he shows how the scientific findings can be implemented in everyday life. He recently published the Spiegel bestseller *"The Soul Compass"*.

Looking back, it is often the most challenging situations in life that we recognise as particularly valuable. However, in a world devoted to comfort and convenience, we do everything we can to avoid them. But what if we could see the hurdles and obstacles as opportunities the moment they stand in our way? In this philosophical essay on life, Bas Kast explores why we resist unpleasant sensations such as pain and hunger, conflict and stress – and what we miss out on as a result. Whether it's physical training, fasting, honest conversations or enduring uncomfortable feelings, "In Praise of Discomfort" is an invitation to stop viewing effort and hardship as enemies and instead discover them as allies that help us grow as individuals. An inspiring encouragement for anyone who expects more from life than comfort and instant happiness.

- From the author of "The Diet Compass" and "A Compass for the Soul"
- Rights for his previous books have been sold in more than twenty languages

Backlist Highlight:



Goldmann
320 pages
April 2025

English sample translation
available [here](#)

Darcy Lee: [The Heart of Auschwitz](#) [Das Herz von Auschwitz]

As a young girl, Darcy Lee stumbles across a mysterious chest while playing hide-and-seek with her mother. When she opens it, her heart starts pounding: inside are photos, letters, and a heart made from the sole of a shoe. Together, they tell the life story of her Holocaust survivor grandparents, Genie and Feliks.

In "The Heart of Auschwitz", Darcy Lee now recounts their tale: how her grandmother Genie, deeply in love with her fiancé Feliks, is terrified when she and Feliks are forced to leave Kraków on different trains, bound for an uncertain future; the horrors she witnesses in Auschwitz; and how, even in this dark place, she unexpectedly found friendship. Feliks, meanwhile, is sent to Dachau, and not a single day goes by that he doesn't miss his beloved Genie. As a symbol of his unbroken love, he fashions a heart for her from the sole of his shoe, and risks everything to make sure it finds its way to her.

80 years after the end of the war, antisemitism, racism and populism are growing at an alarming rate – Genie and Feliks's moving story serves as an urgent reminder: Never again.

- For readers of "The Tattooist of Auschwitz" and "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas"

- Rights sold to: Czech Republic (Dobrovsky), Italy (Giunti), Russia (Eksmo), Slovakia (Motyl), Spain (PRH/Plaza y Janés)

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