

Three documents are on the desk at the same time. A text from a daily newspaper that presents seven facts about the dramatic reduction in biodiversity in an emphatically sober tone, Alexander von Humboldt's travelogue, which made him so well known that "The Castle" should now be called Humboldt Forum, although actually "The Castle" "describes the building better, solely through Kafka's novella of the same name. And Jochen Lempert's selection of photos for the Fotodoks exhibition in Munich.

The direction of this text derives from these three elements, they constitute its inherent urgency, so to speak,—and shouldn't all texts today have an urgency of their own? Lempert's photos are dedicated to the "little" animals. The term "klein"—"little"—is the bad but usual German translation of Gilles Deleuze's concept of mineur. Minor would be a different one, but it's not about quantities, rather about what is otherwise neglected, a concern about the "little" things. Lempert's photos are due to the concentration on these "little" creatures and also because they were all taken at home from his studio window, possibly the most precise counterpart to photos of the Big Five from a private journey (in Swahili "safari") through an African National park. Humboldt too fevered for a safari, and no matter where to—the description of his attempts to get one take up the first part of the book. At the goal of his desires he mostly fights against mosquitos, at least if the book is read against his intended high tone.

Finally, the facts of the journalistic article. An excerpt from this? Here: On average, the amount—more precisely: the biomass—of insects that flew into their [the scientists] nets in 60 places, especially in the Rhineland, fell by around three quarters within 27 years.

Yes, the topic—the parallelism of three forms of describing these small animals primarily raises the question of how it can assert itself as a topic and also how something of this assertion could conquer our scope of action. How does something concern us, how does something affect us, moreover something that can hardly do anything, that exists so besides of us, something for which, for better or worse, we are merely a function.

Humboldt's castle needs almost all of Foucault's repressive apparatus to draw attention to its topic, with its looming cross over the dome and its winged demon over the side portal, raising hell with its fanfare, with its anticipated guided tours for schools, and its roots in an uncritical Academia, scaring off science, and yet it does not manage to call up anything more than our sense of justice with regard to the distribution of space (although this is also an important point with regard to the subject). The quoted article has already disappeared on the website of the newspaper, between similar ones which have also already been filed somewhere (and yet, I remember it). But Jochen Lempert's photos anchor something, an image, an encounter, in us. They call on something in us. They give these disappearing insects an affect that lies within us because it aligns them with our gaze. He hands them over to us, almost individualized, and with the knowledge of the biologist that some of them can only be found

in a rolled-up edge of a leaf. And embedded between biology and getting to know each other personally, as he writes about his picture "Vanessa atalanta migration": *as you perhaps know, the admiral migrates in autumn from northern Europe to the Mediterranean or North Africa—on the ivy of my studio, the admirals suck on the flowers in Sept / Oct before they all fly off to the SW, making an orientation loop.*

In her book *Vita Activa*, Hannah Arendt traces the difference between the conception of nature and one's own perception as an individual in an old self-image, when she quotes Augustine in his effort to root the difference between humans and animals in the *Genesis*. Animals, writes Augustine, were created as species, as *generis*. But man was created as an individual, as one, almost as the one other among everything that lives as *generis*. Jochen Lempert blends this human singularity—beholdable in the face, in the posture or in the individual intention—onto the individuals of a species. Sometimes directly as a face. He writes: *Some people tend to see physiognomically, others don't ...* and even if you may not read faces in images, he affects us with them. Which is possibly the only way to get our *generis* to think.