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Jarosław Świątek
Wszyscy kłamią. Nie daj się oszukać
(Everyone Lies, Don't Get Fooled),
Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne,
Gdańsk 2012, pp. 136 (text in Polish)

A new book has been published in Poland regarding detecting deception by using non-instrumental methods. The publishers are Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, a house which is praised among psychologist circles, and the book's author is Jarosław Świątek – a psychologist, graduate of Szkoła Wyższa Psychologii Społecznej (the University of Social Sciences and Humanities), and editor-in-chief of many psychological websites who specializes in “techniques of social influences”. He is also the founder of a company responsible for “innovatory advertisement research”. The book's cover presents the contents as a guide to lies, containing exact instructions on how to recognize when we are being lied to.

The book is a relatively short read, adding up to a total of 136 pages with the bibliography and the list of quoted names. It consists of five chapters (I – Truth of emotions, II – Political correctness, III – In relationship with , IV – Crime, lies, guilt and punishment, V – Lying doesn't pay)

In the first pages, Świątek states a few obvious facts, such as that everyone lies and that lies are not homogeneous. Citing statistics only known to himself

– as he does not mention their source – he states that a human will lie three times in a 10-minute conversation. The author writes of himself as a man who is hard to fool and a true expert in detecting dishonesty. He does not reveal what tests he has used to hone these skills, nor what tests are available, nor even a way to prove his skills.

In the first chapter, the author decides to introduce us to some basic knowledge on emotions. The larger part of this chapter is a history of Paul Ekman's research. Except for a few extracts, the whole presentation is based upon the outcome of Ekman's works.

With the help of a very detailed description of photography, in which Świątek presents different emotions, he instructs the reader with basic knowledge of detecting dishonesty. He also uses codes, which can be used to translate gestures to describe emotions, although the reader is not acquainted to these methods. Moreover, the author utterly neglects matters of personality, race, psychological diseases or organic brain damage, which the subject of the test might not be aware of. Readers are also not informed that the modern medicine of beauty might influence the outcome of microexpressions, or rather cause the lack of outcome.

In this chapter, the reader can find information about polygraph testing. The author writes that the polygraph (not even polygraph testing) searches for fear. He also mentions that during polygraph testing the "Othello Error" might occur, which might be a reason to consider that someone is guilty (Świątek uses the word "guilty"). Polygraph testing is described in a way that might give the reader an incorrect image, because the author neglects to mention the expert's role in the whole testing process. He presents polygraph testing as if it was based entirely on the polygraph as a machine – as if there was no expert needed. He also mentions that the polygraph cannot distinguish fear from sexual excitement. Świątek points out in addition that non-instrumental methods of detecting deception are better and more successful because there is no need to take agreement. Except for Ekman's books, the reader will not find any other names connected with polygraph testing in the bibliography attached to this chapter.

In the second chapter, an interview with Richard Nixon after the Watergate scandal serves to illustrate verbal and nonverbal cues of dishonesty in a political reality. The extracts from the interview presented are used to support the thesis of a scheme: if A thus B, meaning if the interlocutor raises his voice, then he is surely lying; if he scratches his nose, then he is

surely lying; if he takes time to answer a quickly formed question, than he is surely lying. It is entirely clear that the tiniest linguistic mistake can be used by political opponents, which might have negative consequences not only for a single politician but also for his entire political group. The author relies deeply upon single symptoms, only once mentioning that they should be taken into account with the understanding of the wider situational and behavioural context.

The third chapter is about interpersonal relations and has the objective of unmasking treachery or dishonesty. The advice and methods are still very simple and schematic. Many tips and techniques are unclear, e.g. when describing the actions of a person that we are accusing of lying or treachery, according to the author “an innocent suspect will not heed our aggravation, because he will be angry about being accused. He will try to attack, use counterarguments. With the use of this method we reach an approval on what we suspected”. The quotation makes sense only if the suspect is being accused of innocence. Thus, if a wrongly accused individual is outraged by the existing situation and tries to explain himself, then according to the author he is guilty, because “only the guilty need to explain themselves”.

The fourth chapter contains information about lying during legal proceedings. After a much too extensive description of the OJ Simpson case, Świątek proceeds to describe the hearing and the symptoms that occurred during it. He correctly claims that a wrongly accused person might become stressed. However, the author believes that this certain stress does not appear within a guilty suspect, and without it, it is impossible to intercept the cues of dishonesty, because only under a sufficient amount of stress do they surface enough to become noticeable. Therefore, Świątek suggests that “to instil it (fear), one must properly arrange the interrogation space, for example through manipulating light sources, temperature and sound”. The idea is reminiscent of torturing methods, and testifies to the author’s lack of knowledge in the field of interrogatory tactics and the rights of an accused individual. Even in this chapter he does not shy away from handing out simple advice for lie detection: “if someone looks to the left, it means that he recalls something, then if he looks to the right, he is imagining something that did not took place”. When forming such a thesis, Świątek does not take into account situations such as when a interrogated person is looking to one of the sides quite simply because he is looking at an object which helps him recall the incident in his memory. When describing this chapter, a certain aspect cannot be taken into account. Upon the suggestion that the book was presented by a respected

publisher, that the reviews posted on the internet by psychological portals, such as psychospace.pl, testify to its quality – under these impressions one should not assume that the author is substantially prepared to write about the matter. Unfortunately, this chapter raises great doubts in the subject, which can undermine the substantive value of the entire work. A multitude of works have been presented handling the subject of psychology of law which contain chapters of detection of deception. Setting aside nuances that would not trouble a psychologist, such as the lack of distinction between the testimony of a witness and a defendant or suspect, one cannot turn a blind idea to a huge mistake about the duration of punishment for murder. Reading about the “increasing blame” technique, we learn that “at the very beginning a suspect is threatened with twenty-five years penalty of deprivation of liberty, up to a life sentence, according to the Polish Code of Penal Proceedings” . With all due respect for the author’s work, Article 148 of the Polish Penal Code – rather than the mentioned Polish Code of Penal Proceedings – is knowledge not reserved only for lawyers.

The last chapter, titled “Lying doesn’t pay”, is concentrated around working in a corporate environment. The author again serves simple tips on how to spot a “mole” that is spoiling the efforts of many departments. He advises that in such a situation we should ask the suspected individual for help on how to surface corporate espionage – if he refuses involvement, than he is clearly guilty and has something on his conscience. If he helps then he is clean. I personally believe that a “mole” would be very willing to help, helping only himself by deluding his superiors.

In the epilogue Świątek writes that he has presented tools that, when used in a proper manner, “will always yield the expected results”; the question, however, is what results one should expect when pointing out single correlative dishonesties which in a certain situation do not have to proclaim a lie. On the cover we can see the statement “it’s a great guide on lying” – the problem is that this very statement is a lie. The book avoids many important factors that influence the exhibition of symptoms that indicate lying, such as personality, mental illness, race or cultural differences; despite the emotions being the same, the author remains silent about the differences on how they might be displayed in special cases. In the bibliography, aside from the works of Paul Ekman, we can find academic textbooks, popular scientific papers and references to short movies located on the YouTube portal. Is Jarosław Świątek’s book *Everyone Lies. Don’t Get Fooled* a scientific work? Definitely it is not. Is it popular scientific? It could be, if it did not omit a broad part of

the subject at hand and did not mislead the reader. Instead of reading this book I would recommend the source of the author's inspirations – the work of Paul Ekman, from which the author created a compilation, publishing it as if it were a new item.

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