

# In Defiance of the Pandemic - The Poetic Word Yes, I Mean Poetry, Now!

Albrecht Classen

University of Arizona. Email: [aclassen@arizona.edu](mailto:aclassen@arizona.edu)

---

## Introduction

In a certain way, COVID-19 has forced the world to wake up again and to realize how little we are in control of our own existence. We have increasingly built a world of fantasy on the basis of science and medicine over the last decades or so, but one tiny virus has now brought that house of cards down in an incredibly short period of time, and no end is in sight while I am writing these lines (July 2020). We have been asleep for far too long, dreaming of a bright future in which everything would be possible without any costs to ourselves and the earth. But we live now in the Anthropocene, the new age in which the earth is slowly but certainly getting out of control because of the human impact, while we humans also face the horrifying reality that we are surrounded by an infinite number of viruses that could all become deadly for us.<sup>i</sup> How do we then live under those circumstances, and where do we find ourselves now that we are coming out of these dreams?<sup>ii</sup>

Throughout the centuries, if not millennia, pandemics have raked humanity, taking a huge toll each time, but then people managed somehow to pick up their previous activities and kept living, deeply shaped by the tragedy, but still, living.<sup>iii</sup> However, there were the dead, thousands, if not millions. And the grief, the mourning, the personal suffering, the huge questions, WHY? And, WHAT IS THE PURPOSE of it all? Love or religion did not help to prevent anything, death came and cut down so many people, good ones and bad ones, old and young, men and women, all races, all genders; the grim reaper has never made a difference; it's only the number that matters, the more the better, at least from death's perspective. We could almost rewrite human history as a history of suffering, of tears, or pain, and question the true nature of the creature we call *homo sapiens*. All founders of world religions have been deeply moved by this realization and have tried, more or less successfully, to come to terms with these almost quixotic questions. If we have to die anyway, why do we live?<sup>iv</sup> We only need to think of the Crusades, the Hundred Years' War, the Thirty-Years' War, World War I and II, the Vietnam War, the Afghanistan wars, the Biafra War, the Kosovo War, the civil war in Syria, the war between Saudi-Arabia and Yemen, and countless other conflicts, and could despair over the endless aggression and hostility in the name of this or that religion, ideology, political claims, or racist notion. It almost seems a miracle that humankind has not yet annihilated itself by now, especially in light of the nuclear threat since the Cold War, a threat that has not effectively been eliminated until today, irrespective of what poets might have said about it ever since the first explosion.

## Death and Poetry

This horrible realization concerning the dominance of death was expressed monumentally in the famous *Ackermann aus Böhmen* (The Plowman from Bohemia) by the German-Czech writer

Johann Tepl in ca. 1400, a prose dialogue pitting the metaphorical plowman (Everyman) against the ominous figure of death. The former has lost his wife and is rallying furiously against the unfairness and cruelty of death, who arrogantly, coldly, and brutally rejects all charges and insists on the vanity of all human life.<sup>v</sup> However, even though at the end God grants victory to death because all living beings have to die, the plowman earns honor for his struggle because with his words he has given full credit to the divine nature of the human spirit and the glory of the divinely created body despite its countless shortcomings and failures.

Tepl acknowledges the fact of death's absolute power, of course, but he also overcomes death by means of his poetic words. Ca. hundred years later, the famous artist Hans Holbein the Younger (ca. 1497-1543) achieved the same goal with his sequence of woodcuts, *The Dance of Death*, presenting the horrors of death and its omnipresence and complete power over all life, but the art work actually defies it nevertheless and creates a sense of human culture via these powerful art pieces.<sup>vi</sup>

And today, in 2020? Hospitals are filled to a maximum, mortuaries and cemeteries can hardly handle the ever-growing number of dead bodies, we live in a pandemic once again. What have we woken up to, though? We have realized once again the precariousness of the human existence, and despite the best possible medicine available to us today, if money can afford it, the contingency of human life has been brought home to us once again, as taught already so profoundly by the Roman philosopher Boethius in his *De consolazione philosophiae* (ca. 524). Welcome, COVID-19, you have shattered our illusion, our self-centered sense of comfort, our trust in the complete mastery over the world by people, and our naive faith in the miraculous healing power of modern medicine. Suddenly, we are right back there in 1347 or 1348 when the Black Death took hold of virtually all of Europe and many other parts of the world, mercilessly, massively, and people were and are once again so helpless.

### Poetry and Pandemics - A Timeless Partnership

Are we really so helpless and so bereft of direction, hope, and motivation? Well, let's not talk about medicine, especially because there are so many innovative developments on the horizon. And over the last 150 to 200 years, humanity has responded to pandemics with ever more effective tools and medicine. In fact, there might be a vaccine against COVID-19 ready within a short period of time, but no one can predict it at this point. Are we scholars in the Humanities and all other people not trained scientifically then really hopeless, helpless, and useless, we who do not work in the field of medicine, virology, or pharmacology?<sup>vii</sup> Already Giovanni Boccaccio resisted this desperate if not despondent presumption when he composed his hilarious, irreverent, provocative, entertaining, but also didactic collection of 100 tales told over ten days in his *Decameron* (ca. 1350).<sup>viii</sup> He wrote up against the pandemic, and there were others as well. Poets have always written not because of but despite desperation.

We live, as Alice Walker, the famous author of *Color Purple* (1982), has meaningfully formulated it, by our words and thus create meaning for our short existence here on earth.<sup>ix</sup> In a dream, she perceived a two-headed woman whom she asked whether the world will survive, and the answer was negative. Upon the question what she, the author, should do about it, she learned: "Live by the Word and keep walking" (2). We could go so far and identify human existence as determined by narratives because we impact our world and ourselves by means of our words and our communication, shaping both the physical and the immaterial dimension with our thoughts, feelings, and imaginations.

Undoubtedly, most people tend to perceive the physical aspects as most dominant, such as buildings, roads, objects, machines, vehicles, money, etc., but every material object is completely subject to constant corrosion, dismantling, destruction, and disappearance, whereas words, carriers of the human mind, simply stay with us, whether we are actively engaged with them or not. Homer's *Iliad*, for instance, or Dante's *Divina Commedia*, Shakespeare's *Othello* or Jane Austin's *Emma* are constant reminders of the profound impact which the human words really have had on all of us. All political movements and activities – most recently “Black Lives Matter” – have been predicated on words, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s poem/sermon “I have a dream” (1963) has demonstrated, and those were not empty, idle, meaningless words.<sup>x</sup> Words change the world, whether Lenin's powerful appeals to the masses or Hitler's frenzied speeches whipping the crowd into fascism.

Of course, people speak all the time, social life consists of talking, but currently there seems to be a tendency more than ever before to use social media and public fora to drown out each other with floods of meaningless words, replacing quality of human communication with quantity. However, quiet words, thoughtful words, intelligent words, hence poetry, literature at large, and scholarship have deeply shaped the history of the human race all over the world. Would it not be true that quiet words, even silence, can speak more explicitly and powerfully than the daily cacophony? At the risk of preaching to the converted, I want to revisit the issue why poetry matters, and how we could convince people from all walks of life to accept the notion that poems are of central importance, even if difficult to understand, incomprehensible, and confusing. After all, COVID-19 has suddenly confronted humanity once again with those fundamental questions concerning our existence, but those seem not to occupy the public or the scholarly discourse.

This charge, to keep walking and to live by the word (Walker), proves to be highly valuable and idealistic, but it is also open-ended and does not provide us with the necessary concrete directive as to where we should walk, how we could walk, why we would walk, etc. Just walking aimlessly might not do much good to us and could end up being self-centered and useless, even if we have the best-intended words available. However, there is no doubt about the value of the human word because we are what we are primarily because of our power to communicate, and hence to establish a social network. Ideas, values, feelings, and perceptions require the word to become reality, and this applies to some of the most esoteric manifestations of the word, poems (or songs).

There are many other species here on earth which prove to be similarly competent in that regard, maybe with a drastically lower range of vocabulary and grammatical structures, and yet fully capable of communicating with members of their own species. But here I am not concerned with the relationship between humans and animals, or plants, but with the question of what the human word can do for the human being and how we can transform the material conditions by means of the spiritual word. In specifics, why do we need poetry, and not just in general term, as part of our society, but why would we need it now, today, particularly during the pandemic COVID-19? How does the virus correspond with what we do with our words and our language? How does the deep global crisis impact human culture, hence our identity, and so our social interactions which we carry out by means of words.

### **Like and Dislike of Poetry**

Two odd phenomena clash with each other in that regard. On the one hand, we can soundly and

easily demonstrate that humankind has been deeply invested in poetry ever since its earliest history. All great cultures, and others, have supported the creation of poetry; and in most cases there has never been any need at all to question the existence or validity of this genre. In the Middle Ages, for instance, virtually every literary text, but also many theological or medical texts, was composed in verses, which made it much easier to memorize it and to present it to a diverse audience. Oral poetry was the norm in earlier times. In our not so far away future, when the robotization and digitization of our world will have moved forward in the way and at the pace as it does today, we might actually return to that stage because computerized machines might have taken over our professional activities, including all writing, whereas we might do nothing but speak into microphones, and the rest would then be done automatically. Would we then still create poetry? I strongly suspect that writing and creation are intimately intertwined with each other.

On the other hand, we observe a strong tendency in the present generation to reject poetry altogether or to disregard it as irrelevant.<sup>xi</sup> This might be only anecdotal, and yet there is firm evidence that book publishers are highly hesitant to accept manuscripts of poetry, especially by novice poets, that bookstores have a hard time selling volumes with poetry, that public readings by poets, especially when those do not yet enjoy a high reputation, do not attract significant audiences, and that teaching poetry both at the pre-collegiate and also the collegiate level represents a considerable challenge and might even amount to anathema for the young generation.

Certainly, there are still many publishers with programs in poetry, but they are steadily losing ground, and if anyone might still read anything, it might be the newspaper, manuals for machinery or gadgets, computer screens with texts, recipe books, et al. Sophisticated, esoteric poetry, on the other hand, does not necessarily attract the ordinary contemporary. Publishers still produce volumes with poetry, but the broader reading public demonstrates hardly any interest in those publications, which increasingly seem to be written by and for an intellectual elite, literary aesthetes, dreamers, and individual enthusiasts only. How long is it ago, for instance, that a major or a local newspaper included a new poem and thus invited the public to engage with deeper thoughts, images, ideas, or concepts expressed in a non-linear, irrational, or only suggestive manner? Memorizing poetry or songs seems to be a matter of the past, if we consider modern-day curricula, and there are very few universities in the world with departments or centers dedicated specifically to poetry.<sup>xii</sup>

Curiously, all this negativity might be more typical of the western world, as poetry even on TV has sometimes achieved enormous success, such as the program “Million’s Poet,” aired by the United Arab Emirates television network Abu Dhabi TV and the Million’s Poet Channel. The show is a competition for the most talented poet in Arabic poetry who succeed in reviving the poetry of Nabati, Mwal, Shalla and Qalta since February 2014.<sup>xiii</sup> The number of viewers of this program has been staggering, which certainly underscores that the culture of the capitalist west is not at all representative of the modern world in global terms. Considering the huge impact of  *mariachi*  music, with its lyrics, in the southwest of the United States, Mexico, Central America, and other parts of the southern hemisphere, and the significant role of poetry and music in Africa, India, and many other parts of the world, we have virtually won the debate regarding the relevance of poetry today.<sup>xiv</sup> Christopher Lupke now brings to our attention the enormous creativity and productivity of contemporary East Asian poets,<sup>xv</sup> and yet, considering the huge paradigm shift we have witnessed over the last decades with public culture primarily dominated by the internet, the smartphone, and social media, there continues to be a great danger for poetry because it no

longer enjoys, at least in the west, a significant role in school curricula, university reading lists, public readings, book stores, etc. Statistics prove that an ever-shrinking number of Americans, for instance, is still reading poetry, as much as poets, literary scholars, and publishers try to argue for the opposite. Only opera appears to attract less of an audience than poetry. Even though the internet has made more and more poems available globally, the search for poetry has declined precipitously.<sup>xvi</sup>

Should we thus close this chapter with a “resquiescat in pace,” poetry, and move on, quietly accepting that we now live in a world of prose? Are we now, in the age of the Anthropocene, when a vicious virus rules once again over human life, finally nothing but prosaic beings, without dreams, hopes, ideals, and fantasy, and especially without a sensory organ for the lyrical expression, the musical formulation, and the rhythmic and esoteric language so characteristic still of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?

Oddly, however, in the present time of crisis, COVID-19, many previous assumptions about ourselves, our culture, our concepts and interests have been challenged and are no longer just the same as in the past. Hence, it might be high time to raise the issue once again and to revisit the ancient questions one more time, why poetry?<sup>xvii</sup> Or, why not poetry? Of course, this is such a huge issue, with hundreds and more contributors to this public discourse both in print and online media, and it is of such universal relevance that there is great danger of getting lost in a maelstrom of arguments, explanations, advice, suggestions, ideas, theories, and methods. Yet, simply accepting the continuous decline of interest in poetry among the general readership is not an option, as long as we accept the fundamental value of literature per se.<sup>xviii</sup>

### **Literature - a Value By Itself**

For pragmatic reasons, let us simply define literature as an expression of human ideas, fears, sentiments, desires, feelings, hopes, aspirations, dreams, utopias, dystopias, and imagination and fantasy. We are not only material beings; we also consist of a spiritual body, a mind, or a soul, which has great needs to express itself, as we know both from the most ancient cultures and civilizations and from our own world. This would then automatically imply the essential function of literature because it serves, globally speaking, as the laboratory for the human mind, soul, and heart, as a platform for thought experiments, as a mirror of social interactions or the lack thereof, as a medium for self-reflections and the exploration of foreign worlds, peoples, and cultures, and so forth. However, in our mundane existence we tend to be too busy with our work, family life, or leisure activities to turn our attention to the other, probably most important side of our existence. Hence, the current COVID-19 Crisis represents a moment of pause, it serves as a catalyst, and encourages us, if not forces us, to revisit the ultimate question of who we are, where we are, and why we are where we are. I would argue that writing and poetry can serve as the critical instrument to achieve that goal, at least for those who are sensitive and aware enough to perceive the signals addressing humanity right now once again with a deep appeal to revisit the foundations of our existence.

Poetry is not only what traditional teaching has informed us, a literary medium closely following metrical, rhyme, and rhetorical schemes, carefully crafted to achieve a structural ideal according to classical norms, which in turn requires at times rather tedious, meticulous, strenuous, and hence maybe boring philological analysis which an ordinary person might not be willing to carry out in his/her busy life.<sup>xix</sup> Every cultural product reveals internal structure because it has an essence, but poetry goes beyond that and evokes, because of this language structure it is

made of, a certain kind of music.

Creating, reading, or listening to poetry thus serves as a medium to connect with this music, which might well be the origin of all being, the voice of the divine, as we can read many times in medieval teachings of the Seven Liberal Arts, with music being one part of the Quadrivium. As the Roman philosopher Boethius (d. 524) had already formulated, thus laying the foundation for all medieval and early modern concepts about this phenomenon, “The soul of the universe was joined together according to musical concord . . . when we hear what is properly and harmoniously united in sound in conjunction with that which is harmoniously coupled and joined together within us – and are attracted to it, then we recognize that we ourselves are ut together in its likeness.”<sup>xx</sup>

As C. Stephen Jaeger comments on this, “*Musica humana* is the force which unites the parts of the soul to each other and the soul to the body. Harmony effects this joining . . . of body and soul.”<sup>xxi</sup> Modern writers such as Michael Ende – author of the famous *Die Unendliche Geschichte* (1979; *The Never Ending Story*) – picked up this theme and developed it further. In his novel for young readers, *Momo* (1973), Ende has his female protagonist, a girl of somewhere eight to twelve years of age, indicate that she had, when alone and concentrating on herself and the universe, perceived this music in subtle terms. When she is invited in to the master of all time, Master Hora, she learns more about this music because it amounts to the essence of time, and hence of life.<sup>xxii</sup>

## Poetry and Music

In fact, most, if not all, indigenous people embrace the idea of poetry and music as being two features of the same phenomenon, and we can easily recognize the huge impact of music also on us in the twenty-first century. Popular music, classical music, hard rock, hip hop, Romantic music, medieval music, etc., is always predicated not only on the sound, but also on the word, whether understandable or not. Granted, there is very abstract music, but even there the composition intends to express something. Both music and poetry thus speak an esoteric language, which often proves to be difficult to comprehend, but a language all human life seems to be based on. Medieval scholars firmly believed that all fixed stars represented the notes on celestial scores, so the cosmos was the sound space of the divine power, and the individual was invited to study that music as the gateway to God. The purpose of life was hence to recognize the track reserved for the individual, or to create that very track and to follow its course from birth to death, perhaps support by music.<sup>xxiii</sup>

In fact, the Australian Aborigines had already their fingers very closely on the pulse of deep life through their dreaming tracks. As Robert Tonkinson has observed:

Singing is an essential element in most Mardudjara ritual performances because the songline follows in most cases the direction of travel of the beings concerned and highlights cryptically their notable as well as mundane activities. Most songs, then, have a geographical as well as mythical referent, so by learning the songline men become familiar with literally thousands of sites even though they have never visited them; all become part of their cognitive map of the desert world.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Bruce Chatwin was one of the first to identify and record the so-called “meaning of the ancient ‘dreaming tracks’ of the Aborigines – the labyrinth of invisible pathways by which their ancestors ‘sang’ the world into existence.” As he puts it poignantly:

. . . the labyrinth of invisible pathways which meander all over Australia and are known to Europeans as ‘Dreaming-tracks’ or ‘Songlines; to the Aboriginals as the Footprints of the Ancestors’ or the ‘Way of the Lore.’ Aboriginal Creation myths tell of the legendary totemic being who wandered over the continent in the Dreamtime, singing out the name of everything that crossed their path – birds, animals, plants, rocks, waterholes – and so singing the world into existence.<sup>xxv</sup>

Music thus emerges as the original language, the pre-Babel means of communication, and authentic poetry succeeds in tracing this music once again, as the Romantics certainly had recognized so powerfully. The German poet Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff (1788-1857) formulated, for instance,

Wishing-Wand (1838)

A song sleeps in all things around  
Which dream on and on unheard,  
And the world begins to resound,  
If you hit the magic word.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Dreams and ideals are not simply extraneous to human existence; they constitute its very core and foundation, although they are commonly droned out in our daily lives. Forgetting ourselves, losing ourselves in the material conditions thus represents the critical issues philosophers since the time of Plato have ruminated on (*anamnesis*) and warned about.

Every pandemic throws us back to the starting point of life and forces us to reflect thoroughly about our own purpose here in life, on the way how we can pass through this existence, and how we might achieve the best results for ourselves and our society.<sup>xxvii</sup> This thus proves to be the starting point for us to return to the original question of what forms us as individuals and as members of a larger community. While novels project the lives of one or several protagonists in a long-term outline, while a play presents a critical moment in the hero’s life on the stage, the poem sings a song, so to speak and invites us to listen to the humming of the universe.

### Poetry as the Human Language

Poetry is a highly complex phenomenon, and it has been described and defined throughout the ages in different ways. Scholars have intensively examined countless different aspects pertaining to this genre, emphasizing primarily formal matters, such as meter, rhyme, stanzaic form, verses, language, structure, metaphors, allegories, symbols, personification, metonymy, the poetic voice, and the like.<sup>xxviii</sup> Undoubtedly, it is of essential importance to understand all those technical matter, but if we do not address the more critical issue, that is, the meaning of poetry, its function and purpose both past and present, we might lose all our audience and miss a major opportunity particularly today in the face of the pandemic to reinvigorate the study of poetry as a significant medium of the human spirit.<sup>xxix</sup>

The poet Jeanette Winterson (b. 1959), quoted by David Constantine, observed meaningfully: “A tough life needs a tough language – and that is what poetry is. That is what literature offers – a language powerful enough to say how it is. It isn’t a hiding place. It is a finding

place” (55). This means, above all, that poetry provides a different language, though it uses the same words commonly employed, and renders those words so differently that new perspectives can emerge and a new discourse becomes possible. Poetry has much to do with verbal imagery, with sound, with meaning, and it is not bound by the traditional rational discourse and does not even have to observe the usual grammatical syntax or general rules.

True poetry does not even tell a story, it is not a life narrative; it does not necessarily dramatize events, though there is a lot of very good political poetry, especially when the social situation demands a response by those who are suppressed, silenced, incarcerated, or persecuted in one or the other way. Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) easily comes to mind in this context, or Erich Fried (1921-1988), but to focus on these two would not be fair to the large number of powerful individuals who throughout time stood up against a political regime with poetic words. Injustice, tyranny, violence, intolerance, racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny, and many other forms of abuse by a hegemonic social class against a minority group have called for protests, and poems and songs have regularly served as some of the best literary expressions for all those concerns. Recent discussions have explored various ways of defining lyric poetry, but there is hardly any clear consensus, which can be attributed to the actual potency of the poetic expression in its being highly creative, flexible, mobile, and adaptive to the respective need in any specific situation.<sup>xxx</sup> We need words or language to come to terms with the deep and essential issues concerning human life, and we must be able to draw from the infinite reservoir of past and present poetry to meet that demand.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Currently, we find ourselves in just such a crisis again, but there have been, alas, countless other crises before, and horrible situations, including the Holocaust, and many genocides committed throughout history in many parts of the world. When horror strikes, we must strike back with words, the only and most effective tool to defend ourselves as human beings against the onslaught on humanity. Theodor W. Adorno’s dictum that after Auschwitz poetry was no longer possible to write (1951), for instance, has proven to be wrong, and it was powerfully defied by the magisterial poem “The Death Fugue” by the German-language poet Paul Celan (1920-1970),<sup>xxxii</sup> who gave most moving, but also enigmatic expression to the horror in the concentration camps.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Many other catastrophic events have hit people all over the world since 1945, and poetry continues to be a strong medium to come to terms with all that suffering, but also with profound happiness and spiritual experiences. So, we are forced to ask ourselves once again not so much what poetry really might be concerning its material conditions, format, or expressions, but rather, why we need poetry and what it achieves, and this at the risk of preaching to the converted, of course. However, we must do more than what virtually all poets have done throughout time, whether Guillaume le Neuf (early twelfth century) or Christine de Pizan (early fifteenth century), whether *Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg* (1633-1694) or Emily Dickinson (1830-1896), whether Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) or Kamala Das (1934-2009). Composing poetry is one thing, but making an audience reading or listening to it is another.

Poetry stands on its own and serves for the converted especially who all belong to a community of *literati*, maybe, but how do we convey its relevance to the readers/listeners? Of course, every poet is convinced of his/her significance or relevance as a poet, but there are vast differences between popular but little meaningful songs texts and stanzas, and truly valuable, timeless, philosophical, ethical, moral, religious, erotic, and political statements in verse form. This does not come as a surprise and has always occupied all those who are professionally in charge of evaluating the quality of a literary work, irrespective of the genre. There is trivial



literature and canonical literature, there are poetic texts that have always appealed to the audience, or attracted attention at least at some point of time, and there are texts that were nothing but ephemeral products, and then disappeared quickly again. How to evaluate a poem, or a narrative, or a play by what categories has always been a rather thorny issue and does not need to be pursued further here.<sup>xxxiv</sup> While all those questions have assumed central position in much of previous literary scholarship, the issue of poetry and its relevance gains in centrality particularly during a time of pandemic, as we find ourselves in right now. So, let us return to the drawing board once again and search for new epistemological tools for the present generation.

### Daily Struggles vs. Poetry

Obviously, much of our energy ought to be focused on the fight against the COVID-19 virus in order to save the lives of millions of people. But medicine has always been charged with this task, and the current task is not really much different than in the past, only much more urgent, and much more challenging because this time the human body itself is the carrier of the virus. What can the spirit contribute to all this? As the ancient Romans already used to say, *mens sana in corpore sano*, which was first formulated by Juvenal in his *Satire X* (1st or early 2nd c. C.E.) and which has been copied throughout time by many different individuals.<sup>xxxv</sup> As he formulates, and this significantly in verse form:

You should pray for a healthy mind in a healthy body.  
 Ask for a stout heart that has no fear of death,  
 and deems length of days the least of Nature's gifts  
 that can endure any kind of toil,  
 that knows neither wrath nor desire and thinks  
 the woes and hard labors of Hercules better than  
 the loves and banquets and downy cushions of Sardanapalus.  
 What I commend to you, you can give to yourself;  
 For assuredly, the only road to a life of peace is virtue. (10.356-64).<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Virtues and ethics emerge as the highest ideal, typical of the value system dominant in the Roman republic. But a poetic verse has never simply served, if valid in its own statement, as self-serving or as a function of the political system. As Juvenal tells his audience, what matters in human existence is the fundamental concept of a good life, determined by ideals, by fortitude, character, and personal strength. This does not entail the complete preference of the mind over the body, or an exclusive focus on spirituality. By contrast, Juvenal argues for a good balance of the physical with the spiritual, which would then result in a healthy life, a concept we would not be able to question, particularly not in the present day and age, although Juvenal lived in a very distant culture and period.

We certainly always need to keep in mind the historical-literary framework when analyzing a poem, and yet historical difference does not mean at all that the poetic voice from the past or from a different culture would not carry intrinsic value for us today. I would like to illustrate this with a brief discussion of some of the earliest poems in the Middle High German *minnesang*, such as the anonymous stanza, "Dû bist mîn, ich bin dîn" (ca. 1170-1180) contained in the Tegernsee manuscript, today in the Bavarian State Library, Munich (clm. 194111), hardly visible

within the page, surrounded by Latin texts.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

It is a love poem, disarming the reader/listener through its simplicity, intensity, frankness, and true love. The speaking voice says not much more than that s/he is completely committed to him/her as much as the partner is committed to her/him. Their love is enshrined in the heart of the speaking voice, but the key to the lock has been lost, meaning that the beloved can never leave again: “dû muost ouch immêr darînne sîn” (v. 6; you will always have to stay inside). The poetic voice insists on the shared love which will never leave the couple, since the cage which holds the other person can never be opened again due to the fact that the key is nowhere to be found. The intimacy of the entire poem is astounding and provides a great appeal, especially because this poem comes without any of the usual rhetorical elements and speaks a simple language of great authenticity. We do not know who lost the key to the heart, how it got lost, and why a replica could not be made. We are only told that the beloved is firmly locked into the heart, and the couple will thus never separate again, bound to each other with love and a deep commitment.

Similarly, “Tougen minne diu ist guot” (no. IX.2, 3.12, p. 21, contained in the manuscript of the *Carmina Burana*, at the end of CB 175, stanza 6),<sup>xxxviii</sup> also a straightforward poetic formulation, appealing to us especially because of its directness and presumed honesty, underscores the great value of love that is kept a secret and is not immediately defined by sexuality or marriage. The longing for love, without a clear sense of fulfillment, constitutes, as the narrative voice tells us, a profound experiences of feeling highly uplifted in character, ethos, personal ideals, that is, “hohen muot” (v. 2), one of the key values of medieval courtly society.<sup>xxxix</sup> Love ought to be pursued only with this highest ethos in mind, “triwen” (v. 4; loyalty, or trust), otherwise, the individual would be on the wrong track.

This finds also its timeless and deeply moving expression in another anonymous poem, “Waere diu werlt alle mîn” (*Minnesangs Frühling* I, IX; If the entire world belonged to me), where the narrative voice affirms that she would rather forgo the possession of large lands (“von deme mere unze an den Rîn,” 1.2; from the sea to the river Rhine), if only the king of England – her lover – would lie in her arms.<sup>xl</sup> In “Mich dunket niht sô guotes noch sô lobesam” (I, X), the female singer emphasizes that there is nothing more delightful in the world than the smell of the rose and the love of her paramour. Even if she were able to delight in the most charming sunshine, hence a beautiful nature setting, she would not be able to enjoy anything without his love. As little as those verses seem to say, as much do they actually reveal, imply, infer, and allude to, allowing us to ponder further on the meaning of love.

The world of courtly love poetry, whether *troubadour*, *trouvère*, *Minnesang*, or *stil dolce nuovo*, teems with profound, provocative, irritating, charming, attractive, pensive, and also satirical and even sarcastic statements about love, often determined more by pain and sorrow than by happiness and delight, commonly because love is not fulfilled and either he or she is longing for the partner in vain. The one most illuminating case, predicated on true happiness, consists of Walther von der Vogelweide’s famous poem “Under the linden tree,” where the female voice relates how she went out to the meadow to meet her lover who had already prepared a bed of flowers and grass under a linden tree.<sup>xli</sup>

The retrospective indicates that their love affair resulted also in their physical union, which both enjoyed to a great extent. The singer emphasizes, however, how much she would be embarrassed if people would have discovered them, though the natural bed, which they had left behind, revealed all that had happened there, showing the imprint of their bodies. Everyone who subsequently passed by that site smiled full of delight because they were very pleased that true

love had taken place. The singer herself states explicitly that the situation had been a dream come true for her, but she hopes that no one would find out about it, except a little nightingale, the classical bird of love since the time of the Roman poet Ovid, and which here symbolizes, of course, the poet himself.<sup>xlii</sup>

As much as the entire poem seems to aim for complete privacy and intimacy, the poetic medium makes it all know, and the song thus serves as an instrument to present a sense of love utopia to the courtly audience. After all, this love took place outside of the castle, or village, in nature, under the linden tree, near the forest, but not in the wilderness, so the entire situation hovers between human society/civilization and dangerous nature. Perhaps not so surprisingly, the refrain of each stanza consists of a hapax legomenon, most fitting for all poetic efforts to express the true feelings of love for which there are really no words, so Walther turned to onomatopoeisis: “tandaradei,” which means nothing and everything, and cannot be translated into any language. However, as is always the case with onomatopoetic expressions, each reader or listener can imagine what sweet feelings come to the fore here, all evoked by the delightful memory of the joyful experience of love.<sup>xliii</sup>

### **Mourning and Poetry**

The very opposite, grief and mourning about love lost due to death, finds its vivid expression in the ballads by Christine de Pizan who lamented in some of her *ballades* the death of her husband around 1400. She formulates in a deeply moving way what she went through as a recent widow, and demonstrates the potentials of the poetic word to come to terms with profound pain. Of course, there are no final and absolute expressions for these profound emotions, neither then nor today, and yet we all are bound to experience them because all life is determined by the experience of death.

Anaphorically, Christine states and restates, returns and parallels what she has to say and thus transforms her poems into therapeutic media to come to terms with her suffering:

Alone am I and alone would I be  
 Alone by my lover left suddenly.  
 Alone am I, no friend or master with me,  
 Alone am I, both sad and angrily,  
 Alone am I, in languor wretchedly,  
 Alone am I, completely lost doubtlessly,  
 Alone am I, friendless and so lonely.<sup>xliv</sup>

But was she really alone? Is a poet ever alone, like many people are who need external stimulation to spend their time, and this especially during social self-isolation and distancing? As much as Christine sighed and moaned through her poems, she was creative the entire time and managed to come to terms with her feelings, to sort out her life, and soon enough to emerge as a major poetic spokesperson of her time.<sup>xlv</sup>

Combining philosophy (Boethius) and classical literature (mythography) with personal reflections, she succeeded, especially in her *Book of the Mutation of Fortune* (ca. 1403), to outline in moving terms how she was struck by ill Fortune, lost her husband, the captain of her life's ship, then experienced shipwreck, and finally recovered, picking up strength, and taking charge of her

own life, turning, of course only in allegorical terms, into a man: “. . . I felt all strange / My body undergoing change / All over I felt transmuted: / No longer weak and subjugated. / Each limb of mine did feel much stronger, / I, discomfited no longer, / Felt no further need for crying / as I'd done before, just lying / Helpless. I was now astonished / Never had I been admonished / Of such rapid transformation” (vv. 1334-42). Here we have the perfect example of the deep impact which poetic creativity can have on the individual, and we do not have to question whether such a distant voice might have any relevance for us today. Of course it does, as all poetry does, past and present.<sup>xlvi</sup>

From here we could proceed and discuss virtually thousands and more poems created throughout times and by an infinitude of poets. We would thereby realize that the poetic word has always served in a critical fashion to provide people with a verbal and musical medium to express the ineffable, the mystical, the spiritual, the emotional, and the transcendental, all aspects which determine human existence just as much, if not much more, than the material dimension. It does not matter at what chronological level the nuggets of wisdom rest, in the medieval, the Baroque, the modern, or the postmodern period, they all speak to us and draw us into the continuous discourse which allows us to grow as human beings. Poets do not necessarily provide direct advice, teachings, lessons. Instead, they offer a voice for the ethereal dimension to which we obviously belong, but to which we do not have the best access.

### Mysticism and Poetry: A Higher Truth?

Let us resort to one more example, the seventeenth-century Silesian author of a large number of epigrams, Johann Scheffler (1624-1677), better known under his *nom de plume*, Angelus Silesius (the Silesian Angel). He addressed, in a myriad of formulations, the divine element and the relationship between it and the human being, offering rather mythical images that defy an easy explanation or interpretation, and yet signify much more than any rational discourse might normally achieve.<sup>xlvii</sup> Some of his major poetic strategies relied on the use of apophatic theology, metaphors, the paradox, and the antithesis. Scheffler deeply influenced both his contemporaries – because he had converted from Protestantism to Catholicism, his previous co-religionists rather hated him, probably also because of his enormous success as a poet – and posterity until the present. The famous Argentinian poet Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) commented, for instance:

I will end with a great line by the poet who, in the seventeenth century, took the strangely real and poetic name of Angelus Silesius. It is the summary of all I have said tonight — except that I have said it by means of reasoning and simulated reasoning. I will say it first in Spanish and then in German:

La rosa es sin porqué; florece porque florece.

Die Rose ist ohne warum; sie blühet weil sie blühet.<sup>xlviii</sup>

[The rose exists without a why; it blossoms because it blossoms.]

And in the twentieth-century, the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) acknowledged the extent to which his thoughts about time, being, and space had been influenced by Scheffler.<sup>xlix</sup> Modern-day phenomenologists such as Heidegger and Edith Stein were, in fact, avatars of this Baroque poet and pushed, with his help, the limits of human epistemology.<sup>1</sup> Obviously, there are many literary rivulets from the late seventeenth century to the modern age, especially because this poet, through his spiritual epiphany, had gained a deeper form of understanding of some ultimate truths that continues to appeal to us today, both in the West and

in the East.<sup>li</sup> I have investigated many of those epigrams and identified, for example, the extent to which Angelus Silesius in turn was deeply influenced by the Roman philosopher Boethius.<sup>lii</sup> Poetry, in short, represents a snapshot of an infinite scaffolding of human culture, with all rungs of a universal ladder being connected with each other, all being necessary, whether through their words, sound, rhythm, or ideas. To use a modern metaphor, poetry consists of the basic algorithms that make every computer software program running, whether we are aware of it or not, which means that even the oldest verses continue to be essential building blocks of and for human life until today.

Here, suffice it to bring just a few of his epigrams to our attention because they confirm in an almost mysterious fashion how much the poetic word proves to be the catalyst to overcome the material burden in our existence and to gain access to a spiritual dimension free of rationality and logic. For instance, “We know not what we are”:

I know not what I am; I am not what I know;  
A thing and not a thing, a point and circle’s flow. (I, 5)

Or: “Man is Eternity”:

I am myself Eternity, when I leave time behind  
And I conceive myself in God, and God in me. (I.13)

Or: “You must be nothing, will nothing”:

O Man, as long as you are something,  
while you know, have, and cherish,  
You have not been delivered, believe me, of your burden. (I. 24)

or “Man hears the Word within himself”:

Deny it how you will, the Word of God,  
Is heard by him who sits within himself  
Even beyond time and space. (I, 93)

The (positive) danger reading these epigrams consists of the temptation to fall into a delirium and to forgo all critical analysis because the poet eliminates the physical basis and elevates himself and us into a sphere where the merging of the self with the divine appears to be happening by means of the poetic words. Silesius does not force any reading on us, not being a preacher or missionary, as much as he certainly endeavored to promote Catholicism in his region. However, he had discovered the infinite power of the poetic word to elevate the individual beyond all temporal and spatial limitations and to connect him/her with the ultimate otherness, whether divinity, spirituality, transcendence, or religiosity. His epigrams open windows toward a new form of interiority, selfness, spiritual empowerment, and the apophatic *unio mystica*.<sup>liii</sup>

## COVID-19 and the History of Poetry

### Materialism vs. Idealism

Could we hence convince those who live in self-isolation, observe social distancing, or, much worse, suffer from COVID-19, to turn their attention to these epigrams, or any other poems

discussed above, as a literary medium for new self-reflections? I am myself convinced of that, having published volumes of poetry in print and online, having published haikus on Facebook since March 2019, and in *Rupkatha*,<sup>liv</sup> being a steady contributor to the literary journal *Trans-Litz*,<sup>lv</sup> and deeply committed to teaching about and writing poetry myself. So, I am biased.

And so are the detractors who insist that no literary works can help in the time of crisis. Indeed, as the famous socialist poet Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) once formulated in his *Dreigroschenoper* (*Threepenny Opera*; first performed in 1928), “Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral (“First food, then comes morality”); composed by Kurt Weill, lyrics by Brecht). It is sung by Macheath and Mrs. Peachum and underscores the basic material needs all people have; they need to survive so they can thrive.<sup>lvi</sup> But as valid as that point proves to be, and this also in our time of the COVID-19 crisis, once those needs have been met, what does then human life mean, if the spiritual dimension is not addressed? Moreover, Macheath continues, and reaches the additional, but ghastly and deconstructionist point, “Nur dadurch lebt der Mensch, daß er so gründlich / Vergessen kann, daß er ein Mensch doch ist” (418; People live only when they can thoroughly forget that they are people). Ironically, Brecht himself resorted to most sophisticated poetry from the French Middle Ages (François Villon) and the *Beggar’s Opera* by John Gay from 1728, among many other literary and musical materials to create his work, so he firmly believed in the value of the poetic phenomenon itself.

Once we have eaten, we remember that we also have a heart and a soul. Those organs also need food, but not material nutrition; instead, food of the rarest properties, which helps us to grow beyond our physical self into the new identity we were really born with. As Alberto Manguel recently pointed out: “As Dante knew, literature is the most efficient instrument for learning compassion, because it helps the reader take part in the emotions of the characters.”<sup>lvii</sup> Mario Vargas Llosa adds that literature serves as a communicative medium among all people, past and present, and this synchronously, which makes available all ideas ever conceived of and to reactivate them when the new opportunity arises.<sup>lviii</sup> He goes so far as to claim:

Literature is the food of the rebellious spirit, the promulgator of non-conformities, the refuge for those who have too much or too little in life. One seeks sanctuary in literature so as not to be unhappy and so as not to be incomplete. To ride alongside the scrawny Rocinante and the confused Knight on the fields of La Mancha, to sail the seas on the back of a whale with Captain Ahab, to drink arsenic with Emma Bovary, to become an insect with Gregor Samsa: these are all ways that we have invented to divest ourselves of the wrongs and the impositions of this unjust life, a life that forces us always to be the same person when we wish to be many different people, so as to satisfy the many desires that possess us (ibid.).

We can push the limits here even further and underscore, also together with Llosa, that literature, specifically poetry, empowers us to perceive what the rational mind cannot recognize or deal with, so “literature’s unrealities, literature’s lies, are also a precious vehicle for the knowledge of the most hidden of human realities” (Llosa). For some, poetry empowers us to reach out to our religious needs; for others, poetry appeals to our aesthetic ideals and desires, especially when we consider the high degree of musicality always contained in poetry, abstract or vivaciously present. Poetry makes it possible to approach death and to come to terms with it, just as poetry allows us to comprehend, in a highly esoteric fashion, the ever-evanescent meaning of life itself. But poetry can also have a high political function, which Brecht, once again, expressed so convincingly when he reflected on the failed people’s riot in East Germany on June 17, 1953, offering these rather sarcastic remarks with which he radically undermined the pretentiousness and hypocrisy of the

Socialist regime propped up by Russian tanks and soldiers:

After the uprising of the 17th of June  
 The Secretary of the Writers' Union  
 Had leaflets distributed on the Stalinallee  
 Stating that the people  
 Had forfeited the confidence of the government  
 And could only win it back  
 By increased work quotas. Would it not in that case be simpler  
 for the government  
 To dissolve the people  
 And elect another?<sup>lix</sup>

### Poetry and the Environment

Finally, poetry has proven to be an astounding force in the current ecocritical movement and has helped to give words to those fighting against the pollution of their environment by the big industry, as is the case, to allow also non-European poets an important voice here, with the works by the two Nigerian poets, Tanure Ojaide and Nnimmo Bassey, with their Niger Delta ecopoetics.<sup>lx</sup> The exploration of oil in the Niger Delta region brought much wealth to the people, but also deeply disrupted their relationship with nature and even with themselves, which today constitutes a huge problem globally.

Unfortunately, those environmental issues are no longer – if they ever have been – local and isolated problems and affect humanity at large, which we realize as well through a survey of much of contemporary literature, often deeply concerned with the implications of the Anthropocene, such as in the works of Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes.<sup>lxi</sup> Actually, already Walther von der Vogelweide (see above) voiced deep concerns with and worries about the changing of his world around him in his elegiac poem “Owê, war sint verswunden alliu mîniu jâr!” (124, 1; 97, pp. 461-62). Not only does he come to the realization that old age has set in with him, but also that nature has changed, having been domesticated, tamed, and destroyed. Not only have those people whom he used to know in his childhood become slow and old (stanza I, 9), but wilderness had to make room for farming, the forest has been cut down, and only the rivers still run their old course.

Of course, Walther subsequently voices mostly criticism of the decline in culture, in social, ethical, moral, religious, and political *mores*, lamenting about the shameful behavior of the present generation, but he also realizes rather dramatically the extent to which all material appearances are deceptive, whereas the truth, dark and rotten, rests underneath the screen of the gleaming surface. In his old-age mentality, he rejects the joys of knighthood with its shining armor and seeks for the eternal values of courtly culture beyond the limits of death: “möhe ich die lieben reise gevarn über sê, / sô wolte ich denne singen wol unde niemer mêr ouwê” (III, 15-16, p. 462: I would love to voyage across the see and would then sing well, never lamenting again).<sup>lxii</sup>

## Conclusion

Undoubtedly, each generation and each social group faces its own issues, conflicts, and challenges, and, correspondingly, there is an infinitude of responses to those, in actions, deeds, and words, all valuable, we may assume, unless they become destructive. Nevertheless, the poem itself, the recording of a song in writing, or preserved orally, constitutes a unique medium to enter more deeply into the conversation between the self and nature, between the self and the divine, between life and death, and among the members of the social group, because we are not alone here on earth.

My selection of poetic texts for the present analysis somewhat favored the pre-modern world, particularly because it represents such a huge storehouse of human experiences, ideas, concepts, experiments, concepts, and notions that might or might not be relevant for us today. As we noticed, however, historical distance, linguistic barriers, or cultural contrasts mean nothing in our continuous endeavor to figure out the same old questions, such as who we are, where we are, why we are here, and why we spend time with partners. The COVID-19 crisis has brought many aspects of our lives to a screeching halt, and forced us to reconsider our own position vis-à-vis those profound issues. Only if we can at least approximately come to terms with them, would we be entitled to claim that we would have lived meaningfully and respectfully, leaving behind some inheritance, hopefully in a positive sense.

Poetry, whether by Ovid or William IX, by Christine de Pizan or Johann Scheffler, by Bertolt Brecht or Albrecht Classen (wink wink), speaks a language that is different from the ordinary human expression. Its words are understandable in most cases, but the meaning requires much intellectual and spiritual labor before it reveals itself to us. However, this unique meaning in particular proves to be the key to the fundamental secrets that make life worth living and rewards us today and tomorrow for our efforts to look backward and forward.

The chorus of poets consists of countless voices, and just when COVID-19 seems to break down our social cohesion, or sociability, that is, our love for each other as members of the same human species, the poem enters the picture and opens the obscured perspective once again. Amidst all the dead, here we are as the living, and as much as we must engage with the material dimension of the present time, as much as we are called upon, particularly now in this time of crisis, to uphold the unique value of human existence, despite, or just because of, the virus. Poems are keys to many doors, to many secrets, to the human soul, mind, and heart, and the countless verses, stanzas, and songs composed throughout time encourage us, maybe today more than ever before, to accept those keys and embark on our journey through the labyrinth called 'human life.' There is celestial music out there, and our poetry promises to capture the sound as it resonated throughout the world, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. To wax a little poetic myself, if we can hope that our lives will conclude in at least one musical note to be placed on the scores of the divine symphony, we would not have lived in vain. And that's exactly what a poem can do, leave an imprint in the vast ocean of the universe, if our hope and optimism do not deceive us.

In a previous study on the same issue I had argued that a meaningful poem creates a pause in our everyday lives, a sudden moment of silence, an opening up of numerous perspectives invoked by some particular words, a rhyme, a sound, or an image, which all takes us outside of our physical reality into the realm of metaphysical meaning. A poem thus conveys meaning, but a meaning that is often beyond our rational mind – here disregarding the many wonderful political, social, didactic, or philosophical poems – and addresses an epistemology that only the poetic



epiphany can relate to us.<sup>lxiii</sup>

Here I would add, in light of the many examples cited above and especially in light of the global pandemic we are all going through in 2020, that poetry serves a plethora of purposes, all of which contribute to the central growth of the individual who is exposed to transcendence, spirituality, and music when s/he reads or listens to a poem, or creates one personally. Poetry itself thus emerges as the literary key to a higher dimension in all existence, a dimension which normally remains hidden to us as physical creatures. In the time of crisis, all normalcy disappears and we are forced to reassess our lives, which is best initiated by turning to poetry once again. It remains a highly elusive but an equally productive enterprise to engage with words in a poetic fashion, like sitting down in front of a keyboard and experimenting with playing music. The world suddenly opens up.

## Notes

---

i. Michael B. A. Oldstone, *Viruses, Plagues, and History: Past, Present, and Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Michael G. Cordingley, *Viruses: Agents of Evolutionary Invention* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017); the current literature on this topic is legion.

ii. David Farrier, *Anthropocene Poetics: Deep Time, Sacrifice Zones, and Extinction*. Posthumanities, 50 (Minneapolis, MN, and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2019); Reinhold Münster, "The Anthropocene, Technology and Fictional Literature," *Humanities* 9(3), 56 (2020); <https://doi.org/10.3390/h9030056>; Gregers Andersen, *Climate Fiction and Cultural Analysis: A New Perspective on Life in the Anthropocene*. Routledge Environmental Literature, Culture and Media (London and New York: Routledge, 2020).

iii. *Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death*, ed. Monica Green. Medieval Globe (Kalamazoo: Arc Medieval Press, 2015); John Aberth, *Plagues in World History*. Exploring World History (Lanham, Boulder, et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011); *Pest: Die Geschichte eines Menschheitstraumas*, ed. Mischa Meier (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2005); Peter C. Doherty, *Pandemics*. What Everyone Needs to Know (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

iv. In the Middle High German verse narrative, "Der arme Heinrich," by Hartmann von Aue (ca. 1190), the protagonist is destined to die a very early death because of leprosy. A medical doctor down in Salerno, Italy, has told him, however, that if a young nubile virgin were willing to die for him, then her blood could heal him. This is, of course, impossible, but at the end, when Heinrich is awaiting his death while staying with a farmer whom he had granted numerous privileges before, the man's young daughter learns of this miracle cure and quickly volunteers to die for him so that he could live. Although her parents are horrified about this, she develops such rhetorical skills in justifying her decision that they have to give in, as much as it grieves them deeply. Heinrich also accepts her offer, but just before the doctor is then about to cut open her body to take out her heart, the protagonist peeks through a hole in the wall and suddenly realizes the terrible misdeed that he is about to commit via the doctor. Like in an epiphany, he recognizes the spiritual beauty within and the ugly nature of his body outside, so he forgoes the sacrifice, despite her vehement protests. Amazingly, he is then miraculously healed because God, the *speculator cordis* (the scrutinizer of the heart), has observed that Heinrich has healed spiritually, which makes it possible for him to return to the living completely recovered in body and mind.

When the girl discusses her decision to sacrifice herself for Heinrich, she explains: "till now worldly desires that lead to hell have not touched me. Now I thank God that in my young days he has given me the

good sense to scorn this fragile life completely. I intend to surrender myself into God's power, pure as I am now. I fear that if I get old, the sweetness of the world will draw me underfoot, as it has drawn very many whom its sweetness has duped. Then I might well be denied to God. . . . Our life and our youth are mist and dust. Our stability trembles like a leaf. He is surely a misguided fool who likes to fill himself with smoke . . . who cannot grasp this and who pursues the world; for a silk cloth is spread over the fool dung before us. He whom the splendor seduces is born for hell and has lost nothing less than both soul and body." *The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue*, trans. with commentary by Frank Tobin, Kim Vivian, and Richard H. Lawson (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 225. I have argued before that the young woman actually symbolizes Heinrich's soul, and only when he accepts his spiritual and material side as a holistic whole, can he live fully. Albrecht Classen, "Herz und Seele in Hartmanns von Aue 'Der arme Heinrich.'" *Der mittelalterliche Dichter als Psychologe?*, *Mediaevistik* 14 (2003): 7-30; id., "Utopian Space in the Countryside: Love and Marriage Between a Knight and a Peasant Girl in Medieval German Literature. Hartmann von Aue's *Der arme Heinrich*," Anonymous, 'Dis ist von dem Heselin,' Walther von der Vogelweide, Oswald von Wolkenstein, and Late-Medieval Popular Poetry," *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen, with the collaboration of Christopher R. Clason. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 9 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 251-79.

v. Albrecht Classen, "Mental and Physical Health, Spirituality and Religion in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Medieval Answers for Our Future? With Special Emphasis on Spiritual Healing Through Narratives of Mourning: Johannes of Tepl and Christine de Pizan," *Mental Health, Spirituality, and Religion in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 15 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 1-154; Johannes de Tepl Civia Zacensis, *Epistola cum Libello ackerman und Das büchlein ackerman. Nach der Freiburger Hs. 163 und der Stuttgarter Hs. HB X 23*. Vol. 1: *Text und Übersetzung*, ed. Karl Bertau. Vol. 2: Karl Bertau, *Untersuchungen* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1994); see online at: [https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/15Jh/Tepl/tep\\_tod.html](https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/15Jh/Tepl/tep_tod.html); for critical studies, see Albrecht Classen, "Der Ackermann aus Böhmen – ein literarisches Zeugnis aus einer Schwellenzeit: Mittelalterliches Streitgespräch oder Dokument des neuzeitlichen Bewußtseins?," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 110.3 (1991): 348-73; Christian Kiening, *Schwierige Moderne: Der 'Ackermann' des Johannes von Tepl und die Ambiguität historischen Wandels*. *Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 113 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1998). He confirms my finding, but then ignores it as well in a contradictory fashion. For a brief introduction, see <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/en/bpd/glanzlichter/oberdeutsche/henfflin/cpg76.html> (last accessed on July 15, 2020).

vi. Hans Holbein, *The Dance of Death*, with a commentary by Ulinka Rublack (London: Penguin, 2016); see the contributions to *Death in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: The Material and Spiritual Conditions of the Culture of Death*, ed. A. Classen. *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 16 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016).

vii. In a variety of different venues, I have already tried to argue very hard against this defeatist and eviscerating attitude undermining the critical value of the Humanities: Albrecht Classen, "The Amazon Rainforest of Pre-Modern Literature: Ethics, Values, and Ideals from the Past for our Future. With a Focus on Aristotle and Heinrich Kaufringer," *Humanities Open Access* 9(1). 4 (2020): <file:///C:/Users/aclassen/Downloads/humanities-09-00004.pdf>; id.

"What is *Humanities Open Access* all about? Innovative Perspectives and Inclusivity as the Platform for Novel Approaches in Humanities Research," *Humanities Open Access*, June 30 (2020), at: <file:///C:/Users/aclassen/Downloads/humanities-09-00055.pdf>; "The Principles of Honor, Virtue, Leadership, and Ethics: Medieval Epics Speak Out against the Political Malaise in the Twenty-First Century. *The Nibelungenlied* and *El Poema de Mio Cid*," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 79 (2019): 388-409; id., "The Human Quest for Happiness and Meaning: Old and New Perspectives: Religious, Philosophical, and Literary Reflections from the Past as a Platform for Our Future: St. Augustine, Boethius,

- and Gautier de Coincy,” *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts* 5.2 (2018): 179–206, <http://www.athensjournals.gr/humanities/2018-5-2-3-Classen.pdf>; id., “The Challenges of the Humanities, Past, Present, and Future: Why the Middle Ages Mean So Much For Us Today and Tomorrow,” *Thallosis* 2 (2017): 191–217; id., “The Meaning of Literature and Literature as Meaning—A Productive Challenge of Modern Times from the Middle Ages,” *Humanities Open Access* 5.2 (2017), <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/5/2/24/htm>; id., “Medieval Studies within German Studies: *The Nibelungenlied* and Hartmann von Aue’s *Der arme Heinrich*,” *Taking Stock of German Studies in the United States: The New Millennium*, ed. Rachel Halverston and Carol Anne Costabile Heming. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015), 52–67; “The Challenges of the Humanities, Past, Present, and Future: Why the Middle Ages Mean So Much For Us Today and Tomorrow,” *Humanities Open Access* 3.1 (2014), <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/3/1/1>; id., “The Role of the Humanities Past and Present: Future Perspectives Based on Ancient Ideas: Reflections by a Medievalist,” *Alfinge: Revista de Filología* 24 (2012): 9–30; id., “Humanities — To Be Or Not To Be, That Is The Question,” Editorial for the journal *Humanities—Open Access Journal* (Sept. 16, 2011), <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/1/1/54>.
- viii. Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. by G. H. McWilliam (1972; London: Penguin, 1995).
- ix. Alice Walker, *Living by the Word: Selected Writings 1973-1987* (1981; San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1988).
- x. <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm> (last accessed on July 17, 2020).
- xi. For a contrastive view, see the TedEx talks by Stephen Burt and others, online at: <http://tedxpeachtree.com/is-poetry-still-relevant-today/> (May 14, 2015). See also <https://news.psu.edu/story/378071/2015/11/02/research/probing-question-poetry-relevant-american-society-today> (both last accessed on July 19, 2020).
- xii. I am pleased to report that the University of Arizona boasts of one of those, The Poetry Center, founded in 1960 by the philanthropist, writer, and editor Ruth Walgreen Stephan (1910-1974), with Robert Frost offering a reading at the dedication of the Center; <https://poetry.arizona.edu/visit/about-poetry-center> (last accessed on July 19, 2020).
- xiii. Samuel Spencer, “Million’s Poet: Abu Dhabi’s Prestigious Poetry Programme,” *Culture Trip* Nov. 1, 2016, online at: <https://theculturetrip.com/middle-east/united-arab-emirates/articles/million-s-poet-abu-dhabi-s-prestigious-poetry-program/> (last accessed on July 19, 2020).
- xiv. Daniel Edward Sheehy, *Mariachi Music in America: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); see also the excellent, highly detailed article online at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mariachi> (last accessed on July 19, 2020).
- xv. Christopher Lupke, “Bridge Essay: Modern Poetry as a Global Phenomenon,” *1920 to Early Twenty-First Century II*, ed. Venkat Mani and Ken Seigneurie. A Companion to World Literature, 5b. Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture (Hoboken, NJ, and Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2020), 3251-57.
- xvi. Christopher Ingraham, “Poetry is Going Extinct, Government Data Show,” *The Washington Post* April 24, 2015, online at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/04/24/poetry-is-going-extinct-government-data-show/>.
- xvii. I have ruminated on the same issues several years again, in German: “Wer hat Angst vor dem bösen Wolf? Gedichte schreiben und Gedichte lesen: Reflexionen über ein altes und immer neues Problem,” *Trans-Lit2* XVIII.1 (2012): 38-44.
- xviii. Dieter Lamping, *Das lyrische Gedicht: Definitionen zu Theorie und Geschichte der Gattung*. 3rd ed. (1998; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).
- xix. See, for instance, Jeannine Johnson, *Why Write Poetry? Modern Poets Defending Their Art* (Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007); Matthew Zapruder, *Why Poetry?* (New York: Ecco, 2017);

- Jay Parini, *Why Poetry Matters* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); *Poetry and the Religious Imagination: The Power of the Word*, ed. Francesca Bugliani Knox and David Lonsdale (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).
- xx. Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music: Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius*, trans. with intro. and commentary Calvin M. Bower (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 2.
- xxi. C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944), 166.
- xxii. Michael Ende, *Momo oder die seltsame Geschichte von den Zeit-Dieben und von dem Kind, das den Menschen die gestohlene Zeit zurückbrachte, ein Märchen-Roman* (Stuttgart: Thienemann, 1973); cf. Hans Heino Ewers, *Michael Ende neu entdecken: was Jim Knopf, Momo und Die Unendliche Geschichte Erwachsenen zu sagen haben* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 2018).
- xxiii. Robert Moor, *On Trails* (New York, London, et al.: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2017); this book with essays on trails and tracking as inspired me to write this scholarly study, *Tracing the Trails in the Medieval World: Epistemological Explorations, Orientations, and Mapping* (New York and London: Routledge, 2020).
- xxiv. Robert Tonkinson, *The Mardudjara Aborigines: Living the Dream in Australia's Desert*. Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978).
- xxv. Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines*. The Penguin Classics (1987; New York: Penguin Books, 2012), 2.
- xxvi. [http://www.lyriktheorie.uni-wuppertal.de/texte/1838\\_eichendorff.html](http://www.lyriktheorie.uni-wuppertal.de/texte/1838_eichendorff.html);  
<https://norberto42.wordpress.com/2013/02/25/eichendorff-wunscherute-analyse-interpretation/>;
- xxvii. I was deeply inspired by Robert Moor's essays in his *On Trails* (New York, London, et al.: Simon & Schuster Paperback, 2016).
- xxviii. Dieter Burdorf, *Einführung in die Gedichtanalyse*. 3rd updated and expanded ed. (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2015).
- xxix. David Constantine, *Poetry*. The Literary Agenda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- xxx. Rüdiger Zymner, *Lyrik: Umriss und Begriff* (Paderborn: Mentis, 2009); id., ed., *Handbuch Gattungstheorie* (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2010); Dieter Burdorf, *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik*. Einführung und Interpretationen (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2015); Nigel Fabb, *What Is Poetry? Language and Memory in the Poems of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); John Burnside, *The Music of Time: Poetry in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020).
- xxxi. Andrew Laughlin Ford, *Homer: The Poetry of the Past* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2019).
- xxxii. Johann Wolfgang, *Das Diktum Adornos: Adaptionen und Poetiken, Rekonstruktion einer Debatte* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2018). See also the contributions to *Der Holocaust in den mitteleuropäischen Literaturen und Kulturen: Probleme der Poetisierung und Ästhetisierung = The Holocaust in Central European Literatures and Cultures: Problems of Poetization and Aestheticization*, ed. Reinhard Ibler (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2016); *German and European Poetics after the Holocaust: Crisis and Creativity*, ed. Gert Hofmann. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY, and Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House, 2011). For the large debate about Adorno's famous statement, first written 1949, published in 1951, see [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nach\\_Auschwitz\\_ein\\_Gedicht\\_zu\\_schreiben,\\_ist\\_barbarisch](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nach_Auschwitz_ein_Gedicht_zu_schreiben,_ist_barbarisch) (last accessed on July 16, 2020).
- xxxiii. For an English translation, see, for instance, <https://poets.org/poem/death-fugue>. See also

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Todesfuge> (both (last accessed on July 16, 2020).

xxxiv. Peter Nusser, *Trivalliteratur*. Sammlung Metzler, 262 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1991); *Literatur am Rand: Perspektiven der Trivalliteratur vom Mittelalter bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Eva Parra-Membrives. Popular Fiction Studies, 1 (Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2013); see also the contributions to *Trivialidades literarias: Reflexiones en torno a la literatura de entretenimiento*, ed. Eva Parra Membrives (Madrid: Visor Libros, 2013); *Cheap Print and the People: European Perspectives on Popular Literature*, ed. David Atkinson and Stephen Roud (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019).

xxxv. David C. Young, "Mens Sana in Corpore Sano? Body and Mind in Ancient Greece," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22.1 (January 2005): 22-41. For Juvenal's text, available online, see [https://la.wikisource.org/wiki/Saturae\\_\(Juvenalis,\\_Bucheler\)/Liber\\_IV/Satura\\_X](https://la.wikisource.org/wiki/Saturae_(Juvenalis,_Bucheler)/Liber_IV/Satura_X).

xxxvi. Juvenal, *Satiren*, ed., trans. and notes by Sven Lorenz. Sammlung Tusculum (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017). For an online version, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mens\\_sana\\_in\\_corpore\\_sano](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mens_sana_in_corpore_sano) (last accessed on July 17, 2020).

xxxvii. *Des Minnesangs Frühling*, ed. Hugo Moser and Helmut Tervooren. Vol. I: *Texte*, 38th, again rev. ed. (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel, 1988), no. 3.1, stanza VIII, p. 21. See also Jürgen Kühnel, *Dû bist mîn, ih bin dîn. Die lateinischen Liebes- (und Freundschafts-) Briefe des clm 19411. Abbildungen, Text und Übersetzung*. Litterae, 52 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1977).

xxxviii. *Carmina Burana*, ed. Benedikt Konrad Vollmann. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 13 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1987), p. 568.

xxxix. Otfried Ehrismann, *Ehre und Mut, Âventiure und Minne: Höfische Wortgeschichten aus dem Mittelalter* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1995), 148-51. See also C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

xl. For a reliable edition of this and the other anonymous poems online, see [https://www.hsaugsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/12Jh/Namenlos/nam\\_lied.html#lied](https://www.hsaugsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/12Jh/Namenlos/nam_lied.html#lied) (last accessed on July 17, 2020).

xli. Walther von der Vogelweide, *Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche*, ed. Thomas Bein. 15th ed. (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), no. 16, pp. 126-27 (39, 11).

xlii. Wendy Pfeffer, *The Change of Philomel: The Nightingale in Medieval Literature*. American University Studies, Series 3, Comparative Literature, 14 (New York, Bern, and Frankfurt am M: Peter Lang, 1985).

xliii. This poem has been interpreted already many times, being one of the 'classics' of medieval German literature; see, for instance, Heike Sievert, *Studien zur Liebeslyrik Walthers von der Vogelweide*. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 506 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1990).

xliv. *The Writings of Christine de Pizan*, selected and ed. by Charity Cannon Willard (New York: Persea Books, 1993), No. XI, p. 41.

xlv. Charity Cannon Willard, *Christine de Pizan: Her Life and Works* (New York: Persea Books, 1984); Nadia Margolis, *An Introduction to Christine de Pizan* (Gainesville, Tallahassee, et al.: University Press of Florida, 2011).

xlvi. Albrecht Classen, *Reading Medieval European Women Writers: Strong Literary Witnesses from the Past* (Frankfurt a. M., Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 2016), 183-223.

xlvii. Angelus Silesius, *Cherubinische Wandersmann: Sinnliche Beschreibung der vier letzten Dinge*. Angelus Silesius, Sämtliche poetische Werke, vol. 3 (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1949); for a solid introduction, see Jeffrey L. Sammons, "Johann Scheffler (Angelus Silesius)," *German Baroque Writers, 1580-1660*, ed. James Hardin. Dictionary of Literary Biography, 164. Detroit, Washington, DC, and London: Gale Research, 1996, 279-88; cf. also Martin Hoffmann, *Angelus Silesius: seine Thesen in heutiger Sicht und Bedeutung* (Karlsruhe: Helmesverlag, 2008); Richard von Kralik, *Angelus Silesius und die christliche Mystik* (Paderborn: Salzwasser

Verlag, 2013).

xlvi. Jorge Luis Borges, *Siete Noches* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1980), 120–21; trans. by Eliot Weinberger as *Seven Nights* (New York: New Directions, 1984), 93–94.

xlix. Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund* (Pfullingen: Verlag Gunther Neske, 1957), 68–69; trans. Lilly, Reginald as *The Principle of Reason* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 36ff.; see now Jacques Le Brun, *Dieu, un pur rien: Angelus Silesius, poésie, métaphysique et mystique* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2019).

l. Michael F. Andrews, “Religion Without Why: Edith Stein and Martin Heidegger on the Overcoming of Metaphysics, with Particular Reference to Angelus Silesius and Denys the Areopagite,” *Analecta Husserliana* LXXXIX (2006): 399–427.

li. Hideaki Egawa, “Die Wanderung eines cherubinischen Dichters: Angelus Silesius,” *Doitsu bungaku ronko* 34 (1992): 37–51; Frederick Franck, trans., intro., and drawn by, *Messenger of the Heart: The Book of Angelus Silesius With Observations by the Ancient Zen Masters* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2005).

lii. Albrecht Classen, “Boethius and No End in Sight: The Impact of *De consolazione philosophiae* on Early Modern German Literature From the Fifteenth Through the Seventeenth Century: Andreas Gryphius and Johann Scheffler (Angelus Silesius),” *Daphnis* 46 (2018): 448–66 (online at: doi 10.1163/18796583-04601010); id., “Johann Scheffler (Angelus Silesius): The Silesian Mystic as a Boethian Thinker. Universal Insights, Ancient Wisdom, and Baroque Perspectives,” *Humanities Open Access* 7.127 (2018): 1–12, Dec. 4, 2018; file:///C:/Users/aclassen/Downloads/humanities-07-00127%20(2).pdf; id., “The Secret and Universal Relevance of Johann Scheffler’s (Angelus Silesius’s) Epigrams: Mystical-Philosophical Messages from the World of the Baroque for the Twenty-First Century,” to appear in *The Comparatist*.

liii. For a good selection of his epigrams both in the original (scanned) and in English translation, see <https://www.themathesontrust.org/papers/christianity/silesius-wanderer.pdf> (last accessed on July 18, 2020).

liv. Albrecht Classen, Poems in the Midst of Crisis: “New work conditions,” “Santa Cruz,” “Hidden Happiness,” and 47 haikus,” <http://rupkatha.com/albrecht-classen-poems/> (April 12, 2020).

lv. *Trans-Lit2* is the journal published by the Society for Contemporary American Literature in German (SCALG), with two volumes appearing per year, mostly in German, accepting both poetry and prose, and some book reviews. <https://cah.georgiasouthern.edu/departments/society-for-contemporary-american-literature-in-german-scalg/> (last accessed on July 18, 2020).

lvi. Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Elisabeth Hauptmann (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1967), vol. 2, 417–18.

lvii. Alberto Manguel, *Curiosity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 190.

lviii. Mario Vargas Llosa, “The Premature Obituary of the Book: Why Literature?,” *The New Republic* 224.20 (2001): 31–36. The entire text is available online at: <http://crab.rutgers.edu/~goertzel/vargasllosa.htm> (last accessed on July 18, 2020).

lix. Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 10: *Gedichte* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1967), 1009–10. For an online version of the original and the English translation, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die\\_L%C3%B6sung](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_L%C3%B6sung); for the relevant historical and political background, see [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die\\_L%C3%B6sung](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_L%C3%B6sung) (both last accessed on July 18, 2020). There is a vast body of research on Brecht’s poems and on “Die Lösung” itself. See, for instance, Konrad Feilchenfeldt, “Brecht und der 17. Juni 1953: zu seinem Gedicht ‘Die Lösung’,” *Weiter schreiben - wieder schreiben: deutschsprachige Literatur der fünfziger Jahre. Festschrift für Günter Häntzschel*, ed. Adrian Hummel (Munich: Iudicium-Verlag, 2004), 191–206.

lx. Abba A. Abba and Nkiru D. Onyemachi, “Weeping in the Face of Fortune: Eco-Alienation in the Niger-Delta Ecopoetics,” *Humanities* 9(3).54 (2020); <https://doi.org/10.3390/h9030054>.

lxi. *Natur und Kultur: Essays, Gedichte, Anmerkungen zur literarischen und medialen Bearbeitung von Natur*,

---

ed. Knut Hickethier. *Beiträge zur Medienästhetik und Mediengeschichte*, 23 (Münster: Lit, 2004); Susanna Lidström, *Nature, Environment and Poetry: Ecocriticism and the Poetics of Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes*. Routledge Environmental Humanities Series (London and New York: Routledge, 2015); John Charles Ryan, *Plants in Contemporary Poetry: Ecocriticism and the Botanical Imagination*. Perspectives on the Non-Human in Literature and Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 2018).

lxii. For an online version, with a modern German translation, see <http://www.pinselpark.org/literatur/w/walthervogelweide/poem/owewar.html>; for an English translation, see <https://lyricstranslate.com/en/owe-war-sint-verswunden-ouwe-alas-where-have-all-years-gone.html> (both last accessed on July 18, 2020).

<sup>lxiii</sup> Classen, “Wer hat Angst vor dem bösen Wolf” (see note 17).