

Pleasure and Leisure in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age

Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture



Edited by
Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge

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Pleasure and Leisure in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age



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on Toys, Games, and Entertainment

Edited by
Albrecht Classen

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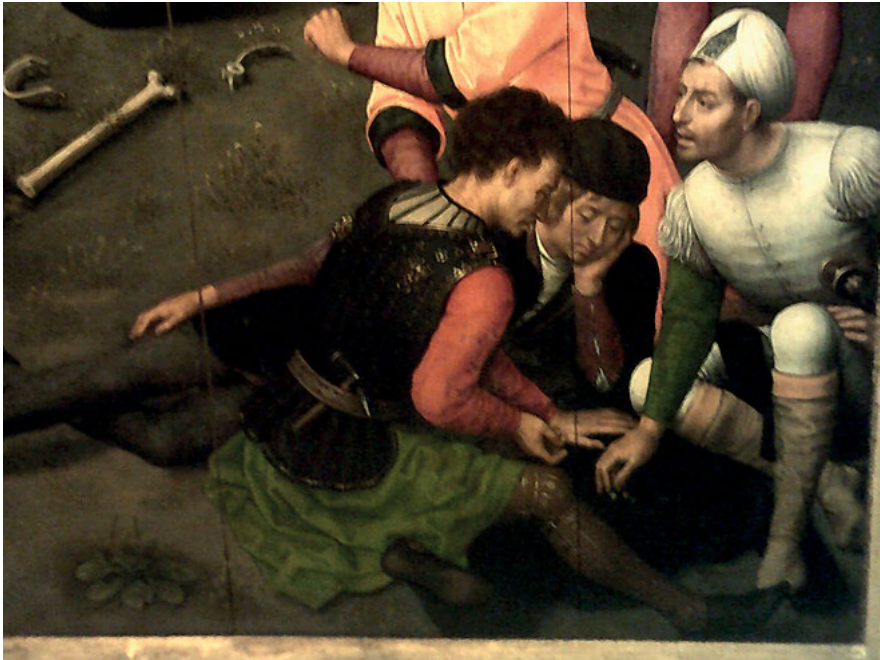
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Hans Memling, Passion Altar ("Greveradenaltar"), 1491, originally in the Lübeck Cathedral, now in the Saint Ann's Museum, Lübeck, Germany. Detail showing three Roman soldiers (they appear more like early modern courtiers) casting lots for Christ's garments. © Albrecht Classen, 2019.

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Albrecht Classen

Pleasure and Leisure from the Middle Ages to the early Nineteenth Century

The Rediscovery of a Neglected Dimension in Cultural History.
Also an Introduction

“Des wil ich mich ziehen an die Romer. Die haben es selbes getan vnd haben das ire kinder gelernet, das sie liebe in eren haben solten, turnieren, stechen, tanzen, wetlaufen, springen vnd allerlei zuchtige hubscheit treiben solten bei mussiger weile auf die rede, das sie die weile bosheit weren vberhaben” (Johannes von Saaz [Tepl], *Der Ackermann*, ca. 1401, ch. 23; ed. Günther Jungblut, 1969 https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/15Jh/Tepl/tepl_tod.html).

[Let me refer to the Romans as role models. They themselves did it and also taught their children to love honorable behavior and to embrace the idea that they should pursue entertainment through tournaments, jousts, dancing, competitive running, leaping, and all kinds of other acceptable activities during their leisure time so that they would be free from evil thoughts.]

(Here I have used my my own translation; but see also <http://www.michaelhaldane.com/HusbandmanandDeath>)

Global Perspectives on the *homo ludens*

People throughout time, both old and young, men and women, have always searched for various types of entertainment and games, and despite the allegedly superficial character of ‘playfulness’ and the seemingly simple ‘enjoyment,’ the opportunity to spend one’s time more leisurely and/or filled with excitement has traditionally assumed a high reputation even for the social elites, if not especially among them, because game playing is a form of theoretical reflection on and practice of the countless options and opportunities in life. The elites, above all other social classes, tend to have the necessary resources and free time to pursue pleasures, but this does not mean that the members of other social classes were doing nothing but work or slaving away, neither in the Middle Ages nor in our own time.

Entertainment makes it possible for the player to move away from the hardship and constraints of reality while challenging him/her in an artificial frame-

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work without exposing the player to the real implications of the actions.¹ Those, however, are predicated on the concrete conditions in our existence, imitating and refracting them according to changing sets of rules. Life thus proves to be a game, as we might say, and it is our challenge to learn the rules in order to participate in that game as well as possible so that both we ourselves and our playing partners can have a fulfilled and happy time, getting ready for the reality outside of the game where the various options have been played out in a rather random fashion, or determined by extra rules and regulations.

For the purpose of being as inclusive as possible and in order to avoid terminological confusion, subsequently I will not sharply differentiate between entertainment, games, gaming, play (not in the sense of drama, or stage perfor-

1 Sophie Caflisch, *Spielend lernen: Spiel und Spielen in der mittelalterlichen Bildung*. Vorträge und Forschungen, Sonderbände, 58 (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2018), highlights how much didactic literature, accounts about tournaments, narratives dealing with chess games etc. all addressed critical issues of social, political, economic, and religious conditions. All those ludic activities essentially contributed to the education of young noble people. See also Patrick Leiske, *Höfisches Spiel und tödlicher Ernst: Das Bloßfechten mit dem langen Schwert in den deutschsprachigen Fechtbüchern des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2018). For historical studies of the tournament, see *Das Ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter: Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen- und Verhaltensgeschichte des Rittertums*, ed. Josef Fleckenstein. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 80 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985); Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (1989; Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989; reprinted numerous times); David Crouch, *Tournament* (London and New York: Hambledon and Continuum, 2005). As to the depiction of tournaments in high medieval romances, see Peter Czerwinski, "Die Schlacht- und Turnierdarstellungen in den deutschen höfischen Romanen des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts: zur literarischen Verarbeitung militärischer Formen des adligen Gewaltmonopols," Ph.D. Freie Universität Berlin, 1975. See also the compact and highly valuable article by F. Cardini, Ph. Contamine, A. Ranft, and P. Schreiner, "Turnier," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 8 (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1999), 1113–18. For a discussion of the tournament field, see Silke Winst, "Schlachtfeld, Turnierplatz," *Literarische Orte in deutschsprachigen Erzählungen des Mittelalters: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Tilo Renz, Monika Hanauska, and Mathias Herweg (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 459–75. The importance of tournaments for early modern society is confirmed by a significant account from 1566: Sigmund Feyrabent, *Thurnier Buch: Von Anfang, Vrsachen, Vrsprung vnd Herkommen der Thurnier im Heyligen Römischen Reich Teutscher Nation, wie viel öffentlicher Landthurnier von Keyser Heinrich dem Ersten dieses Namens an biss auff den jetztregierenden Keyser Maximilian* (Frankfurt a. M.: Feyrabent und Hüter, 1566); online at: <http://www.archive.org/stream/thurnierbuchvona00ruxn#page/n27/mode/2up> (last accessed on June 1, 2018). See also the contribution to this volume by Allan V. Murray. I will refer to tournaments a number of times in various contexts, obviously because they assumed such a central role in medieval and early modern society. For the social, economic, intellectual, moral, and religious ramifications of games within pre-modern cultural conditions, see the contribution to this volume by Scott L. Taylor.

mance), leisure (activities), and even playfulness since all those aspects overlap and mirror a fundamental concern in human existence to experiment playfully with alternative conditions and to operate there on the new playing field, whether a tournament camp, a soccer stadium, a volleyball court, a chessboard, a card game, etc. Playing can take place in physical, intellectual, and spiritual fashion, and both the arts and literature have regularly created the fundamental platform where individuals could experiment and create a playful situation.² We have also realized that game underlies most intra-human interactions, both in politics and in economic relations, although in this context we move to a very global definition of game as part of the universal dimension of entertainment, pleasure, and leisure. Many studies that seemingly address this larger topic in reality are mostly concerned with humor, laughter, jokes, satire, or irony.³ The central question

² See the contributions to *Giving People Ideas – Text and Concept: Literary Texts as Thought Experiments*, ed. Susanne Kord, Ernest Schonfield, and Godela Weiss-Sussex. Publications of the English Goethe Society, N.S., 80 (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2011); cf. also Walter Haug, *Die Wahrheit der Fiktion: Studien zur weltlichen und geistlichen Literatur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2003); Robert Eisenhauer, *Paradox and Perspicacity: Horizons of Knowledge in the Literary Text. Studies on Themes and Motifs in Literature*, 76 (New York, Washington, DC, et al.: Peter Lang, 2005); Sophia Alt, Caterina Brand, and Vanessa Haazipolo, “Literatur als Gedankenexperiment – Grenzen und Chancen einer Perspektive,” *Journal of Literary Theory* (March 2017): 1–8. They summarize the major gist of a conference focused on the question how to approach literature through this lens: “Erklärtes Ziel der Tagung war dabei, nicht allein über, sondern ‘mit Literatur [zu] philosophier[en]’, um die Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Begriffs des literarischen Gedankenexperiments auszutesten” (The declared goal of this conference was not only to ‘philosophize’ about, but also with literature in order to test out the possibilities and limits of the term of the literary thought experiment). In her keynote address, Catherine Z. Elgin approached literature as “Imaginative Exploits, Epistemic Rewards” (thus her title). Other contributors criticized her approach as too vague and leaning toward trivialization of literature at large, which is not at all the case. Moreover, the charge was that literature does not contain any propositionalen Wahrheitswerte” (Gottfried Gabriel; propositional truth value), but in essence, I believe, we can embrace Elgin’s concept as a rather useful heuristic concept that gives literature a new level of meaning. See also Catherine Z. Elgin, “Fiction as Thought Experiment,” *Perspectives on Science* 22.2 (2014): 221–41. For a summary of the individual papers, see <http://www.jltonline.de/index.php/conferences/article/view/910/2083> (last accessed on Aug. 11, 2018).

³ Ken Binmore, *Game Theory and the Social Contract*. MIT Press Series on Economic Learning and Social Evolution (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994); *Frontiers of Dynamic Games: Game Theory and Management*, St. Petersburg, 2017, ed. Leon A. Petrosyan, Vladimir V. Mazalov, and Nikolay Zenkevich (Cham: Springer International Publishing, Birkhäuser, 2018); *Game Theory: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice* (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2018). This is a big topic in sociology, mathematics, philosophy, and related fields. Intriguingly, pre-modern studies can easily connect with this approach, drawing from their own materials and also the theoretical models developed in modern times. For a typical example of a collected volume that seems

will be what constituted or produced entertainment in the pre-modern world and what significance leisure activities could have had in their wide range of social, political, economic, and religious contexts. Whereas previous scholars in the field of Cultural Studies have only tentatively begun to explore the wide field of games, recent years have witnessed a new and heightened interest in this topic, although we often face the dilemma that the material dimension (toys, board games, dice, dolls, etc.) blinds us to the theoretical reflections truly necessary in order to gain a new and more insightful understanding of the issue at stake, as suggested by Ludwig Wittgenstein and Charles Sanders Peirce in their semiological concepts, identifying game as another form of representation of social reality.⁴

to address the same topic as the present book, see *The Playful Middle Ages: Meanings of Play and Plays of Meaning: Essays in Memory of Elaine C. Block*, ed. Paul Hardwick. Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 23 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010). The issues there concern mostly visual, i.e., art-historical documents reflecting grotesque human actions, laughable situations, foolishness, scatological language, satirical art works such as misericords or sculptures, embossed boxes, and other objects. This is, bluntly put, not a book about plays or games in practical or theoretical terms, despite the promising title. It is a book about humor, comedy, fun, satire, etc. Modern historians also tend to use the term 'pleasure' for a variety of purposes that, at closer analysis, have hardly anything to do with 'pleasure' in a cultural-historical context; see, for instance, Rachel Plotnick, *Power Button: A History of Pleasure, Panic, and the Politics of Pushing* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 2018). This is a study on the introduction of buttons for all kinds of gadgets to set them into motion or to activate them at the time of the introduction of electricity from 1880 to 1925.

⁴ The most authoritative study proves to be David Parlett, *The Oxford History of Board Games* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), who focuses, however, mostly on the practical side of the various games and is less interested in the historical, cultural, and political function of games; for more metaphorical concepts of games, see Ernst Strouhal, "Politische Partien: Zur Instrumentalisierung von Brettspielen am Beispiel *Schach*, *Monopoly* und *Gänsepiel*," *Games of Empire: Kulturhistorische Konnotationen von Brettspielen in transnationalen und imperialen Kontexten*, ed. Karen Aydin, Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn, Heinrich Schlange-Schöningen, and Mario Ziegler. Transcultural Anglophone Studies, 5 (Münster, Berlin, et al.: LIT Verlag, 2018), 236–60; cf. also Rudy Koshar, *Histories of Leisure. Leisure, Consumption and Culture* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002); see also the contributions to *A Handbook of Leisure Studies*, ed. Chris Rojek (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, ed. with an intro. and notes by Martha Banta (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). As much as modern cultural historians and sociologists assume that leisure represents essentially a phenomenon that emerged only since ca. 1800, both pleasure and leisure were of central importance already much earlier. For the modernist perspective, see the contributions to *New Directions in Urban History: Aspects of European Art, Health, Tourism and Leisure since the Enlightenment*, ed. Peter Borsay. Münsteraner Schriften zur Volkskunde, europäische Ethnologie, 5 (Münster, Munich, et al.: Waxmann, 2000).

We are dealing here with leisure and pleasure in their myriad of manifestations because human life is not only determined by work, eating, sleeping, or procreation, but also by free-time activities, playing, or relaxing in a deliberately non-productive fashion, which was, according to Thorstein Veblen, primarily a privilege of the upper class.⁵ Historically speaking, in order to comprehend human culture, we must not ignore what happens when people are not working, not engaged in war, not attending mass, or are not involved in harvesting, for instance, if we think of the peasant population.⁶ Gaming and other forms of entertainment are as old as human culture and have always represented a unique form of social interaction freed from serious consequences. As soon as a society has achieved a level of security and wealth, having enough resources available to carve out free time for its individual members, the components of pleasure and

5 Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1934; New York: New American Library, 1953); John Neulinger, *To Leisure: An Introduction* (Ann Arbor, MI: Allyn and Bacon, 1981); John Kelly, *Leisure*, 3rd ed. (1982; Boston and London: Allyn and Bacon, 1996); Stephen J. Page and Joanne Connell, *Leisure: An Introduction* (Harlow, England: Financial Times Prentice Hall, 2010); Peter Bramham and Stephen Wagg, *An Introduction to Leisure Studies: Principles and Practice* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2014). The entire theory of leisure, as originally developed by Veblen, would deserve an extensive discussion from a sociological-historical perspective; see Warren J. Samuels, *The Anthem Companion to Thorstein Veblen*, ed. Sidney Plotkin (London: Anthem Press, 2018).

6 See, for instance, the contributions to *Amusement und Risiko: Dimensionen des Spiels in der spanischen und italienischen Aufklärung*, ed. Robert Fajen. Interdisziplinäres Zentrum für die Erforschung der Europäischen Aufklärung: Kleine Schriften des IZEA, 6 (Halle a.d. Saale: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2015). Already in the eighteenth century scholars realized how important the metaphor of game could be for all human cultures; see Samuel Friedrich Günther, Wahl, *Der Geist und die Geschichte des Schach-Spiels bei den Indern, Persern, Arabern, Türken, Sinesen und übrigen Morgenländern, Deutschen und anderen Europäern* (1798; Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1981). As to the social context of late medieval plays, see, for instance, Rainer H. Schmid, *Raum, Zeit und Publikum des geistlichen Spiels: Aussage und Absicht eines mittelalterlichen Massenmediums* (Munich: Tuduv-Verlags-Gesellschaft, 1975). As to games in the Renaissance, see Andrew Leibs, *Sports and Games of the Renaissance* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004). For broader theoretical reflections on game, see the contributions to *Theorien des Spiels*, ed. Hans Scheuerl. 10th expanded and rev. ed. Beltz-Studienbuch, 88 (1964; Weinheim: Beltz, 1975). Hans Scheuerl, in his seminal study concerning the pedagogical dimension of play, *Das Spiel: Untersuchungen über sein Wesen, seine pädagogischen Möglichkeiten und Grenzen*. 11th ed. (1954; Weinheim: Beltz, 1990), 347–48, argues that game is determined by ambivalence, freedom, a relative compactness of the internal structure, and an awareness about time set apart from normal time. See now also *Ambivalenzen des geistlichen Spiels: Revisionen von Texten und Methoden*, ed. Jörn Bockmann and Regina Toepfer. Historische Semantik, 29 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018).

leisure enter the picture.⁷ As Paul Milliman has recently emphasized, addressing medieval culture at large, “games and pastimes permeated medieval society. ...” However, he also alerts us to the fundamental problem of how to research this issue: “more often than not, games are marginal ..., mentioned in passing, or serve as metaphors in works concerned mainly with other topics. Games and pastimes are everywhere and nowhere, so one must look for them in a wide range of sources.”⁸ Literary documents, as to be expected, offer themselves as important and fertile mirrors of everyday culture in which games and many other forms of entertainment assume a significant role.⁹ But there are also numerous visual depictions, musical compositions, and philosophical reflections that provide insight into this heretofore relatively neglected research field.¹⁰ Moreover, travelogues, pilgrimage accounts, and chronicles also contain valuable information about how free time was filled with a variety of activities in the pre-modern world.

⁷ Harold James Ruthven Murray, *A History of Board-Games Other than Chess* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); David Sidney Parlett, *The Oxford History of Board Games* (see note 4). As to modern video games and related technology-based games, which have deeply impacted youth culture globally, see, for instance, Kevin Leyton-Brown and Yoav Shoham, *Essentials of Game Theory: A Concise Multidisciplinary Introduction*. Synthesis Lectures on Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, 3 (San Rafael: Morgan & Claypool Publishers, 2008); Carl Heinze, *Mittelalter Computer Spiele: zur Darstellung und Modellierung von Geschichte im populären Computerspiel*. Historische Lebenswelten in populären Wissenskulturen, 8 (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012); Andrew Williams, *History of Digital Games: Developments in Art, Design and Interaction* (Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis, 2017). For a very useful overview of what games were played throughout time globally, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_games (last accessed on July 3, 2018).

⁸ Paul Milliman, “Games and Pastimes,” *Handbook of Medieval Culture: Fundamental Aspects and Conditions of the European Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), vol. 1, 582–612; here 583. He addresses, above all, topics such as criticism and support of games, games as pedagogical aids, rules of and restrictions in games, places and times for playing and games, specific games, such as board, dice, and card games, then physical games such as tournaments, and games involving animals. He offers this concluding observation: “Rich and poor, old and young, men and women, clerics and lay people all found ways to entertain themselves with a wide variety of games and pastimes, but most of these have left little trace in the historical record” (612). As in the case of all other contributions to this *Handbook*, Milliman reviews a broad scope of the relevant research literature. See also his own contribution to this volume.

⁹ See the contributions to *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, ed. Serina Patterson. The New Middle Ages (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), dealing with chess, the *jeux-partis*, ludic runic readings, textual games, and similar aspects.

¹⁰ Cf. now Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar: Böhlau, 2018); Milliman, “Games and Pastimes” (see note 8).

One of the ‘classical’ examples of how members of courtly society sought entertainment is provided by the Middle High German poet Hartmann von Aue in his ‘translation’ of Chrétien de Troyes’s *Yvain* from ca. 1160, *Iwein* (ca. 1200), where we encounter the company of King Arthur during the festive season of Pentecost. Every member of his court is dedicated to some kind of enjoyment because there is, so to speak, free time and everyone has complete freedom to do whatever it might please him or her. As the narrator lists them, some knights are chatting with ladies (65), some take care of their own well-being and appearance (66), some are dancing and singing (67), some are running and jumping for exercise (68), some are listening to the playing of string instruments (69), some are practicing shooting with bow and arrow (70), some are telling love stories (71), and others relate heroic adventures (72). King Arthur and his wife retire to their tent to take a nap, but less because they need a rest, as the narrator emphasizes, and more for giving each other some company (80–84). At the same time, four knights, Dodines and Gawein, Segremors and Iwein, along with the court seneschal Keii, form a group and listen to an extraordinary account told them by Kâlogrenant who a long time ago had experienced a most difficult time in a knightly encounter and then had failed to win a joust (92–95). The queen listens and finds this so intriguing that she gets up from bed and joins the company to hear more about this adventure (97–104).¹¹

The twelfth-century Cambro-Norman archdeacon of Brecon and historian, Gerald of Wales (ca. 1146–ca. 1323; also known as Giraldus Cambrensis), offers in his *Descriptio Cambriae* from ca. 1186 to 1188 (with several new editions in the following years) a detailed description of this country in its geophysical appearance, its history, and of the people’s culture. He highlights also that the people of Wales, in contrast to those in England, sing, whenever they meet at social

¹¹ Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein*, ed. G. F. Benecke and K. Lachmann, newly rev. by Ludwig Wolff. 7th ed. Vol. 1: *Text* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968); see also Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein. Mittelhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch*, ed. and trans. Rüdiger Krohn. Commentary by Mireille Schnyder. Rev. ed. (2012; Stuttgart: Reclam, 2015); *Arthurian Romances, Tales, and Lyric Poetry: The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue*, trans. with commentary by Frank Tobin, Kim Vivian, and Richard H. Lawson (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001). Scholarship has discussed this courtly romance already from many different perspectives; see, for instance, Gert Kaiser, *Textauslegung und gesellschaftliche Selbstdeutung: Die Artusromane Hartmanns von Aue*. Schwerpunkte Germanistik. 2nd newly rev. ed. (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1978); Hubertus Fischer, *Ehre, Hof und Abenteuer in Hartmanns “Iwein”: Vorarbeiten zu einer historischen Poetik des höfischen Epos*. Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur, 3 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1983). See also the contributions to *A Companion to the Works of Hartmann von Aue*, ed. Francis G. Gentry. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005).

gatherings, “their traditional songs, not in unison, as is done elsewhere, but in parts, in many modes and modulations. When a choir gathers to sing, which happens often in this country, you will hear as many different parts and voices as there are performers, all joining together in the end to produce a single organic harmony and melody in the soft sweetness of B-flat.”¹² As laudatory as this might be, the subsequent sections paint a rather negative picture of the Welsh at large. For our purposes, however, we can interpret this section as a strong confirmation of the fact that communal singing was a central means for people in those parts of the British Isles in the high Middle Ages to pursue pleasure and leisure and thereby to confirm their identity.

According to Gerald, the Welsh pursue their own characteristic style of singing, while the English enjoy communal singing in a different way: “the English who live there produce the same symphonic harmony when they sing. They do this in two parts only, with two modulations of the voice, one group humming the bass and the others singing the treble most sweetly” (242). In other words, singing as a public form of entertainment represented, for Gerald, an indication of a national character involving all the people, so when he remarks on where the English might have learned their style: “I think that these latter must have taken their part-singing, as they did their speech, from the Danes and Norwegians, who so often invaded those parts of the island and held them longer under their dominion” (243). If we widened our perspective, we could easily also include the dances and songs performed on the Faroe Islands in the North Atlantic from the fourteenth century until today, often replicating the heroic epic known as the *Nibelungenlied* and a variety of medieval ballads. The medieval tradition of public entertainment by means of poetic texts, dance, and music thus has continued there, far away from the rest of Europe, and this unabatedly.¹³

12 Gerald of Wales, *The Journey Through Wales and The Description of Wales*, trans. with an intro. by Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin, 1978), 242. As to his biography, see Brynley F. Roberts, *Gerald of Wales*. Writers of Wales (s.l.: University of Wales Press, 1982); Michael A. Faletta, *Wales and the Medieval Colonial Imagination: The Matters of Britain in the Twelfth Century*. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); see also Michelle P. Brown, “Gerald of Wales and the ‘Topography of Ireland’: Authorial Agendas in Word and Image,” *Journal of Irish Studies* 20 (2005): 52–63.

13 Klaus Fuss, *Die färöischen Lieder der Nibelungensage: Text, Lesarten und Übersetzung*. 3 vols. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 427–29 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1985–1987); Wolfgang Suppan, “Musikethnologische Forschungen auf den Färöer Inseln,” *Acta Musicologica* 49 (1977): 49–69. See also Ulrich Müller, “Die färöischen Tanzballaden: Ihr ‘Sitz im Leben’ 1985,” id., *Gesammelte Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft*. Vol. 2: *Lyrik II, Epik, Autobiographie des Mittelalters*, ed. Margarete Springeth, Gertraud Mitterauer, and Ruth Weichselbaumer. Göp-

As we will see below, late medieval and early Renaissance poets similarly reflected extensively on the accounts of public entertainment and thus set up very comparable scenes where a group of story-tellers gets together and entertains each other with accounts of love, adventures, vice and virtue, etc. (Boccaccio, Chaucer, Kaufringer, Sacchetti, et al.), often combining their narratives with songs as interludes. It might be rather appropriate to identify some of the famous collections of medieval and early modern songs and love poetry, such as the *Carmina Burana* (ca. 1230/1240), as mirrors of intellectual and artistic entertainment insofar as those compositions reflect intricately how members of learned and/or ecclesiastic groups experimented with a variety of erotic, satirical, political, and religious issues, provoking each other to understand the subtle allusions and literary games, relying on deliberate ambivalence, irony, satire, and parody, and this not only in the poems/songs, but also in the religious plays.¹⁴ The thirteenth-century French *chanteubleu*, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, in its structure as a prosimetrum, adds to this observation quite meaningfully.¹⁵

pinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 750, II (1985; Göttingen: Kümmerle, 2010), 393–406; Marianne Clausen, *Føroya ljóð í kvæðum, vísam, sálrum og skjaldrum = Sound of the Faroes – Traditional Songs and Hymn* (Hoyvík: Stíðin, 2014).

14 *Carmina Burana*. Texte und Übersetzungen. Mit den Miniaturen aus der Handschrift und einem Aufsatz von Peter und Dorothee Diemer, ed. Benedikt Konrad Vollmann. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 13 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1987). See now also *Carmina Burana*, ed. and trans. David A. Traill. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2018), which is allegedly marred, however, by some linguistic issues in the translation as Peter Godman claims who is currently preparing a new critical edition. For a contrastive view, see the review by Scott G. Bruce in *The Medieval Review* online, 19.01.08, who also highlights the study by Christopher de Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts: Twelve Journeys into the Medieval World* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017), 330–75. There is much research literature on those songs; see, for instance, Sabina Tuzzo, *La poesia dei clerici vagantes: studi sui Carmina Burana*. Quaderni di Paideia, 18 (Cesena: Editrice Stilgraf, 2015); see also the contributions to *Parodie und Verkehrung: Formen und Funktionen spielerischer Verfremdung und spöttischer Verzerrung in Texten des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Seraina Plotke and Stefan Seeber. Encomia Deutsch, 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016); a new volume with studies on the *Carmina Burana* is currently being prepared by Henry Hope and Tristan E. Franklins. As to the plays in the *Carmina Burana*, see Christine Catharina Schnusenberg, *The Relationship between the Church and the Theater: Exemplified by Selected Writings of the Church Fathers and by Liturgical Texts until Amalarius of Metz, 775–852 A.D* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988).

15 Roger Pensom, *Aucassin et Nicolette: The Poetry of Gender and Growing Up in the French Middle Ages* (Bern, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 1999); Albrecht Classen, “Aucassin et Nicolette,” *Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature*, ed. Jay Ruud (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 44–46; *Aucassin and Nicolette: A Facing-Page Edition and Translation* by Robert S. Sturges (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press 2015).

The literary and artistic representation of pleasure and leisure thus lends itself exceedingly well for a critical examination of the relations between ludic activities, physical and intellectual, and the more serious dimensions of pre-modern and early modern culture. Accordingly, the focus of this collection of articles rests on the question how people achieved entertainment through physical and intellectual activities, through listening to songs and epic poems, through dancing and playing games. But the focus will not rest only on the concrete objects of game, which previous and even very recent scholars have already begun to study closely, but also on the metaphorical, spiritual, political, and philosophical dimension of games and playing, and other forms of entertainment, in a social and cultural context. In contrast to some recent publications that address 'pleasure' in terms of emotions, as a learning experience, or as a feeling about the meeting with God, this volume is focused on the actual types of games, leisure activities, public performances for fun, and other practical aspects, and their spiritual meaning even in a mystical and theoretical context, for instance.

As Claire Taylor Jones remarks in her review of *Pleasure in the Middle Ages* edited by Cohen-Hanegbi, Naama and Piroška Nagy (2017),

The essays are grouped into three sections: "Pleased Bodies," "Didactic Pleasures," and "Pleasures in God." The first section treats pleasurable sensations or activities and the experience of bodily pleasure in different historical contexts and from different disciplinary perspectives. The second section explores the role of pleasure in pursuing virtue and in constructing a Christian cultural community. The essays of the final section treat pleasure as repudiated, allegorized, and transformed in the writings of Church reformers and mystics.

And:

However, the effect of the organization is to lead the reader on the path of mystical enlightenment, from base pleasures of the medical body, through bodily pleasure ordered to virtue, to rejection of the physical and enjoyment of the divine – achieved in Faesen's final essay which finds in the Flemish mystics "an enjoyment on the level of 'being' rather than the level of 'experiencing'" (371).¹⁶

There is no question concerning the validity of this approach, regarding pleasure as a sentiment or emotion as experienced in the pre-modern world in perhaps psychosomatic form, providing satisfaction, joy, delight, or sensation in general,

¹⁶ Claire Taylor Jones, review of *Pleasure in the Middle Ages*, ed. Naama Cohen-Hanegbi and Piroška Nagy. International Medieval Research (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), in *The Medieval Review* 18.12.04 (online).

but our intention is much more directed toward the material, practical, maybe just banal, trivial, or pedestrian aspect of everyday life. Yet, if we do not have a good grasp of that part of human existence, how would we then be able to claim to have a full understanding of medieval and also early modern culture?¹⁷

The question regarding how to find relevant documents from the pre-modern era will always loom large on the horizon, but recent research has opened many new avenues for this kind of new scholarship, pointing out not only the vast corpus of didactic texts, of sermons, and of entertaining literature, but also the incredibly important and until today hardly tapped collection of letters or written statements (supplications) by clerics and lay people addressed to the Holy See in Rome, the Apostolic Penitentiary, requesting absolution or dispensation from (perceived) sins or crimes which an individual had committed in the past and which, many years later, prevented them from being appointed to official positions in the Church or to realize some personal goals.

As Arnold Esch has now alerted us, here we come across many facets of people's ordinary lives, facets that normally never made their way into official documents. These supplications talk about many different kinds of misbehavior or even criminal activities, at least as they were interpreted by the authors of those documents or by their superiors who wanted to deny them their requests back home because of the previous sinful behavior. The range of themes or topics is amazing, and also includes cases involving visits to the tavern, conflicts between two individuals, sometimes with a deadly outcome, then cases of playing music and joining dances, sport activities, card games, playing dice, tournaments, taking baths, going hunting, board games, gambling, and so forth. There is, for instance, the earliest report about an accident in a soccer match from 1441, or an account of public festivities involving dancing and playing with a ball from 1440, or a confession about the death of a child during Shrovetide when it fell off a swing in 1439.¹⁸

17 See also C. M. Woolgar, *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2006); *Pleasure and Danger in Perception: The Five Senses in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Corine Schleif. The Senses & Society, 5.1: Special Issue (Oxford: Berg, 2010); *Sensual and Sensory Experiences in the Middle Ages: On Pleasure, Fear, Desire and Pain*, ed. Carme Muntaner Alsina, David Carrillo-Rangel, Delfi I. Nieto-Isabel, and Pau Castell Granados (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017). See also Andrea Zech, *Spielarten des Gottes-Genusses: Semantiken des Genießens in der europäischen Frauenmystik des 13. Jahrhunderts*. Historische Semantik, 25 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

18 Arnold Esch, *Die Lebenswelt des europäischen Spätmittelalters: Kleine Schicksale selbst erzählt in Schreiben an den Papst* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2014), 71–102. See now also *Supplications from England and Wales in the Registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary, 1410–1503*, ed. Peter D. Clarke. 3 vols. The Canterbury and York Society, 103–105 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013–2015).

Philosophy of Free Play: Universal

Hardly any philosopher, linguist, child psychologist, sociologist, etc. has ever entirely ignored thinking about the nature of playing and leisure, the essential activity free of external social constraints. Already Heraclitus (ca. 500 B.C.E.) talked about time as a playing child moving figures on a board and holding royal power over all. Plato argued that the human being was a plaything of God and hence had to entrust itself to game in order to please God. Art, created by people, constitutes a form of game because it is different from nature and copies it. Aristotle did not comment extensively on game, except once quite famously in his *Politics* where he compares the individual that does not cooperate politically with the entire state or community with a single player, but opined that it was a form of necessary relaxation without which humans could not fully exist, an idea which was later adopted by Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) in the thirteenth century.¹⁹

Nicholas of Cusa (d. 1464), whom I will discuss later at greater length, was the first to offer a full theoretical discussion of gaming both in practical and theoretical terms, reading game as a metaphor of human existence and the relationship between the individual and God.²⁰ In the subsequent history of philosophy, the topic of game gained more profound attention only by the end of the eighteenth century, when Immanuel Kant, in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), called

Cf. also Kirsi Salonen and Ludwig Schmutge, *A Sip from the "Well of Grace": Medieval Texts from the Apostolic Penitentiary*. Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Canon Law, 7 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009).

19 I have drawn those global perspectives on the philosophical discussion of 'play' from Angelika Corbineau-Hoffmann, "Spiel," *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer. Vol. 9 (Basel: Schwabe & Co, 1995), cols. 1383–90. But let us first consider a definition. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, for instance, offers these two definitions, apart from specializing meaning in different contexts: "Active bodily exercise or movement; brisk and vigorous action of the body or limbs, as in fighting, fencing, dancing, leaping, etc.," or: "The action of lightly and briskly wielding or plying a weapon in fencing or combat" (<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/145474?rskey=QoSOWc&result=1#eid>; last accessed on Sept. 1, 2018). Corbineau-Hoffmann offers a particularly useful outline and overview of the various positions taken by philosophers vis-à-vis game and playing until the recent past. For our present purpose, I can only highlight some of the central points. The following quotations are taken from her article since it would go far beyond the scope of this study to investigate the entire history of game philosophy all by itself. For games in antiquity, see Louis Becq de Fouquières, *Les jeux des anciens* (Paris: C. Reinwald, 1869); Harold James Ruthven Murray, *A History of Board Games Other Than Chess* (see note 7).

20 Andreas Hermann Fischer, *Spielen und Philosophieren zwischen Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. V&R Academic (Göttingen and Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).

game a “Beschäftigung, die für sich selbst angenehm ist” (an occupation that is pleasant by itself), without having any relationship to critical thinking and reasoning. And Friedrich Schiller suggested in his famous *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1795) that through play people would gain a new form of inner freedom from their social, political, and economic limitations and mundane constraints. In other words, through the free play the individual would have the opportunity to acquire access to a new form of aesthetics coupled with freedom because human life is determined by a “Spiel-Trieb” (instinct of playing): “Der Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Worts Mensch ist, und er ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt” (The human being plays only then when s/he is, in the full meaning of the word, human, and s/he is only then a full human being when s/he plays).²¹

Many Romantic philosophers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Friedrich Schlegel followed him in this regard when they reflected on the idea of beauty by itself, the aesthetic dimension of human life. Most significantly for the modern world, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) finally, drawing once again from Heraclitus and Schiller, argued that the entire world was a game, which would remove all moral and ethical categories in the evaluation of human actions. If God created the world in a playful manner, the living creatures would have no other choice but to continue with the game that was given them (*Panpaida*). In his famous *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister* (from 1878 to 1880), for instance, he poignantly emphasized that both fairy tales and games belong to the fundamentals of all human life.²²

21 Colas Duflo, *Le jeu: de Pascal à Schiller* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997); Ingeborg Strohmeier, *Musik und Spiel im Lichte der Kant-Schillerschen Ästhetik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2016); see also the contributions to *Schiller, der Spieler*, ed. Peter-André Alt, Marcel Lepper, and Ulrich Rauff (Göttingen: Wallstein-Verlag, 2013). Cf. further Irmgard Kowatzki, *Der Begriff des Spiels als ästhetisches Phänomen: Von Schiller bis Benn*. Stanford German Studies, 4 (Bern and Frankfurt a. M.: Herbert Lang, 1973); Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner, “Von der Geschichtsphilosophie zur Ästhetik: Von der Ästhetik zur Geschichtsphilosophie,” *Friedrich Schiller: Der unterschätzte Theoretiker*, ed. Georg Bollenbeck and Lothar Ehrlich (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2007), 39–35.

22 Chapter 11: “Um der Langeweile zu entgehen, arbeitet der Mensch entweder über das Maß seiner sonstigen Bedürfnisse hinaus oder er erfindet das Spiel, das heißt die Arbeit, welche kein anderes Bedürfnis stillen soll, als das nach Arbeit überhaupt. Wer des Spieles überdrüssig geworden ist und durch neue Bedürfnisse keinen Grund zur Arbeit hat, den überfällt mitunter das Verlangen nach einem dritten Zustand, welcher sich zum Spiel verhält, wie Schweben zum Tanzen, wie Tanzen zum Gehen, nach einer seligen, ruhigen Bewegtheit: es ist die Vision der Künstler und Philosophen von dem Glück” (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden* [Munich: Hanser, 1954], vol. 1, 715–16. Also available online at: <https://www.textlog.de/22198.html>; last accessed on July 7, 2018). The most respected edition is now: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche*

Ever since, game has mattered critically for modern philosophers, whether we think of Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jacques Derrida, John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Arnold Gehlen, and Émile Benveniste.²³

In the present context, I ignore the difference between leisure and recreation, which matters more in sociological terms and less for cultural history in the pre-modern world when the differences between private and public were not as significant as they are for us. Only with the sixteenth century do we witness the emergence of a concrete perception of leisure in terms of “*licentia*” or “*loisir*,” that is, free time away from the work day. In classical antiquity the notion of “*otium*” mattered significantly, but in the Middle Ages this mostly meant the time away from chivalric or labor activities and dedicated to attending mass, or to the participation in church festivals. However, those, in turn, were rigidly determined by countless regulations to combat the danger of *luxuria*. We would have to keep in mind that medieval society did not strictly differentiate between time of work and time of leisure, especially because the nobility was not necessarily required to do manual labor for its income. This was to change

Werke, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980–). In my translation: ‘In order to escape boredom, the human being works beyond the extent to which he is ordinarily required, or s/he invents a game, that is, a kind of work that does not satisfy any need, except the one for work itself. The person who gets tired of game and does not have the need for work because of additional desires, is overcome at times by the longing for a third condition, which is determined by the same relationship to game as flowing is related to dancing, as dancing to walking, and this after a blissful, tranquil movement: it is the artist’s and the philosopher’s vision of happiness.’ Surprisingly, in the major reference work for Nietzsche, *Nietzsche-Handbuch: Leben – Werk – Wirkung*, ed. Henning Ottmann (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2000), the topic of play or game is mentioned only in passing, 88, 147, 348. See, however, Catherine Bates, *Play in a Godless World: The Theory and Practice of Play in Shakespeare, Nietzsche and Freud* (London: Open Gate Press, 1999); Alexander Aichele, *Philosophie als Spiel: Platon – Kant – Nietzsche* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2000); Vasile Padurean, *Spiel – Kunst – Schein: Nietzsche als ursprünglicher Denker* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008).

23 Ingeborg Heidemann, *Der Begriff des Spieles und das ästhetische Weltbild in der Philosophie der Gegenwart* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968); Heinrich Kutzner, *Erfahrung und Begriff des Spiels: eine religionswissenschaftliche, metapsychologische und gesellschaftskritische Untersuchung* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1975); Martina Roesner, *Metaphysica ludens: das Spiel als phänomenologische Grundfigur im Denken Martin Heideggers*. *Phaenomenologica*, 167 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003); Klaus D. Frank, *Lebensspiele: Versuch einer philosophischen Sicht* (Hamburg: tredition, 2018); Steffen Wittig, *Die Ludifizierung des Sozialen: differenztheoretische Bruchstücke des Als-Ob* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2018). See now also the contributions to *Spielwissen und Wissensspiele: Wissenschaft und Game-Branche im Dialog über die Kulturtechnik des Spiels*, ed. Thomas Lilge and Christian Stein. *Edition Kulturwissenschaft*, 139 (Bielefeld: transcript, 2018).

fundamentally during the long-term paradigm shift to the early modern world, but this is not of relevance for our present purposes.²⁴

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of playful activities has continued to exert considerable influence until today, a time which seems to be more determined by *bricolage* than by creativity, hence an existence constrained by a limited number of moves on the gameboard of life where rules are established and then also transgressed depending on the *magister ludi* and the degree of her/his authority.²⁵ Even linguistically, we can notice how much the approaches to game, specifically, varied from culture to culture, from language to language, and from period to period, and yet, fundamentally, shared the same principles of winning and losing, challenges, calculations about the proper move, and the likelihood of luck. Considering that games apparently distracted the individual from God and subjected him/her to random rules inappropriate to a good Christian, it was little wonder that medieval and also pre-modern clerical critics heavily condemned this entire phenomenon.²⁶

Medieval and early modern Europe witnessed, above all, the emergence of the religious play, which met with ever-growing interest and represented a public engagement in imaginary roles on a fictional game board. In fact, the large number of entertaining religious plays, filled with much sarcastic humor, deftly sexual allusions, hilarious confusions, is almost legion, if we consider, for instance, the fourteenth-century *Miracles de Notre-Dame par personnages*, composed and performed between 1339 and 1382 by the Saint-Eloi confraternity of goldsmiths in

24 Rolf Sprandel, "Spiele: A. Mittel-, West- und Südeuropa," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. VII (Munich: Lexma Verlag, 1995), 2105–06; see also the contributions to *Jeux, sports et divertissements au moyen âge et à l'âge classique: actes du 116e Congrès national des sociétés savantes, Section d'histoire médiévale et de philologie, Chambéry, 1991* (Paris: Ed. du CTHS, 1993); Fabian Müllers and Sylvestre Jonquay, *Les jeux au Moyen Âge*, rev. and expanded ed. (Aubagne: La Muse, 2015); Alessandro Rizzi, *Ludus/ludere: Giocare nell'Italia alla fine del Medio Evo*. Ludica, 3 (Treviso: Fondazione Benetton, 1995).

25 Tanja Wetzel, "Spiel," *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe: Historisches Wörterbuch*, ed. Karlheinz Barck, Martin Fontius, et al. (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2003), vol. 5, 577–618; here 578–79. The term 'magister ludi' of course plays a central role in Hermann Hesse's famous novel *Das Glasperlenspiel* from 1943, where the protagonist Josef Knecht rises to the highest position in the intellectual and artistic community of Castalia but then, after he has performed his last master game, leaves that almost antiseptic world and returns to 'reality' in order to teach. Despite the tragic outcome, Knecht leaves a deep impact on his new student and can thus, so it appears, change him by instilling a new level of maturity in this young man. See also further below where I attempt to connect Hesse's *Glass Bead Game* with the *Enigmata* by the Anglo-Saxon monk Aldhelm.

26 See the contribution to this volume by Chiara Benati. She quotes both late medieval German didactic writers and also refers to their basic model, the biblical text of Christ's Passion.

Paris. As Linda Rouillard now explains in her review, in these “plays [] we meet greedy popes and bishops, lascivious nuns, and miscreant judges. Barren couples lose their children to the devil or to overlaying. Wives are falsely accused of adultery. Typically the miracle entails an eventual rejection of one’s sins and new-found faith in God’s mercy through Mary. Occasionally we find spectacular miracles of a cut-off hand that regrows, as in the play about St. Chrysostom, or of vision restored to gouged-out eyeballs, as in the character of Libanius in the play about the Emperor Justinian.”²⁷

In the long run, this basically facilitated the increased secularization of this genre (see the Shrovetide play, carnival, didactic plays, etc.) and the emergence of the early modern theater play, probably best represented by William Shakespeare and his contemporaries both in England and on the Continent (Aphra Behn, Andreas Gryphius, Molière, among others). At the risk of widening the whole notion of pleasure and leisure too much, we can certainly recognize here new forms of public entertainment not only for the noble class, but for the entire urban population, for instance. Some plays continued to be deeply religious (e.g., Easter or Passion plays, Nativity plays, etc.), others were specifically composed for the Shrovetide season and aimed at moral and ethical teachings through hilarious and facetious elements, scenes, and figures. Subsequently, however, those plays increasingly gained in depth and addressed universal, historical, philosophical, ethical, and moral issues of great relevance for the audience.²⁸

Large philosophical, political, and economic issues are certainly also embedded in concrete play objects or board games throughout time and all over

²⁷ *Miracles de Notre-Dame par personnages*, ed. and trans. Gérard Bezançon and Pierre Kunstmann. Vol. I: *Moyen Âge en Traduction* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2017); reviewed by Linda Rouillard in *The Medieval Review* 18.12.12 (online).

²⁸ Alan Hindley, “Playing Games in the Early French Theatre (1350 – 1550),” *The Playful Middle Ages: Meanings of Play and Plays of Meaning: Essays in Memory of Elaine C. Block*, ed. Paul Hardwick. *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe*, 23 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 23–43; Albrecht Classen, “The Discourse About the Gender-Relationships on the Urban Stage: in Late-Medieval German Shrovetide Plays and Verse Narratives,” *Performance and Theatricality in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Markus Cruse. *Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 41 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 111–33. Cf. also the other contributions to this volume. Cf. also *Ambivalenzen des geistlichen Spiels*, ed. Jörn Bockmann and Regina Toepfer, 2018 (see note 6).

the world,²⁹ and a tournament or a game of bowling, a swimming contest, or the entertainment with fighting horses (Iceland, above all) replicates, in turn, the simple games which children pursue, and vice versa.³⁰ Globally speaking, both in the past and present, games and playful activities represent concrete, physical life but in a more abstract, maybe artistic fashion, especially because the consequences, gains and losses do not have a direct impact on reality, and yet they are certainly part of it, historically, culturally, and materially. In games, the individual copies the world and plays with it as well, duplicating and varying the rules as they dominate reality.³¹

In games, art and life find a newly shared platform and facilitate the enactment of fantasy, or, as Wetzel now suggests, it is the “Entwurf und Deutung virtueller Konstellationen” (the design and interpretation of virtual constellations).³² Despite specific rules in all games, there is a certain freedom from the requirements in real life. We would, however, lose the firm grip on the various forms of pleasure if we uncritically accepted Martin Heidegger’s claims, as formulated in his *Satz vom Grund* (1957), that all games take place without any causality or justification and operate in a separate “Zeit-Spiel-Raum[]” (time-game-space) free from all external constraints.³³ Even in postmodern thinking, the notion of play matters critically insofar as it constitutes, in Jacques Derrida’s words, the focal point of centered structure: “The concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a play based on a fundamental ground, a play which itself is beyond the reach of play.”³⁴ As he admits himself, this decentering operation, the replacement of hierarchical structure by way of play, was first observed by Frie-

29 See now the contributions to *Games of Empires* (see note 4). The contributors address mostly board games as played in antiquity, the Middle Ages, the early modern age, and in the modern world, highlighting the political, ethical, and social implications in games at large.

30 Lisa J. Kiser, “Animal Acts: Animals in Medieval Sports, Entertainments, and Menageries,” *A Cultural History of Animals*, ed. Linda Kalof and Brigitte Resl (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), vol. 2, 103–26; see also Paul Milliman, “Games and Pastimes” (see note 8), 610–11. As to horse fighting, *Hestaping*, which was, contrary to previous research, virtually never intended to lead to the death of one of the animals, and which instead served as a form of public entertainment to demonstrate the horse owner’s worth, see the contribution to this volume by Carlee Arnett.

31 This was one concept centrally developed by Friedrich Nietzsche, who talked about the “Weltspiel.” See Wetzel, “Spiel” (see note 25), 591–603.

32 Wetzel, “Spiel” (see note 25), 602.

33 Wetzel, “Spiel” (see note 25), 605.

34 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. with an intro. and additional notes by Alan Bass (orig. 1968; 1978; London: Routledge, 1995), 279.

drich Nietzsche, promoted by Sigmund Freud, and developed further by Martin Heidegger.

Even though subsequently the notion of play no longer matters specifically for Derrida because he turns to the interaction of the sign and the signified, even he recognizes and acknowledges the fundamental significance of play within the epistemological process.³⁵ For our purposes, we can be satisfied with the realization that we have thus strong confirmation of play being a universally relevant activity that both undermines and reconfirms structure, thus threatens and reconstitutes the larger system. Both medieval tournaments and modern-day soccer championships, chess games and gambling, various ball games and religious plays fall into the category of the playful, that is, entertainment, but they all also mirror and influence real conditions and can have huge political, economic, even military implications. All pleasure activities belong to the world of non-work, and yet they mirror and reconfirm reality through various narrative and performative actions.

To put it differently, all leisure activities are, of course, certainly removed from the physical, political, or religious realm, but not entirely disconnected from it. We are still dealing with a very specific cultural-historical phenomenon located intriguingly between seriousness and playfulness, as Gregory Bateson argued in his article “A Theory of Play and Fantasy” (1955). According to his research, children’s games and adults’ behavior demonstrate striking similarities, even if on different levels: “adult phenomena as gambling and playing with risk have their roots in the combination of threat and play.”³⁶ We could also imagine

35 Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (see note 34), 287: “One could say ... that this movement of play, permitted by the lack or absence of a center or origin, is the movement of *supplementarity*. One cannot determine the center and exhaust totalization because the sign which replaces the center, which supplements it, taking the center’s place in its absence – this sign is added, occurs as a surplus, as a *supplement*.”

36 Gregory Bateson, “A Theory of Play and Fantasy: A Report on Theoretical Aspects of the Project of Study of the Role of the Paradoxes of Abstraction in Communication,” *Psychiatric Research Reports. American Psychiatric Association* 2 (December 1955): 39–51; also in id., *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*. Chandler Publications for Health Sciences (San Francisco, CA: Chandler Publications, 1972), 176–93; here 181. He further emphasizes the significant correlation between play and ritual, ceremony, and public performance. The worst aspect proves to be the human willingness to die in war: “Finally, in the dim region where art, magic, and religion meet and overlap, human beings have evolved the ‘metaphor that is meant,’ the flag which men will die to save, and the sacrament that is felt to be more than ‘an outward and visible sign, given unto us.’ Here we can recognize an attempt to deny the difference between map and territory, and to get back to the absolute innocence of communication by means of pure mood signs” (183). See also Wetzel, “Spiel” (see note 25), 607; cf. now also Stephen Nachmanovitch, “This Is Play,” *New Literary History* 40.1 (Winter, 2009):

game as a mode of transgressing established order, as an experiment with and in reality, as an event within time, as deconstruction, as fantasy and imagination, and hence as a “Metapher des Lebens,” as Dietmar Kamper formulated it (metaphor of life).³⁷

Games, however, are only a specific cultural manifestation, and incorporate all types of pleasure and leisure for many different age groups and might even be gender specific. The chess board, for instance, intentionally represents life, that is, the social structure, but in an experimental measure, and while many medieval protagonists are dedicated to playing chess, many others are simply onlookers or devote themselves to other games. In other words, we are dealing with a short-term vacation from real life, to which all those involved will have to return, or which they have to find at the end, as is beautifully illustrated in the Middle English alliterative romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* where the game played by the Green Knight is predicated on fear of death (see below).

Play and leisure are distinct from real life, and yet they repeat and refract it as well. Methodologically, we can hence easily draw conclusions about historical reality by studying fictional accounts about playful enactments of courtly ideals, for instance, and, in the reverse, we can focus on the hard facts of life and then expound on them with respect to their playful replication in the private dimension.

Caesarius of Heisterbach: The Vice of Gambling from a Monastic Perspective

Notably, King Alfonso X of Castile the Wise was the first to engage extensively and theoretically with the phenomenon of game when he composed his famous *Los libros de juegos diversos de axedrez, dados y tablas* (1283).³⁸ For him, God had

1–24. As to the danger, at least according to late medieval didactic writers, involved in board games, dice, and all kinds of games involving money for the winner see the contribution to this volume by Chiara Benati.

37 Dietmar Kamper, “Spiel als Metapher des Lebens,” *Der Mensch und das Spiel in der verplanten Welt*, ed. Andreas Flitner (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1976), 130–45; here quoted from Wetzl, “Spiel” (see note 4), 617.

38 Laura Fernández Fernández, *Arte y ciencia en el scriptorium de Alfonso X el Sabio*. Monografías de Alfonso X, 1. Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, Serie historia y geografía, 259 (El Puerto de Santa María: Cátedra Alfonso X el Sabio, 2013); Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile*. The Middle Ages Series (1993; Philadelphia, PA: University

made possible the pursuit of entertainment to alleviate the burdens of human life, so he felt justified to explore the many different kinds of games available and known to him. Gaming constituted an intellectual challenge, a worthwhile enterprise that could be appreciated even by the most intellectual and wisest individuals. Many games such as chess are predicated on intellectual skill and dexterity and mirror the hierarchy of society, as Alfonso and then also the Dominican Jacobus de Cessolis indicated in his highly popular and often translated *Liber de moribus hominum ac officiis nobilium super ludo scaccorum* from ca. 1275.³⁹ Very soon, however, many different types of gambling games emerged in the high Middle Ages, which soon triggered massive protests and criticism by clerics all over medieval Europe,⁴⁰ unless they themselves were, particularly as vicars, prone to playing games, spending time in the taverns, and enjoying their concubines or prostitutes. This topic was perhaps best expressed by the fifteenth-century French poet François Villon in his *Le Testament* (1462–1463?).⁴¹ But either way, game was continuously regarded as a mirror of the entire spectrum of life, either prescriptively or descriptively. Gaming could be a model to practice

of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). The research on this outstanding king is legion; see, for instance, Julio Valdeón Baroque, *Alfonso X el Sabio: La forja de la España moderna*. temas ‘de hoy. historia (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 2003); H. Salvador Martínez, *Alfonso X, the Learned: A Biography*, English trans. by Odile Cisneros. Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, 146 (2003; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010). I will later return to these *Libros de juegos diversos de axedrez* in another context.

39 Franziska Küenzlen, “Lehrdichtung zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit: Die Bearbeitung von Jacobus’ de Cessolis Schachtraktat durch Konrad von Ammenhausen,” *Dichtung und Didaxe: Lehrhaftes Sprechen in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. Henrike Lähnemann and Sandra Linden (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 265–83; Jean Rychner, “Les traductions françaises de la moralisatio super ludum scaccorum de Jacques de Cessoles,” *Recueil de travaux offert à Clovis Brunel par ses amis, collègues et élèves*. Mémoires et documents publiés par la Société de l’Ecole des Chartes, 12 (Paris: Société de l’Ecole des chartes, 1955), 480–93; Oliver Plessow, *Mittelalterliche Schachzabelbücher zwischen Spielsymbolik und Wertevermittlung: der Schachtraktat des Jacobus de Cessolis im Kontext seiner spätmittelalterlichen Rezeption* (Münster: Rhema, 2007).

40 W. Endrei, “Spiele: Mittel-, West- und Südeuropa. Spiele im privaten Bereich,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. VII (Munich: Lexma Verlag, 1995), 2108–10; Ursula Kampmann, *Das Spiel mit dem Glück: Glücksspiele und -spieler aus historischer, philosophischer und psychologischer Sicht* (Zürich: MoneyMuseum, 2012).

41 Barry Dobson, “The English Vicars Choral: An Introduction,” *Vicars Choral at English Cathedrals: Cantate Domino: History, Architecture and Archeology*, ed. Richard A. Hall and David Stocker (Oxford: Oxbow, 2005), 1–10; here 8; see the contribution to this volume by Chiara Benati. As to taverns, drinking, and gambling, hence also to Villon, see the contribution to this volume by Albrecht Classen.

good life, or it could represent the deviations and shortcomings in human existence.⁴²

The famous, more or less contemporary Cistercian novice master in Germany, Caesarius of Heisterbach, in his *Dialogus miraculorum* (ca. 1260; first printed in 1483), included numerous examples of people who fell prey to sin because of their excessive passion for playing games and gambling, and who thus wasted their life in a condemnable, sinful fashion.⁴³

The addiction to gambling or playing with dice by members of the clergy was particularly condemned in various sermons and other relevant texts throughout the entire Middle Ages and the early modern age, obviously because this proved to be a rather widespread problem, as we hear countless times from various preachers and authors of critical comments about the dangers of gambling or gaming at large, as illustrated from very early on with the reference to the theme of the soldiers throwing dice or cast lots for Christ's clothing (Matt 27:35), such as Hugo von Trimberg (see below), and then also in the early modern age, by authors such as Jakob Mennel (d. 1532), Ruy Lopez (fl. middle of the sixteenth century), Duke August II of Brunswick and Lüneburg (pseudonym: Gustavus Selenus, d. 1655), not to forget the many artists who created corresponding paintings or woodcuts treating the same theme, such as William Hogarth's "A Rake's Progress" from 1735.⁴⁴

42 Barbara Holländer, "Spielbewertung in der Zeit des Spielwandels," *"Mit Glück und Verstand": Zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte der Brett- und Kartenspiele*, ed. Christiane Zangs and Hans Holländer (Aachen: Thoutet, 1994), 109–10; see also the subsequent entries on specific games and authors critical of games, 110–27.

43 "Mit Glück und Verstand" (see note 42); Caesarius von Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, trans. and commentary by Nikolaus Nösges and Horst Schneider. Vol. 2. *Fontes Christiani*, 86.2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 780–81. See also the English trans., Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, trans. H. von E. Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland. 2 vols. (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1929). Chiara Benati, in her contribution to this volume, offers numerous references to the critical evaluation of playing with dice.

44 For further details, see Chiara Benati's contribution to this volume; cf. also Walter Tauber, *Das Würfelspiel im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit: eine kultur- und sprachgeschichtliche Darstellung*. Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe 1: Deutsche Sprache und Literatur, 959 (Frankfurt a. M., Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 1987); R. Lieberwirth, "Glücksspiel," *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, ed. Adalbert Erler and Ekkehard Kaufmann, vol. 1 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1971), 1713–14; id., "Würfeln," *ibid.* (1998), 1545–46; "Mit Glück und Verstand" (see note 42), 112–37. For a reproduction of the entire series of paintings by Hogarth, see https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:A_Rake%27s_Progress?uselang=de; and for a detailed description of Hogarth's painting, http://www.artoftheprint.com/artistpages/hogarth_william_arakesprogresscompletesetofeight6.htm (both last accessed on July 12, 2018).

But let us return to the thirteenth century. Of course, as to be expected Caesarius does not detail the specifics of gambling and other games, such as in the tale about a young man who hanged himself after he had lost all of his clothing in gambling and felt deeply ashamed about this dishonor (4:44). The story about the novice Theobald proves to be particularly interesting for us because he is first introduced as a public entertainer and obsessive gambler: “vino et tesseri-bus deditus totus, et propter suam scurrilitatem in tota civitate Coloniensi notis-simus” (4:4, 682–84; completely given over to drinking wine and gambling, he was known in the entire city of Cologne for his scurrility). For Caesarius, it was a fortunate development that this man finally changed his way of thinking, but this was apparently a rare case, whereas in public most people seem to have been excessively dedicated to pursuing a life of pleasures in utter disregard of clerical teachings. Only the monastery offered an alternative, but even the monks were not free from temptations presented by gaming, drinking, and other leisure activities.

Among other stories, Caesarius tells the anecdote of one Cologne canon who applies for membership in the Cistercian monastery of Heisterbach, but the abbot rejects him because he easily recognizes that the man is a gambler. He wears only his tunic because he has lost his other clothing in gambling (1:11, 242). At the same time, he seems to be well known among the novices who, filled with excitement and joy (“maxime, non parvum fecit gaudium,” 242), strongly urge the abbot to accept him, but to no avail. Membership in a monastery thus seems to have been, at least in theory, the last refuge from a world entirely given over to pleasures and leisure. In another tale we hear that a young man joins the monastery because he has lost a large amount of money in gambling or some other game (“ludo,” 1:12, 242). His friends then urge him to change his mind and to return to their joyous company, which he finally does, which leads to a law case submitted by the abbot against him because he had already given his canonical oath. Although the history of medieval monasticism paints a clear picture of the enormous appeal which cloistered life exerted for those who wanted to ensure a safe pathway for their soul to the afterlife, at the same time, as Caesarius seems to indicate, the majority of people did not turn away from their secular existence and continued to pursue their personal pleasures in obvious disregard of the constant ‘barrage’ of sermons and other didactic comments by members of the clergy.

At another time, Caesarius informs us about large folk festivals with dances and music, which irritate the local priest immensely. One most impertinent old woman particularly guilty of transgressive behavior is then punished by God

and dies within three days (4:11).⁴⁵ In a yet another case we hear of a very skillful and highly passionate gambler who knows how to win with the dice all the time and so gains the money from all those who dare to challenge him. According to Caesarius, then God granted the devil the right to defeat that gambler in order to demonstrate the evil nature of this pleasurable activity which leads to addiction (“ut non die, non nocte quiesceret,” 1072). To the poor man’s surprise, the stranger magically wins all the games and finally the gambler recognizes the true identity of his opponent, but it is too late. The devil grabs him violently and pulls him through the roof, which rips all of his intestines out of him with full force (5:34). Nothing of his body is ever seen again, only the remains of the intestines hang from the roof tiles (1075). In short, for Caesarius gambling and playing games was a very present and dangerous phenomenon, and he regarded it as his task to warn his listeners about the dangers involved in those leisure activities. He knew very well that he would not have any impact on the situation outside of the monastery, but he tried at least, as the novice master that he was, to influence the young candidates within his own institution to understand the dangers to one’s spirituality and religious devotion resulting from the vices of gaming or gambling.

The Public Debate About the Value of Leisure Activities

Medieval Perspectives

Impressively, and this even for us today, in remarkable contrast to Caesarius and other contemporaries, Thomas Aquinas already drew a major distinction between those who commit the sin of falling prey to excessive play and those who are looking for simple entertainment and relaxation without undermining the seriousness of real life and without damaging the enjoyment of God’s love.⁴⁶ In other words, Aquinas simply believed that ordinary pleasures were fully acceptable as long as they did not divert the individual from the divine service.

⁴⁵ Caesarius von Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* (see note 43), Vol. 2, 700–01.

⁴⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II–II 168, 2–4; here quoted from Wolfgang Janke, “Spiel: Philosophisch,” *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. Gerhard Müller. Vol. XXXI (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 671–76; here 673.

Human life does not consist only of work and fight, praying and serving, as I have emphasized already several times; instead, every individual throughout history has had central needs of enjoying free time, relaxing, and playing games. There is always time for work and time for entertainment, and while struggle, labor, public performance, etc. are subject to a certain form of force, play and entertainment represent the freedom from external rules, here disregarding the internal rules of every game or playful entertainment, including leisure activities, such as ambulating, visiting a spa, dancing, and the like.⁴⁷ In the present volume, and hence also here in this introductory essay, we consequently take a closer look at this world of entertainment, which certainly also constituted a fundamental aspect of life in the Middle Ages and the early modern age. We will examine a wide variety of critical issues underscoring the larger phenomenon, and will thus attempt to create a kaleidoscope of perspectives centrally relevant for the pre-modern world, parallel to issues such as death, friendship, hygiene, multilingualism, childhood, old age, gender issues, and so forth.⁴⁸

While entertainment has always represented a challenge for moralists, religious critics, and politicians of a certain bent intent on regulating all aspects of life for ordinary people, gaming, pleasures, and leisure activities have been subject to intensive theological, philosophical, anthropological, and sociological investigations both in the past and in the present.⁴⁹ In the late Middle Ages, we encounter not only didactic comments on gaming, normally uttered by preachers and other theologians, but also abstract reflections on the notion of game as a metaphor of human existence.⁵⁰

Previous research tended to identify leisure as a phenomenon that came into being only in the nineteenth century, primarily in the west, but we ought to consider that the upper classes across the globe have always enjoyed extra time and extra resources for pleasure activities that were of great importance especially since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵¹ Both knights and pilgrims,

⁴⁷ Helmut Fischer, "Spiele," *Encyclopädie des Märchens*, ed. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich. Vol. 12 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 1032–37; here 1032.

⁴⁸ Many of those issues have already been addressed in volumes that have previously appeared in our book series, "Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture."

⁴⁹ Thomas Klie, "Spiel," Sections I–IV, *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*. Fourth, completely rev. ed., ed. Hans Dieter Betz, Don S. Browning, et al. Vol. 7 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), cols. 1571–76.

⁵⁰ Ann E. Moyer, *The Philosophers' Game: Rithmomachia in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*. Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Civilization (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

⁵¹ Laurent Turcot, *Sports et Loisirs: Une histoire des origines à nos jours*. Collection Folio / Histoire, 257 (Paris: Gallimard, 2016); see also Gary Gross, *A Social History of Leisure – Since 1600*

and members of various aristocratic or otherwise wealthy individuals demonstrated a great interest in traveling for travel's sake, whether they went to holy sites or explored exotic countries, or whether they looked for highly esteemed universities.⁵² The lower classes could probably never profit from the same freedom, but they also looked for entertainment, however, and this wherever it was possible. In order to gain a solid grasp of the topic itself, this introductory study will not only summarize the findings by the individual contributors (at the end), but intends also to outline and discuss the basic features that concern us here collectively.

Pleasure, Leisure, and Game in Practical Terms

What did games, playing, enjoyment, etc. mean for medieval and early modern people? Where do those terms appear in historical documents, what do they imply in the literary, philosophical, religious, and historiographical context? How did individuals and entire social groups, such as the members of the aristocratic courts embrace the notion of entertainment? Were games and secular recreation acceptable for the Church, or how did didactic writers view playing, games, toys, card games, chess games, tournaments, ball games, etc.? As soon as we open our perspective toward that dimension, we easily recognize that game/play certainly made up a considerable part of everyday life at all age levels, at least within secular society. At the same time, we also would have to admit that we have not gained enough insights to understanding game and other lei-

(State College, PA: Venture Publ., 1990); Peter Borsay, *A History of Leisure: The British Experience Since 1500* (New York: Palgrave, 2006). Despite significant differences, we should not ignore, for instance, that the medieval pilgrimage and the early modern *Grande tour* facilitated large-scale travels for a select group of wealthy individuals. See Lynne Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours: A History of Leisure Travel, 1750 to 1915* (New York: Morrow, 1997). Both pilgrimage and the *Grand tour* have attracted extensive interest by scholarship that I cannot engage with here. As to entertainment during pilgrimages, see further below. See also the contribution to this volume by Thomas Willard concerning the new leisure class in early modern English society during the Civil Wars.

52 Werner Paravicini, *Ehrenvolle Abwesenheit: Studien zum adligen Reisen im späteren Mittelalter*, ed. Jan Hirschbiegel and Harm von Seggern (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2017). He summarizes the overarching goal of his studies: "Worum geht es aber dann? Um die adlige Reisepraxis als kontinuierliche Anpassung einer herrschenden Schicht an die sich stetig wandelnden Anforderungen von Ehrgeiz und standesgemäßer Ausbildung im Laufe von etwa 500 Jahren, in einer Zeit zunehmender Konzentration von Staatlichkeit und von Monopolisierung der Chancen in der Hand der Fürsten und steigender Konkurrenz der Fachleute" (11).

sure activities in the pre-modern world despite numerous efforts by international scholars.⁵³

To approach the issue from a different perspective, let us keep the following questions in mind: Did the early medieval world, for instance, so deeply determined by military conflicts from early on – age of migration, attacks by the Huns, the Arabs, the Vikings, the Avars, the Magyars, the Mongols etc. – know anything about leisure time, personal enjoyment, play, or public entertainment? What did the warriors, knights, or simple soldiers do after a battle or during periods of idleness? Did monks and nuns dedicate themselves entirely to their religious service, without ever looking for alternatives to release the stress or boredom of their daily routine? The example of the *Carmina Burana*, mentioned already above, clearly signals that at least among the highest intellectual elites entertainment and enjoyment of life were of paramount importance, which certainly spilled over to convents and monasteries where often aristocrats sent their children for education. Members of the lower classes often imitated the practices and cultures of the upper classes, and so probably developed variant forms of aristocratic games.

As Marilyn L. Sandidge informs us, for instance, the origin of the game of tennis can be traced to late medieval monasteries where the cloisters were at times irreverently transformed into courts for this sport activity. The oldest visual evidence of tennis in the Middle Ages, here disregarding classical-ancient examples, appears in a book of hours from Cambrai, ca. 1300, which would point to northern France as the place of origin of this sport.⁵⁴

⁵³ The most comprehensive overview is now offered by Paul Milliman, “Games and Pastimes” (see note 8). For a surprisingly negative example, see Ernst Schubert, *Alltag im Mittelalter: Natürliches Lebensumfeld und menschliches Miteinander* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002). Although he covers many important aspects in medieval life, including ecocritical aspects (as I would call them), interhuman relations, and love, there is not one word on pleasure and leisure.

⁵⁴ See Marilyn L. Sandidge’s contribution to this volume; cf. also Heiner Gillmeister, *Aufschlag für Walther von der Vogelweide: Tennis seit dem Mittelalter* (Munich: Knaur, 1986); id., *Tennis: A Cultural History* 2nd ed. (1990; trans., 1997; Sheffield, South Yorkshire, and Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2017), 13. He points to King Louis X of France, also known as Hutin, the Quarrelsome, who on June 5, 1316 fell seriously ill after having made the unwise decision to drink a large amount of chilled wine kept in a grotto to get refreshment after a tennis match, 16–17. He soon succumbed to death, the first victim of extreme tennis, we might say. Gillmeister provides enough evidence to demonstrate that tennis was, indeed, a sport certainly commonly played at court, which motivated didactic writers such as Christine de Pizan to comment on it as well. See further Terry Todd *The Tennis Players from Pagan Rites to Strawberries and Cream* (Guernsey: Vallency Press, 1979); Robert William Henderson, *Ball, Bat and Bishop: The Origin of Ball Games* (New York:

In parallel to this, the game of golf can also be traced to the Middle Ages, when a record reports of a predecessor of this sport in Loenen aan de Vecht, near Hilversum, The Netherlands, in 1297. “In the 1261 Middle Dutch manuscript of the Flemish poet Jacob van Maerlant’s *Boeck Merlijn* mention is made of a ball game ‘mit ener coluen’ (with a colf/kolf [club]).”⁵⁵ In 1360, the city council of Brussels issued a ban on this leisure activity: “‘wie met colven tsolt es om twintich scell’ oft op hare overste cleet’ (he who plays at colf pays a fine of 20 shillings or his overcoat will be confiscated).” In 1387, Albrecht of Bavaria, regent of the county of Holland, Zeeland and Hainau, issued a ban on playing any game for money, with the exception of what we would call ‘golf’ today. And in 1388, he assigned a special field outside of the city of Haarlem where that sport could be practiced with full approval by the authorities.⁵⁶ Most impressively, one remarkable *Book of Hours*, the *Golf Book* from 1540 – British Library, Add MS 24098, Use of Rome – also known as the *Il libro del Golf*, splendidly illuminated by Simon Bening, depicts, even though only at the bottom of a page, a group of kids playing an early form of golf.⁵⁷

Rockport Press, 1947); Malcolm D. Whitman, *Tennis: Origins and Mysteries* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004).

55 Even if *Wikipedia* articles cannot always be trusted, the information on the history golf contained in the relevant article is significant; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_golf (last accessed on Oct. 24, 2018). The quote is from this site. For further research, see below.

56 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_golf (last accessed on Oct. 24, 2018); see also Robert Browning, *A History of Golf: The Royal and Ancient Game* (London: Dent, 1955); Will Grimsley, *Golf: Its History, People & Events* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966); Steven J. van Hengel, *Early Golf*. 2nd rev. ed. (1982; Vaduz: Eck, 1985); Elizabeth Jane MacNulty and Dale Concannon, *Golf – The Early Days: Royal & Ancient Game from its Origins to 1939* (Vancouver: Cavendish, 1995); David Stirk, *Golf: History & Tradition 1500 – 1945* (Ludlow: Excellent Press, 1998).

57 For a facsimile edition, see *Golf Book* ([Barcelona: M. Moliero Editor, 2004]); see also the extensive studies by Carlos Miranda García-Tejedor, *Golf Book* (Barcelona: M. Moliero Editor, 2004). The image at the bottom of a calendar page for September is very small in the octavo of the original/facsimile, but we can clearly recognize the golf clubs handled by the youth in front of a farm house. A larger image is in García-Tejedor’s study on p. 133. He points out that similar scenes can be found in the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary* (fol. 6v) and the *Spinola Hours* (fol. 6v), both by Gerard Horenbout, and in the *Croy Hours*, which Bening probably worked on as well. García-Tejedor provides more background on the history of golf, already in Roman antiquity and then in the late Middle Ages, 131–34. For digital images, see <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-golf-book>; http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_24098; for illustrations, see online at: <http://www.bl.uk/turning-the-pages/?id=6a8fcef9-4373-46f4-8de9-7b6603024f43&type=book> (last accessed on Oct. 24, 2018). For Bening, see, for instance, *In Konkurrenz zum gedruckten Buch: die Meister von Gent und Brügge*, ed. Norbert Wolf. Die Galerie der schönsten Bücher: Buchmalerei erleben (Lucerne: Faksimile Verlag, 2006). For

Parents at most social class levels were certainly aware of their children's need to have some happy time, using toys and playing games, but chroniclers, biographers, poets, and artists have not reflected on those aspects of life at length, and this for understandable reasons, considering their primary concerns to deal with the more pressing issues of war, hunger, illness, death, and the hope of rest and relief in the afterlife, itself a form of pleasurable leisure in need of exploration. Nevertheless, we would be short-sighted if we focused on the catastrophic news contained in chronicles, for instance, only, and thereby assumed that early medieval people had exclusively war, God, and death in mind. The existence of a huge body of secular literature by itself signals how much pre-modern society was of course much in need of entertainment and sought out many avenues to gain pleasure and leisure time.

Even within the context of worst possible descriptions of the workings of demons and devils, terribly mistreating a human soul, we can glean evidence for the existence and common practice of playing physical games. Caesarius of Heisterbach, for instance, relating a story about the life of a deceased abbot of Morimond, mentions how his soul was taken to a horrible valley filled with sulfuric fumes. There demons tossed the soul back and forth, “ad similitudinem ludi pilae proiciebant; alii ex parte altera per aera volantem manibus suscipiebant” (1:32, 292; Those demons on one side threw the poor soul to the other side as in a ball game, and the demons on the other side caught it with their hands). Undoubtedly, this brief reference sheds significant light on certainly common practices of young and old people playing diverse ball games; otherwise this comment would not have made sense.

We can also refer to one of the most popular romances/novels from the entire Middle Ages, *Apollonius of Tyre*, originally composed in Greek in the second or third century C.E., which was translated into many different European languages and adapted countless times well into the seventeenth century. Fairly early on in the narrative, Apollonius arrives at the shore of Pentapolis, having barely survived a shipwreck. But he is taken in by King Archistrates, to whom he quickly appeals as an outstanding and fine young man who is exceedingly educated and well mannered. In the gymnasium, where the two men meet, they at first play a game of ball, in which Apollonius excels right away, which makes the king notice him:

When he was playing a game with his men, by God's favour Apollonius got close to the king's crow. He caught the ball as the king was playing and returned it with accuracy

many wonderful online reproductions, see <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/artists/351/simon-bening-flemish-about-1483-1561/> (last accessed on Oct. 24, 2018).

and speed; when it came back he hit it back again even faster, and never let it fall. Then since King Archistrates had noticed the young man's speed and did not know who he was, and since he had no equal at the ballgame, he looked at his servants and said: "Draw back, servants. For I believe that this young man is a match for me."⁵⁸

Late medieval versions of this text also include this scene and thus support our claim that gaming was of central importance for the elite cultures, if not for all social classes throughout time. In Heinrich Steinhöwel's fifteenth-century German version, *Apollonius*, the protagonist observes the game being played in the gymnasium, and thinks by himself: "Des spiles kennest du dich maijster sin" (You know that you are a master in this game). Subsequently, he joins the game and indeed proves to be superior in his skill: "Er lieff dem bal engegen vnd schluog in so subtillich, das der küng ain besunder uff sechen uff in het" (He ran toward the ball and hit it back so adroitly that the king took particular note of him).⁵⁹ Social rank and esteem can thus also be achieved through the mastery of games, sport activities, card games, dance, etc.

Pilgrimage and Entertainment

When we consider how people passed their time while traveling, we find valuable information as well, such as in the Dominican Felix Fabri's famous *Evagatorium* from 1483.⁶⁰ In his discussion about the voyage from Venice to Jerusalem, having already detailed the long route from his home town Ulm in southern Germany across the Alps to northern Italy, he outlines in great detail how people keep themselves busy during the long sea voyage. Some immediately turn to drinking wine right after breakfast (122) and never let this go all day long, which is typical of the Saxons and the Flemish, and other lower-ranked people.

58 Elizabeth Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre: Medieval and Renaissance Themes and Variations: Including the text of the Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri with an English translation* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1991), 125.

59 Tina Terrahe, *Heinrich Steinhöwels 'Apollonius': Edition und Studien*. Frühe Neuzeit, 179 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 181–83.

60 Here quoted from the very useful bilingual edition, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Reisens im Spätmittelalter*, selected and trans. by Folker Reichert together with Margit Stolberg-Vowinckel. *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters Freiherr-vom-Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe*, 46 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009), 122–35. See now Félix Fabri, *Les Errances de frère Félix, pèlerin en Terre sainte, en Arabie et en Égypte*, intro. gén. et éd. critique par Jean Meyers. Trad. et notes par Jean Meyers et Michel Tarayte. 6 vols. (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013–2017), vol. 1, 424–28.

Others gamble for money using dice, playing stones, or cards; others turn to playing chess (122). Some people dedicate themselves to playing music and singing songs, while others converse with each other, read books, and pray the paternoster. But the variety of people also brings it about that each individual pursues his/her own interest; some simply meditate by themselves, some keep busy with handiwork, and again others simply sleep all day. Fabri also notes that some keep walking all over the ship, lift heavy objects to keep up their strength, and others simply “faciendo animosa” (122; doing nonsense).

More reasonable seems to him to watch the sea, the land that passes by, and to write about their observations, what he himself is doing (122–24). Almost hilariously, one of the most important activities, which has not that much to do with pleasure or leisure, proves to be the necessity to chase and kill fleas, lice, and other creatures, which requires hours of work; otherwise one would not be able to sleep well at night. Certainly an important but heretofore ignored aspect of leisure and pleasure in the pre-modern period!

Finally, Fabri also notes that the condition of the sea and the weather have a significant influence on people's attitudes. If the circumstances are pleasant, everyone appears to be happy and in a good mood, but if they change to the negative, people either withdraw to themselves, become depressed and sorrowful, or they turn against each other and break out in terrible cursing and yelling. As the author then concludes: “Notavi manifeste, quod motus omnium passionum vehementior est in aqua quam extra” (124; I have clearly noticed that everyone's emotional conditions are stronger while they are on the water than on land). We could, however, also argue that the situation on a ship during a very long voyage to Jerusalem represented a unique situation which would not necessarily reflect the ordinary conditions back home. However, Fabri simply outlines what types of entertainment people were pursuing at that time and what options were available, all depending on the various individuals and their personal interests which they brought with them from the time before the pilgrimage.⁶¹

⁶¹ Fabri has been discussed recently in a variety of contexts; see, for instance, Albrecht Classen, “Imaginary Experience of the Divine: Felix Fabri's *Sionpilger* – Late-Medieval Pilgrimage Literature as a Window into Religious Mentality,” *Studies in Spirituality* 15 (2005): 109–28; id., “The Encounter with the Foreign in Medieval and Early Modern German Literature: Fictionality as a Springboard for Non-Xenophobic Approaches in the Middle Ages: *Herzog Ernst*, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Konrad von Würzburg, *Die Heidin*, and *Fortunatus*,” *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 14 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 457–87; see also my introduction (1–222), where I focus heavily on Fabri. As to his very concrete descriptions of life on ships, see Albrecht Classen, “Travel by Ship in the Late Middle Ages – Felix Fabri's Pilgrimage Account as a Meticulous Eye-Witness Report,”

We also have to consider that a pilgrimage across the sea to the Holy Land, for instance, represented a rather unique, difficult and dangerous situation since the travelers were bound to the small space of the ship with very little to keep them seriously occupied. Other pilgrims and general travelers who reached their goals via the land route had many other opportunities to enjoy their free time and so frequented, whenever possible, healing spas and other locations. Poggio Bracciolini, for instance, reports in a letter to Niccolò Niccoli (1416) about his visit to the Swiss town of Baden.⁶² As he notices, in the spa everyone is only intent on leaving all melancholy behind and aim at living a pleasant life by enjoying all material goods and other aspects of life as much as possible without worrying about the tomorrow: “Non de communi dividendo agitur, sed de communicandi divisa” (206; They are not occupied with sharing the communal goods, but with enjoying that what they all have already shared).

Other pilgrimage authors such as Arnold von Harff (1471–1505) also spent a long time in the Swiss spas and did not have a great hurry to reach their goal or to return home. They knew very well how to combine the religious zeal with the pleasures of this life, combining the spa experience with the pleasantries of parties and other events in the respective towns.⁶³ While all pilgrimages have been religiously determined, many pilgrims also must have enjoyed their free time in a variety of ways, as these few references clearly indicate, especially since the late

International Journal of History and Cultural Studies 4.4 (2018): 42–50; <https://www.arcjournals.org/pdfs/ijhcs/v4-i4/3.pdf> (last accessed on Nov. 27, 2018). Cf. also Kathryn Beebe, *Pilgrim and Preacher: The Audiences and Observant Spirituality of Friar Felix Fabri (1437/8–1502)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁶² *Quellen zur Geschichte des Reisens im Spätmittelalter*, selected and trans. by Folker Reichert (see note 60), 198–209.

⁶³ *Rom – Jerusalem – Santiago (Gebundene Ausgabe)*, *Das Pilgertagebuch des Ritters Arnold von Harff (1496–1498)*, ed. [trans.] Helmut Brall-Tuchel and Folker Reichert (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2007); Albrecht Classen, “Travel Space as Constructed Space: Arnold von Harff Observes the Arabic Space,” *German Studies Review* 33.2 (2010): 375–88; id., “Traveler, Linguist, Pilgrim, Observer, and Scientist: Arnold von Harff Explores the Near East and Finds Himself Among Fascinating Foreigners,” *Ain gut geboren edel man: A Festschrift for Winder McConnell on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Gary C. Shockey with Gail E. Finney and Clifford A. Bernd. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 757 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2011), 195–248; see also the contributions to *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: Exploration of Textual Presentations of Filth and Water*, ed. A. Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 19 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017).

Middle Ages when pilgrimages increasingly assumed touristic features and were organized professionally by, as we would say today, tour agents.⁶⁴

We can also identify specific interests in pursuing leisure travel in pilgrimage accounts such as by Hans von Waltheym (1474), who took every opportunity to enjoy his time as pleasantly as possible when he crossed Switzerland on his way to southern France, including bathing in hot spas.⁶⁵ Already the Romans, and many other cultures before and after them, were passionately interested in bathing and spent much time for that purpose, which opens yet another perspective toward pleasure and leisure in global cultural-historical terms.⁶⁶

Children and Toys

Although we might not think much about children's or adults' toys and games in the past, recent archeological and social-cultural research has clearly demonstrated how important those objects can be in our analysis of previous cultures and their mentality. They tell us much about cultural practices, values, ideals, and common notions.⁶⁷ There are three major groups of toys from the pre-modern era: "everyday objects that are modified for, or by, children for play; objects expressly designed as toys; and miniature objects which encourage children to

⁶⁴ *From Medieval Pilgrimage to Religious Tourism: The Social and Cultural Economics of Piety*, ed. William H. Swatos and Luigi Tomasi. Religion in the Age of Transformation (Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 2002).

⁶⁵ Albrecht Classen, "A Slow Paradigm Shift: Late Fifteenth-Century Travel Literature and the Perception of the World: The Case of Hans von Waltheym (ca. 1422–1479)," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 42 (2017): 1–21. For bathing and other hygienic efforts as part of people's enjoyment of their free time, see my introduction and contribution to *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature* (see note 63).

⁶⁶ Marga Weber, *Antike Badekultur*. Beck's archäologische Bibliothek (Munich: Beck, 1996); Karl-Wilhelm Weeber, *Baden, spielen, lachen: wie die Römer ihre Freizeit verbrachten*. Geschichte erzählt (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007); *Aquae salutiferae: il termalismo tra antico e contemporaneo*, ed. Maddalena Bassani, Marianna Bressan, and Francesco Ghedini. Antenor, 29 (Padua: Padova University Press, 2013). The literature on this topic is legion.

⁶⁷ Helmut Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10), 11, explicitly emphasizes that game and play are, next to myth and culture, economy and sciences, art and war, some of the most important cultural manifestations in human life. The enjoyment of playing games represents, as Birkhan highlights, apart from the need to intake nourishment and to pursue sexuality, "primäre [] Lebensbedürfnisse []" (11; primary life needs). See my review, forthcoming in *Mediaevistik* 31. Cf. also Jean Verdon, *Les loisirs au moyen âge* (Paris: Librairie Jules Tallandier, 1980); Compton Reeves, *Pleasures and Pastimes in Medieval England* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

imitate the adult world through play.”⁶⁸ Toys and games mirror deeply the conditions of society and vice versa, but life mirrors and can be shaped by those toys and games as well. After all, toys are also often used by adults for very similar purposes, and all people, young and old, enjoy the liberty which games offer during leisure time. Toys duplicate, just as card and dice games, sport competitions, and musical performances, the serious world of the adult and prepare the young person for the life in the future.⁶⁹ By the same token, the analysis of how adults pass their leisure time deeply illuminates culture at large insofar as those private activities reveal much more about the basic sentiments and feelings prevalent at a certain time than most official statements might be willing to do.⁷⁰

Studying the history of games, gaming, sports, etc., makes it possible to grasp critical features of all social interactions within a cultural unit.⁷¹ Game his-

68 Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 148; she in turn draws here from Margarita Sánchez-Romero, “Childhood and the Construction of Gender Identities through Material Culture,” *Childhood in the Past* 1 (2008): 17–37; here 26. Unfortunately, there is no bibliographical entry for this name, a typical example for methods by many scholars not to include notes. For archaeological research focusing on play objects, see Mark A. Hall, “*Jeux sans Frontières*: Play and Performativity or Questions of Identity and Social Interaction Across Town and Country,” *Objects, Environment, and Everyday Life in Medieval Europe*, ed. Ben Jervis, Lee G. Broderick, and Idoia Grau Sologestoa. Studies in the History of Daily Life (800–1600), 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 189–212. His interest is focused on the close connection between toys used in cities and toys used in the countryside.

69 Dorota Żołądz-Strzelczyk, Izabela Gomułka, Katarzyna Kabacińska-Łuczak, Monika Nawrot-Borowska, *Dzieje zabawek dziecięcych na ziemiach polskich do początku XX wieku* (Wrocław: Chronicon, 2016). I appreciate the help by Dorota Żołądz-Strzelczyk to get hold of a copy of this excellent collaborative study and to understand the major conclusions. I rely mostly on the English summary, 467–71, by Dorota Gonczaronek.

70 Gudrun Müller, “Spielzeug,” *Das gemeinsame Haus Europa: Handbuch zur europäischen Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Wulf Köpke and Bernd Schmelz (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999), 1188–98; Broder-Heinrich Christiansen, “Kriegsspielzeug,” *ibid.*, 1199–1203; Marion Fischer, “Kartenspiele, Brettspiele, Geschicklichkeitsspiele,” *ibid.*, 1204–09; Gundolf Krieger, “Traditionelle Sportarten und Spiele,” *ibid.*, 1210–21; Gunter Gebauer, “Spiel,” *Vom Menschen: Handbuch Historische Anthropologie*, ed. Christoph Wulf (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Verlag, 1997), 1038–48; Norbert Meuter, “Spielen,” *Handbuch Anthropologie: Der Mensch zwischen Natur, Kultur und Technik*, ed. Eike Bohlken and Christian Thies (Stuttgart and Weimar: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 2009), 423–28, highlights and discusses the aspects of functionality, mimesis, and symbolism of play. The theory of play, game, pleasure, and leisure has, of course, been discussed globally as well both among philosophers and cultural anthropologists, historians and art historians. For an interesting case study of British spa cultures in which wealthy individuals enjoyed their free time in attractive spa towns both for medical and for entertainment purposes, see the contribution to this volume by Melvyn Lloyd Draper.

71 *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, ed. Serina Patterson. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); for the opposite perspective, considering how the modern

torians have clearly underscored that games and toys have been found already among the oldest civilizations on earth and all over the globe, while here we will focus on the European Middle Ages and early modern time, adding at least some perspectives toward the Arabic culture during the same period.⁷² Our interest here, however, does not rest on the concrete objects that make pleasure and leisure possible. Those were rather common and have been discovered by archeologists at many sites all over Europe, both in cities and in the countryside, whether they were concrete objects to play games, or music instruments.⁷³ Instead, the purpose will be to identify much more specifically what games and toys actually mean in philosophical terms within courtly or late medieval urban society, and beyond. In this way I hope that this study will take the next necessary step to move from the material culture of gaming itself (chess boards, dice, playing cards, etc.) to a more fundamental explanation of the social and philosophical meaning of those objects so central for the world of pleasures and leisure.⁷⁴

world uses the Middle Ages as a medium to play games, see Katharina Zeppezauer-Wachauer, *Kurzwil als Entertainment: Das Mittelalterfest als populärkulturelle Mittelalterrezeption. Historisch-ethnografische Betrachtungen zum Event als Spiel*. Studien zur Unterhaltungswissenschaft, 6 (Marburg: Tectum, 2012); Doris Fischer, *Mittelalter selbst erleben!: Kleidung, Spiel und Speisen – selbst gemacht und ausprobiert* (Darmstadt: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2015). However, the present volume endeavors to understand most seriously what pleasure and leisure really meant in the past not only in material, but also in philosophical, political, and even religious terms. After all, life and game interact most closely with each other, and within pleasure and leisure there are hidden reflections of meaning and relevance.

⁷² Harold James Ruthven Murray, *A History of Board-Games Other than Chess* (see note 7); David Shenk, *The Immortal Game: A History of Chess & Its Consequences or How 32 Carved Pieces on a Board Illuminated Our Understanding of War, Art, Science, and the Human Brain* (New York: Doubleday, 2006); Sonja Musser Golladay, “Los Libros de Acedrex Dados e Tablas: Historical, Artistic and Metaphysical Dimensions of Alfonso X’s Book of Games,” Ph. D. diss., University of Arizona, 2007; Matthew Taylor, *The Association Game: A History of British Football* (Harlow et al.: Pearson Longman, 2007); John Fox, *The Ball: Discovering the Object of the Game* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2012). See also Elizabeth Wilson, *Love Game: A History of Tennis, from Victorian Pastime to Global Phenomenon* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014); Tristan Donovan, *It’s all a game: The History of Board Games from Monopoly to Settlers of Catan* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2017); see also the contributions to *Games of Empire* (see note 4). The list of other studies tracing the history of specific games or sport activities is very long; here suffice it only to emphasize that game and entertainment have always been pursued by people throughout time, even though every individual game has its own history.

⁷³ Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life* (see note 68), 151–54.

⁷⁴ There are many studies that describe medieval life from the infant stage to old age and death, and so also play and games, but then we deal with highly superficial investigations that read more like novels than critical examinations. Robert Fossier, *Das Leben im Mittelalter*,

All people enjoy playing games, just as much as laughing proves to be fundamental of human life, irrespective of what individual critics might have voiced over the centuries.⁷⁵ Without leisure there is no relaxation, and without relaxation, there is no creativity, and without creativity there is no productivity. In short, if society wants to progress, it must embrace both hard work and delightful pleasure, as we would say today. Free time is as important, to a measured degree, as work time.⁷⁶ Whereas previous research commonly identified the cul-

trans. from the French by Michel Bayer, Enrico Heinemann, and Reiner Pfeleiderer (2007; Munich and Zurich: Piper, 2008), offers a really pleasant narrative and touches on many aspects in the everyday life situation of people in the Middle Ages. However, since there are no notes and no bibliographical references, there is no way to verify or falsify any of his claims. Wolfgang Reinhard, *Lebensformen Europas: Eine historische Kulturanthropologie* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2004), 481–86, at least addresses games and athletic activities, but he does not go into any details and covers this topic only fleetingly. We could also list countless other cultural-historical studies addressing the fundamental aspects of the Middle Ages where the issues of pleasures and leisure, games and sports simply do not figure. See, for instance, Alessandro Barbero and Chiara Frugoni, *Medioevo: Storia di voci, racconto di immagini*. Economia Laterza, 725 (Rome and Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, 1999). For excellent images depicting the life of medieval children, see Arsenio e Chiara Frugoni, *Storia di un giorno in una città medievale*. Economia Laterza, 785 (Rome and Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, 1997).

75 See the contributions to *Semiotik, Rhetorik und Soziologie des Lachens: Vergleichende Studien zum Funktionswandel des Lachens vom Mittelalter zur Gegenwart*, ed. Joerg O. Fichte and Hans-Werner Ludwig. Blaubeurer Symposion, 13 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996); and to *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, Its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. Albrecht Classen. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 5 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010); Hans Rudolf Velten, *Scurrilitas: das Lachen, die Komik und der Körper in Literatur und Kultur des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2017); see my review in *Mediaevistik* 30 (2018): 543–45.

76 Peter Borsay, *A History of Leisure: The British Experience since 1500* (Oxford: Macmillan Education – Palgrave, 2006). The culture of leisure is commonly detected only in the modern era since the eighteenth or nineteenth century; see Rudy Koshar, *Histories of Leisure*, ed. Rudy Koshar (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Adam Matthew, *Leisure, Travel & Mass Culture: The History of Tourism* (Marlborough, Wiltshire: Adam Matthew, 2016); Johanna Niedbalski, *Die ganze Welt des Vergnügens: Berliner Vergnügungsparks der 1880er bis 1930er Jahre* (Berlin-Brandenburg: be.bra wissenschaft, 2018). For a study on modern pleasure and leisure, see the contributions to *Die vergnügte Gesellschaft*, ed. Michael Heinlein and Katharina Seßler. Soziologische Theorie (Bielefeld: transcript, 2014). As much as it seems to be true that our modern world is deeply determined by those aspects, with ever more people taking vacations, seeking entertainment, enjoying leisure activities, etc. as little can we support the general claim that all those aspects emerged only in the time after, say, 1600. Of course, tourism, the entertainment industry, movies, vacationing, etc. are all typical features of the modern world, but this does not necessitate that people in the Middle Ages, for instance, knew little to nothing about pleasures and leisure.

ture of leisure with the rise of the modern world,⁷⁷ here I would suggest that this element can, of course, already be discovered in the Middle Ages and earlier. We are, in other words, on the brink of busting another myth, this time pertaining to a previously ignored but certainly fundamental need of human beings to enjoy their life occasionally simply unproductively and not to be limited by the demands of war and religion, for instance.⁷⁸

Toys are only seemingly innocent by-products of culture. In reality, they allow us to understand how people viewed children, how they evaluated them, how they tried to help their children to find some entertainment, and thereby to learn about serious matters and objects in real life. And to be honest, many adults both then and today have had their own toys, which could be anything from a sword, a bat, a tool, or a ball. According to Jan Buja, a toy is

a material object made especially for ludic purposes, which displays cultural elements characteristic of a given period or previous periods within the scope of material, spiritual or social culture, and which expresses them in a way evoking certain ludic attitudes, and through its mediation it forms physical, psychological, or emotional developments.⁷⁹

In order to study the world of games, such as toys, but then also card games and dice, we must rely, on the one hand, on concrete historical toys, and on the other on the wealth of written documents and iconography where we can find countless references to toys (and games), which thus emerge as important representatives of everyday life in the Middle Ages and beyond. Analyzing the history of toys and other tools of entertainment makes it specifically possible to understand the psychological approaches to childhood since they reflect standard norms of the relationships between children and adults.⁸⁰ However, the issue here rests on pleasure and leisure, and touches on childhood only marginally,

⁷⁷ As the study by Paul Milliman, "Games and Pastimes" (see note 8), demonstrates, however, specialized medieval research has already worked to dismantle that myth for a long time.

⁷⁸ See the contributions to *Misconceptions about the Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen J. Harris and Bryon L. Grigsby. Routledge Studies in Medieval Religion and Culture, 7 (New York: Routledge, 2008); Albrecht Classen, *The Medieval Chastity Belt: A Myth-Making Process*. The New Middle Ages (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁷⁹ Jan Bujak, *Zabawki w Europie: Zarys dziejów – rozwój zainteresowań*. Rozprawy habilitacyjne / Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 139 (Cracow: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1988), 24; here taken from Gonczaronek's translation (see note 69).

⁸⁰ Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 164–76. However, like many other scholars before him, he views both toys and games as typical of and virtually exclusive to childhood.

as much as a child's play matters in many different contexts as well.⁸¹ When Parzival in Wolfram von Eschenbach's eponymous romance arrives at King Artus's court and demands to be knighted and to receive the armor which the Red Knight wears, who had left the court in anger over a conflict, the seneschal Keye fully approves this request, urging Artus to let the young stranger try his best in this deadly game since it would not matter if he were to lose his life in this challenge. Just as in a hunt of a boar, the death of a dog would have to be accepted. Life is always at any rate filled with risks and dangers, as in any game, which he even describes in detail, comparing the youth's struggle with the whip and the top.⁸²

One charming literary example from the late twelfth century, Konrad von Fussesbrunnen *Die Kindheit Jesu*, demonstrates how much the world of children could be a matter of religious reflections, even with a considerable amount of humor.⁸³ The poet relates how young Jesus and his friends spend their time trying to catch fish without nets by way of directing the creek into freshly dug furrows and then blocking the fish from returning to their original water. In that moment a conflict arises which makes Jesus kill another child, who had stomped on his own earthwork, simply by the power of his words (2755–58). Later, after an uproar has occurred, his mother coaxingly asks him what has happened, and he explains, “dâ zebrach er mir mîn spil” (2799; he destroyed my game = furrow). Thereupon, but quite grudgingly Jesus agrees to let the dead companion return to life on behalf of his mother, so he proves his divine nature already so early in life. But the word “spil” carries various connotations and can also refer to the playful behavior of lion cubs whom Jesus subsequently encounters in the mountains (2845). To be sure, child play matters centrally in this religious

81 *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Results of a Paradigm Shift in the History of Mentality*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005).

82 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*. Studienausgabe. Mittelhochdeutscher Text nach der sechsten Ausgabe von Karl Lachmann, Übersetzung von Peter Knecht, Einführung zum Text von Bernd Schirok (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), Book 5, ch. 150, vv. 11–22. For a solid introduction and review of the relevant research, see, above all, Joachim Bumke, *Wolfram von Eschenbach*. 8th, completely rev. ed. Sammlung Metzler, 36 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2004). See also Michael Dallapiazza, *Wolfram von Eschenbach: Parzival*. Klassiker Lektüren, 12 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2009); *Wolfram von Eschenbach: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Joachim Heinze. 2 vols (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

83 Konrad von Fussesbrunnen, *Die Kindheit Jesu*, ed. Hans Fromm and Klaus Grubmüller (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973).

verse tale and illustrates both Jesus's normal character as a child and also his true identity, God's son.⁸⁴

As we have learned already for some time, neither children nor childhood was ignored by the adults in the Middle Ages and the early modern age, even if young people were often depicted as rather immature and dedicated to innocent love, such as in Konrad Fleck's *Flore und Blanscheffur* (ca. 1220/1230) and many of its pan-European manifestations. We have learned to understand that our perception of that world depends heavily on the lens that we use and the material or sources that we consult.⁸⁵ Maybe the transition from childhood to adulthood was not as clearly marked then as it might be today, but at any case all those literary documents, coupled with concrete objects (toys, dolls, etc., see below), unmistakably confirm that there was a specific sense about the value of play time, entertainment, and personal enjoyment. Sometimes, when adults observe children play, they even realize the shortcomings of their

84 Medieval German literature contains numerous passages where the word 'spil' appears, often in quite different contexts; see Matthias Lexer, *Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1876), cols. 1091–92; cf. Helmut Fischer, "Spiele" (see note 47). For the world of playing cards, see Detlef Hoffmann, *Kultur- und Kunstgeschichte der Spielkarte*. Mit einer Dokumentation von Margot Dietrich zu den Spielen des Deutschen Spielkarten-Museums Leinfelden-Echterdingen (Marburg: Jonas-Verlag, 1995); Sylvia Mann, *Alle Karten auf dem Tisch: Geschichte der standardisierten Spielkarten aller Welt*. Bestands- und Ausstellungskatalog des Deutschen Spielkarten-Museums, 4 (Leinfelden-Echterdingen: Deutsches Spielkarten-Museum, 1990); globally, see Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10). See also Maria Raid, "'Ein Amt bekleiden...': Kleidung und Mode als Ausdruck von Stand und Stellung in der Gesellschaft des 15. Jahrhunderts am Beispiel des Ambraser Hofämterspiels," M.A. thesis, Vienna 2017. I am grateful to the author for alerting me to her valuable study and for providing me with a copy. She focuses on textiles and fashion depicted on those cards as an expression of the social status of the various members of the court, which she could illustrate through a close study of this fifteenth-century card game. She basically concludes (12, note 22), summarizing the various statements by art historians, that we cannot determine with any real credibility where and when this card game was created, apart from the rough dates around the middle of the fifteenth century. Particularly the attribution to Ladislas Posthumous as patron seems most problematic, cf. Timothy B. Husband, *The World in Play: Luxury Cards, 1430–1540* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 60–61.

85 Christine Putzo, *Konrad Fleck, 'Flore und Blanscheffur': Text und Untersuchung*. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 143 (Berlin, Munich, and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015); see also Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (see note 80); cf. also the contributions to *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (see note 81); to *A Cultural History of Childhood and Family in the Middle Ages*, ed. Louise J. Wilkinson. A Cultural History of Childhood and Family, 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2010); and to *Childhood in History: Perceptions of Children in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, ed. Reidar Aasgaard and Cornelia Horn, with Oana Maria Cojocaru (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018).

own approaches to life and then are suddenly willing to change, if not transform their own viewpoints or habits, as we learn in the farcical play by Marguerite de Navarre (1492–1549), *L'Inquisiteur* (ca. 1535 or 1536).⁸⁶ We find an even earlier example, though differently structured, in the verse narrative (*mære*) “The Pious Miller’s Wife” by Heinrich Kaufringer (ca. 1400).⁸⁷ The modern example fitting this model would be Michael Ende’s famous novel for young readers, *Momo oder Die seltsame Geschichte von den Zeit-Dieben und von dem Kind, das den Menschen die gestohlene Zeit zurückbrachte* (1973).⁸⁸

Toys and Dolls as Cultural Products

Naturally, in the course of time the number of references to toys and games, and related objects or subject matters grows tremendously, especially if we think of the copious didactic treatises, moralizing statements, and comments by medical authorities, then of diaries, letters, and travelogues. Nevertheless, even the pre-modern world was filled with toys since children have always been in need of them, as parents regularly recognized throughout time. Moreover, toys are always age specific, and adults enjoy their own toys, including games, all of which constitutes an alternative existence, a mirror where all activities are playful and fanciful, opening up new possibilities and imaginations. But neither toys nor games are simply a matter specifically for children; instead they pertain to human culture and can be found among all age groups and social classes, among men and women.

86 This is extensively discussed by Sharon Diane King in her contribution to this volume. The issue, children teaching adult, is a topic intensively discussed in many publications, blogs, and other media outlets; see, for instance, Luminita D. Saviuc, “15 Things A Child Can Teach An Adult,” online blog at <https://www.purposefairy.com/5305/15-things-a-child-can-teach-an-adult/> (last accessed on Feb. 3, 2019).

87 *Love, Life, and Lust in Heinrich Kaufringer’s Verse Narratives*. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 467. MRTS Texts for Teaching, 9 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), no. 17, pp. 95–98. I’ll discuss more of his texts below and will then also reflect on additional research.

88 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); Hans-Heino Ewers, *Michael Ende neu entdecken: Was Jim Knopf, Momo und die Unendliche Geschichte Erwachsenen zu sagen haben* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 2018). *Momo* has been translated into more than forty languages and is one of the most successful books for young (and adult) readers of our time. It was also transformed into radio plays, theater plays, operas, movies, musicals, ballets, and other media. For a good overview of the most important versions, see [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Momo_\(Roman\)#Rezeption](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Momo_(Roman)#Rezeption) (last accessed on Feb. 3, 2019).

This book hence deals with the wide world of games and playing, including sport events, competitions, tournaments, and the like, without necessarily limiting our approaches to a strict boundary between the world of children and the world of adults. Contrary to many modern assumptions, the pre-modern world was already very much interested in athletic competitions and regarded them as essential for the physical training of children and youth preparing them for their adult life.⁸⁹ These are all human activities that create a joyful sensation and temporarily alleviate the individual from the serious challenges in life, without leaving that life completely outside. If something does not work out in the game, or in the play, there is no serious problem since it can simply be repeated. As much as all games and playful activities operate with rules and regulations, with limitations and boundaries (game field, for instance), they are all infused with a strong sense of joy and freedom.⁹⁰

The Physical World of Toys

However, we must not forget the world of materiality, the study of toys and games makes it possible to gain deep insight into mental-historical structures and concepts of everyday-life culture. An extreme example would be, for instance, dolls or similar objects placed in pre-modern graves, either serving apotropaic functions to prevent the phenomenon of revenance (return of the ghosts of the dead haunting the living), or perhaps as sentimental funerary objects. Irrespective of how we would have to evaluate those objects, they undoubtedly represent a world of gaming and playfulness duplicating hard-core reality.⁹¹

Toy museums all over Europe (and in other parts of the world) prove to be excellent resources for this large and fundamental topic, as Dorota Żołędź-Strzelczyk, Izabela Gomułka, Katarzyna Kabacińska-Łuczak, and Monika Nawrot-Borowska have demonstrated recently, taking us from the Middle Ages to

⁸⁹ August Nitschke, *Bewegungen in Mittelalter und Renaissance: Kämpfe, Spiele, Tänze, Zeremoniell und Umgangsformen*. Historisches Seminar, 2 (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1987); Klaus Willner, *Vom Spiel zum Sport: eine Villingen Chronik der einzelnen Leibesübungen vom Mittelalter bis nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Villingen: Todt-Druck, 1998); Allen Guttman, *Sports: The First Five Millennia* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004); Uwe Mosebach, *Sportgeschichte: von den Anfängen bis in die moderne Zeit* (Aachen: Meyer & Meyer Verlag, 2017).

⁹⁰ Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10), 13–14.

⁹¹ Romedio Schmitz-Esser, *Der Leichnam im Mittelalter: Einbalsamierung, Verbrennung und die kulturelle Konstruktion des toten Körpers*. *Mittelalter-Forschungen*, 48 (2014; Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2016), 451, note 103.

the twentieth century. They also include research on toy production and toy marketing, which adds an important socio-economic dimension to the issue at question here.⁹² Dealing with toys naturally leads to a thorough study of the lives of children in the pre-modern era, but I will leave this aside here because we have dealt with that issue already at great length in a 2005 volume,⁹³ and because the focus will rest more on the global topic of pleasure and leisure, moving us away from the literary and historical accounts addressing people's daily lives while at court, in war, or on travel, and turning us to the other aspect, the entertainment which was always looked for and practiced as well, though less reported about in specific terms.

There is certainly a qualitative difference between a child's play/toy/game and an adult's game etc., but not so much in terms of the meaning and relevance of play within the wider context of human existence because the game takes the individual out of the realm of material reality into an imaginary world, very parallel to the former, also determined by rules and regulations, but without involving serious consequences concerning one's social, political, religious, or material condition. In Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Titarel*, a fragment that he composed at the end of his life, ca. 1220, drawing from some loose narrative threads in his own grail romance, *Parzival* (ca. 1205), real life and the game world (dolls) are intriguingly merged with each other.⁹⁴ At one point young Sigûne is informed that she is to move to live with her aunt, Herzeloyde, who wants to raise this pre-

92 Dorota Żołądz-Strzelczyk, Izabela Gomułka, Katarzyna Kabacińska-Łuczak, Monika Nawrot-Borowska, *Dzieje zabawek dziecięcych na ziemiach polskich* (see note 69). Their extensive bibliography is mostly dominated by Polish titles, but they also include some studies in other European languages. This volume is richly illustrated, at least concerning the time from the sixteenth through the twentieth century. It is almost tragic that western researchers hardly know Polish or other Slavic languages, but I am not aware of any solution to this huge linguistic hurdle. Who can handle more than two or three foreign languages? See also Rita Buchholz, "Mittelalterlich-frühneuzeitliche Spielzeugfunde aus Wismar," *Wismarer Studien zur Archäologie* 1 (1990): 56–61; "Daz kint spilete und was fro": *Spielen vom Mittelalter bis heute*, ed. Manfred Glaser. Ausstellungen zur Archäologie in Lübeck, 2 (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 1995); Dirk Scheidemantel, "Die Würfel sind gefallen: Spiel und Muße im Alltagsleben des Mittelalters," *Dresden 8000: eine Zeitreise*, ed. Judith Oexle (Dresden: Landesamt für Archäologie mit Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte, 2006), 184–87; Marianne Erath, "Die Würfelherstellung in Europa im Mittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit," *Archäologie als Sozialgeschichte: Studien zu Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im frühgeschichtlichen Mitteleuropa. Festschrift für Heiko Steuer zum 60. Geburtstag*. Internationale Archäologie: Studia honoraria, 9 (Rahden/Westphalia: Leidorf, 1999), 307–28.

93 *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (see note 81).

94 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Titarel*, ed., trans., commentary, and an intro. by Helmut Brackert and Stephan Fuchs-Jolie (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 48. Here I use my own translation.

cious descendent of a long line of worthy kings and queens. The narrator has already relayed much about the tragic history of the Grail family, but with Sigûne, the last heir, new hope seems to arise, especially because she shines through her virtues, honor, and beauty (stanza 32). Curiously, when Sigûne is told that she would have to go to Herzeloyde's court for her further education, she immediately realizes that this would represent the essential transition from childhood to adulthood, wherefore she draws a direct connection between her dolls and future lovers:

Das kint sprach: "liebes väterlin, du hayss mir gewinnen
mein schrein vollen tocken, wenn ich zu meiner muomen vare von hynnen.
so bin ich zu der ferte wol berichtet.
es lebt manig ritter, der sich in meinen dienst noch verphlichtet.'

(stanza 30)

[The child said: "My dear father, then arrange that my chest
filled with dolls be brought to me when I will travel from here to my aunt.
Then I will be well prepared for the voyage.
There are many knights who will commit to serve me."]

Even if her remark might smack of precocity, it clearly indicates how much Sigûne is aware of how much courtly culture with its ideals of love wooing represents a form of game in which she would be easily able to participate, merging playful game (dolls) with courtly love (erotic). Although still a child, this young protagonist has learned already and appreciates the intricacies of adult life, a world where playful operations are just as important as military, religious, or political movements.

We find evidence for the presence of toys and dolls as important elements in the lives of young people, whether at court or in the countryside also in the anonymous, rather hilarious *mære* (verse narrative) "Dis ist von dem heselin" (This is about the little bunny rabbit) from the late thirteenth century. A young knight catches a little bunny rabbit and decides to take it to his beloved as a gift. When he passes through a village, a young peasant woman spies the delightful animal and immediately desires to acquire it as her pet. She offers all her treasures for the barter, such as rings, ten dice, and a valuable belt, an odd mixture of playthings and fashionable attributes of a young noble lady.⁹⁵ As the young belle indicates, her mother had given those to her as gifts, proba-

⁹⁵ Quoted from *Novellistik des Mittelalters: Märendichtung*, ed., trans. and commentary by Klaus Grubmüller. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 23 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1996), 594, vv. 89–100.

bly, if we disregard the dice, as potential objects for her future dowry. Of course, the knight refuses that offer and insists on receiving for his animal nothing but her “minne,” that is, her sexual favor.

Although she does not understand what he means, being unfamiliar with that term, she agrees and lets him search for it on her body, meaning that she allows him to make love with her without fully understanding the implications. Her naïveté and innocence come through subsequently when her mother learns the whole story and beats her badly. In order to compensate for her failure, the maid later waits for the knight to return and begs him to give her back her “minne,” to which he happily obliges and which then works out well for both insofar as the young woman can keep the bunny rabbit and ultimately, through curious circumstances, is chosen by the knight as his future wife.⁹⁶ Even though the maid is clearly identified as a woman living in a village, she later rises to the rank of nobility because the knight has recognized her purity, innocence, beauty, and also sexual attraction, which all far exceed the qualities of a designated aristocratic fiancée for him. For our purposes, however, we only need to recognize that the poet projects a mixed situation, shedding light on what kind of toys or jewelry a young country maid might possess.

Even when medieval poets barely enter into detail about the protagonists’ leisure activities, as here is the case, they do not shy away from mentioning at least that there has always been time of struggle and time of entertainment, both dimensions closely correlated with each other. In Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur* (first printed in 1485), for instance, we are told of Sir Launcelot’s many efforts to carry out deeds of arms on behalf of his beloved, Queen Guenever, which is then coupled with the significant statement: “Thus Sir Launcelot rested him long with play and game. And then he thought himself to prove himself in strange adventures. ...”⁹⁷ In other words, chivalry and knighthood were

96 Albrecht Classen, “The Fourteenth-Century Verse Novella *Dis ist von dem Heselín*: Eroticism, Social Discourse, and Ethical Criticism,” *Orbis Litterarum* 60.4 (2005): 260–77; 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 Heselín,’ 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.

97 Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D’Arthur*, ed. Janet Cowen. With an Introduction by John Lawlor (1969; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1979), Book VI, 194. See also *Le morte Arthur: A Critical Edition*, ed. P. F. Hissiger (1975; Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2015). This is, of course, a much discussed romance; see, for instance, the contributions to *A Companion to Malory*, ed. Elizabeth Archibald. Arthurian Studies, 37 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1996); K. S. Whetter, *The Manuscript*

determined both by serious fighting and also by playfully passing time and seeking relaxation. It is not uncommon to discover references to board and dice games that attract the attention of a prince or a ruler, such as Emperor Otto I the Great (912–973), whom the chronicler monk Widukind of Corvey describes as strongly interested not only in hunting, but also in the “*ludi tabularum*,” among many other forms of entertainment. According to the author, Otto demonstrated thereby his extraordinary courtly education and strong character qualities. The anonymous poet of the Old French *chanson de geste*, *Daurel et Beton*, confirmed this observation when he has Beton prove his noble birth already at young age both through his impeccable personality and behavior and also through his strong interest in various board games which he masters effortlessly. And the didactic author Aegidius Romanus (also: Giles of Rome; late thirteenth to the early fourteenth century) emphasized in his *De regimine principum* that rulers ought to pursue the practice of embracing the “*ludus liberalis*” and thus the virtue of “*iocunditas*,” that is, to pursue games during their spare time and thus to step away from the hard business of governing, which would help them, if they observe moderation in all activities, to direct their energies toward performing good deeds. As Sophie Caflisch has recently pointed out, the ethical ideals of a ruler find their expression in his ability to seek the middle ground in all of games and thus to enjoy his free time in a virtuous and yet also pleasant manner.⁹⁸

Structural and Conceptional Components of Leisure Activities

Social conditions, ranks, gender positions, or age are not supposed to be operative in games since there, as in every play, social class distinctions and other game external criteria are removed, and only the principles of the game determine all moves. According to Roger Caillois (1913–1978), all games take place within the category of *agon* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimicry* (imitation [of reality]), and *ilinx* (deception, cunning, trickery, etc., i.e., games that involve the pursuit of the feeling of vertigo and dizziness so that habitual perception is

and Meaning of Malory's *Morte Darthur*: Rubrication, Commemoration, Memorialization. *Arthurian Studies*, 84 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2017).

⁹⁸ Sophie Caflisch, “Macht das Spiel den Herrscher? Brettspiele als höfische *probitas*,” *Games of Empires* (see note 4), 169–88. I have drawn those three examples from her article.

disrupted).⁹⁹ However, in contrast to human reality, within game/play, failure or loss is not of great or decisive significance and would actually inspire the player to try harder, again, or differently, especially because, as Birkhan now formulates, the game provides a form of mask (*mimicry*) with which, according to Rainer Buland and Ulrich Schädler, the following types of entertainment can be realized: board and dice game, sportive activities, gambling, and play or acting on the stage.¹⁰⁰ Game can also become very addictive, as the existence of casinos all over the world today indicates. The pre-modern world might not have had quite the same commercial perception of and approach to ‘games,’ but the barrage of criticism against all gaming activities we have already dealt with above underscores how pervasive such extreme forms of pleasure activities could have been addictive already then.¹⁰¹

Refining the previous observation, in order to gain a solid handle on these and related topics, including adult games and toys, and to comprehend the vast domain of pleasure and leisure in the pre-modern world, we must draw from many different scholarly disciplines, including archaeology, history, literary studies, art history, religion, philosophy, history of medicine, history of fashion, history of furniture, and also psychology, if possible under the historical circumstances.

After all, as cultural historians have observed already for a long time, despite their playful and seemingly irrelevant nature, games and toys are a very serious matter both for their own time and lives and for us as critical researchers. For instance, it now appears to make good sense to identify the entire concept of the courtly world as a game in abstract or metaphorical terms, which would

99 Roger Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games*, trans. from the French by Meyer Barash (1958; New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961); he emphasizes that those four categories often appear in pairs or bundles and interact with each other easily, 71.

100 Birkhan, *Spielendes Mittelalter* (see note 10); see also the numerous volumes in the book series *Homo ludens – der spielende Mensch: internationale Beiträge des Institutes für Spielforschung und Spielpädagogik an der Hochschule “Mozarteum” Salzburg*, ed. Rainer Buland and Ulrich Schädler, vol. 1–10 (Munich: Emil Katzschler, 1991–2010); Rainer Buland, *Wenn der Mensch nach dem Glück greift: über Gewinner und Verlierer* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2005).

101 For further examples in late medieval German literature, see the contribution to this volume by Chiara Benati. For game addiction today, see, for instance, Neils Clark and P. Shavaun Scott, *Game Addiction: The Experience and the Effects* (Jefferson, NC; McFarland, 2009); *Gaming and Technology Addiction: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice*. Critical Explorations. 2 vols. (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2017); Adam Alter, *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017). The literature on this topic is expansive, but see the technically detailed study by David Parlett, *The Oxford History of Board Games* (see note 4).

allow us to gain a much better understanding of the highly contradictory, esoteric, and ambivalent phenomenon of courtly love as well.¹⁰² Viewed through this lens, both theoretical reflections (Andreas Capellanus) and romances (Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan* or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*), both courtly love poetry (the first *troubadour* poet Guillaume IX or the famous Middle High German *Minnesänger* Walther von der Vogelweide), contradictory engagements of men and women in the discourse of love (Marie de France [Anglo-Norman], Boccaccio [Italian], Geoffrey Chaucer [Middle English], etc.), and philosophical ruminations on the nature of game (Nicholas of Cusa) make much more sense than before and prove to be talking to each other in a larger cultural-historical framework.

We might even go so far as to consider the most intriguing letters exchanged between Abelard and Heloise as a form of intellectual game which continues to occupy us until today, considering the extent to which scholars debate continuously about the authenticity of that correspondence, the literary, philosophical, and theological sources, and the true meaning of the opinions voiced by those two highly educated writers.¹⁰³ Dialectics is a form of game, as it involves debates and provocation, confrontation and agreement. Those who do not want to or cannot engage in physical activities, certainly delight in games of the

102 Albrecht Classen, "Spiel als Kultur und Spiel als Medium der Lebensbewältigung im Mittelalter: Vom Schachspiel und Liebeswerben hin bis zur literarischen Spielführung," *Études Germaniques* 73.3 (2018): 333–55.

103 *The Letters of Heloise and Abelard: A Translation of Their Collected Correspondence and Related Writings*, trans. and ed. by Mary Martin McLaughlin with Bonnie Wheeler. The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); see also the contributions to *Listening to Heloise: The Voice of a Twelfth-Century Woman*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler. The New Middle Ages (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). In a previous study I highlighted the dialectic nature of these letters, "Dialectics and Courtly Love: Abelard and Heloise, Andreas Capellanus, and the *Carmina Burana*," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 23 (2013): 161–83. See also Deborah Fraioli, "Assessing Medieval Moral Outrage: the Correspondence of Abelard and Heloise," *Mediaevistik* 25 (2012): 55–68. Musing on how the intellectual posterity responded to this correspondence, she argues that "they reveled in the intellectual pleasure of unmasking the hidden marrow of the correspondence, recognizing the moral substratum that underlies the correspondence, yet delighting in the rude, boisterous, and comic manner in which it is delivered through the *personae* of Abelard and Heloise" (68). Generally, she observes numerous cases of possibly deliberate dissonances that ought to have provoked a strong reaction by her audience that was thus invited to play the intellectual game with her to debate the problematic propositions contained both in Abelard's *Historia calamitatum* and in Heloise's correspondence with him.

mind, which might fundamentally explain many features of the intellectual world in the Middle Ages.¹⁰⁴

Game and Pastime in Mysticism

Surprisingly, even within the world of medieval mysticism, the idea of game gained traction because it allowed the authors to explain the free flow of the loving exchange between the Godhead and the loving soul. The thirteenth-century Beguine turned mystic Mechthild von Magdeburg (d. 1282), for instance, resorted to the notion of play in order to come to terms with the idea of the mystical revelation.¹⁰⁵ The Godhead welcomes her soul by way of resorting to courtly lan-

104 Catherine Brown, *Contrary Things: Exegesis, Dialectic, and the Poetics of Didacticism*. Figure: Reading Medieval Culture (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Constance Brittain Bouchard, *“Every Valley Shall Be Exalted”: The Discourse of Opposites in Twelfth-Century Thought* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 145: “Whether discussing binary opposites or the two extreme poles of a continuum, theologians and vernacular writers alike deliberately *valued* both halves of the equation.” As to the discourse on love, also a highly sophisticated game, see Peter L. Allen, *The Art of Love: Amatory Fiction from Ovid to the Romance of the Rose*. Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992). I have proposed already before the thesis that courtly love was a game, Albrecht Classen, “Erotik als Spiel, Spiel als Leben, Leben als Erotik: Komparatistische Überlegungen zur Literatur des europäischen Mittelalters,” *Mediaevistik* 2 (1989): 7–42; id., “Minnesang als Spiel. Sinnkonstitution auf dem Schachbrett der Liebe,” *Studi Medievali Serie Terza*, XXXVI.1 (1995): 211–39; see now Beate Kellner, *Spiel der Liebe im Minnesang* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2018), who suggests that courtly love poetry was a medium to experiment and play with many different strategies and options in courtly society. I have commented on her study at greater length in note 135 below. See also my review in *Mediaevistik* 32 (2019 or 2020), forthcoming.

105 See the English translation, Mechthild of Magdeburg, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, trans. & intro. Frank Tobin, preface Margot Schmidt (New York and Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1998), but I will use my own here because I disagree with some of the specifics of this translation in order to stay closer to the original; for the historical-critical edition, see Mechthild von Magdeburg, *‘Das Fließende Licht der Gottheit’: Nach der Einsiedler Handschrift in kritischem Vergleich mit der gesamten Überlieferung*, ed. Hans Neumann. Vol. 1: *Text*, ed. Gisela Vollmann-Profe. Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 100 (Munich and Zürich: Artemis, 1990). Her work has been discussed many times and has been recognized as a major contribution to mysticism, mystical literature, and medieval women’s literature; see, for instance, Hildegard Elisabeth Keller, *My secret is mine: Studies on Religion and Eros in the German Middle Ages*. Studies in Spirituality Supplements, 4 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000); David F. Tinsley, *The Scourge and the Cross: Ascetic Mentalities of the Later Middle Ages*. Mediaevalia Groningana New Series, 14 (Paris, Leuven, and Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010); Balázs J. Nemes, *Von der Schrift zum Buch – vom Ich zum Autor: Zur Text- und Autorkonstitution in Überlieferung und Rezeption des ‘Fließenden Lichts der Gottheit’ Mechthilds von Magdeburg*. Bibliotheca-

guage and “clothes her in the garments that one fittingly wears in a palace” (40), treating the soul as the most ardently sought after beloved. Stunningly, the soul is then taken to a secret spot where she must speak only for herself and cannot think of anyone else because the Godhead “wants to play a game that the body does not know, nor the peasants at their plows, nor knights at their tournaments, nor his lovely mother, Mary – not even she may play it there” (41).¹⁰⁶ Game and love join forces and transform the soul into the most beloved entity in the universe, with the Godhead completely focused on her and giving her all of its attention.

In that process, however, the soul is transported far beyond all earthly dimensions and loses her ability even to talk about what she witnessed: “a blissful place of which I neither will nor can speak. It is too difficult” (41). This is, of course, the well-known concept of the “*unio mystica*,” which constitutes one of the core concepts in mysticism. If we tried to translate it into the common language, then we suddenly face an apophatic expression about the very nature of love which reveals much more about this emotional experience than any verbose, eloquent, rhetorically skillful explanation might be able to achieve.

Just as in a game, the outcome of the vision is not predictable, and yet the mystic is graced with having been invited to join a game played by the Godhead with her soul. The game the mystic alludes to, however, is not comparable to any other games, that is, ordinary human activities determined by specific rules and regulations. At the very moment when the union with the divine is virtually complete, a kind of spiritual orgasm takes place, and yet precisely then the soul has to depart again, as she explains filled with sorrow: “Wenne das spil allerbest ist, so muos man es lassen” (8; When the game is at its best, one has to let it go).¹⁰⁷ Even though the soul no longer wants to return to the body because the experience together with the Godhead makes it virtually impossible for her to do so, the latter emphasizes: “din stimme ist ein seitenspil minen oren, dinu wort

ca Germanica, 55 (Tübingen and Basel: A. Francke Verlag, 2010); Albrecht Classen, *Reading Medieval European Women Writers: Strong Literary Witnesses from the Past* (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2016).

106 Research on Mechthild is truly rich, but the relationship between spiritual love and game does not seem to have been noted yet; see, for instance, Elizabeth A. Andersen, *The Voices of Mechthild of Magdeburg* (Oxford, Berlin, et al.: Peter Lang, 2000), but again, her focus rests on the various voices speaking up in the mystic’s visions. See now Albrecht Classen, “Mystical Literature for the Modern Reader – Responses to a Dilemma and Pragmatic Suggestions: With a Focus on Mechthild of Magdeburg,” *Studies in Spirituality* 28 (2018): 145–67.

107 Albrecht Classen, “The Dialectics of Mystical Love in the Middle Ages: Violence/Pain and Divine Love in the Mystical Visions of Mechthild of Magdeburg and Marguerite Porète,” *Studies in Spirituality* 20 (2010): 143–60.

sint wurtzen minem munde, dine gerunge sint die miltekeit miner gabe" (8; your voice is music for my ears played on a string instrument; your words are roots in my mouth; your desires are the mercy of my gifts).

Tragically, however, as Mechthild then also indicates, as soon as the height of all blissfulness has been achieved, she must leave again and return to her own life. The out-of-body sensation is over, the 'game' is accomplished, and deep disappointment sets in, which can make perfect sense even in modern-day jargon and thinking because we are all only too aware of the impossibility of maintaining the exceedingly fleeting sense of happiness achieved at special moments even under the best circumstances. Love and game thus prove to be interchangeable and co-dependent functions, specifically in the mystical context, but it is also a critical element in the courtly discourse on love.¹⁰⁸ The experience of a game within the mystical context thus emerges as a metaphor of great significance. Pleasure, to use a related phrase central for our investigations, thus proves to be a fundamental notion in human epistemology insofar as the freedom of the game activity frees the individual from all physical detractions and frees the mystic to experience the revelation of the Godhead.¹⁰⁹

Moving forward from here, we can easily recognize that the notion of game also undergirded Baroque culture which was theater-oriented at any event, relying heavily on pleasure principle and performance on the courtly stage.¹¹⁰ However, that kind of game was always predicated on publicity, transforming the material world into a theater stage, although then the spiritual dimension was absent because the visual representations of the Baroque world aimed at the projection of worldly power, so clearly demarcating the separation between the upper and the lower social classes. Nevertheless, even then each group assumed an essential role in that social game.

The question, however, to what extent games should be allowed or even embraced as healthy activities to relieve the exhausted mind, and the issue whether gambling games should be banned principally, as many theologians argued,

108 Albrecht Classen, "Worldly Love – Spiritual Love. The Dialectics of Courtly Love in the Middle Ages," *Studies in Spirituality* 11 (2001): 166–86; id., "Die flämische Mystikerin Hadewijch als erotische Liebesdichterin," *Studies in Spirituality* 12 (2002): 23–42.

109 Andrea Zech, *Spielarten des Gottes-Genusses: Semantiken des Genießens in der europäischen Frauenmystik des 13. Jahrhunderts*. Historische Semantik, 25 (Göttingen and Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

110 *Spiel!: Kurzweil in Renaissance und Barock: eine Ausstellung des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien, Schloss Ambras Innsbruck 16. Juni bis 2. Oktober 2016*, ed. Sabine Haag (Vienna: KHM Museumsverband, 2016); Anna K. Nardo, *The Ludic Self in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991).

were hot items still in the eighteenth century, as demonstrated by the lengthy entry on “Spiele” (games) in Johann Heinrich Zedler’s *Universal-Lexicon* (1743).¹¹¹ In the famous *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences*, edited by Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d’Alembert from 1751 to 1780, we find an extensive article on “Jeu,” in which historical, social, political, and cultural dimensions of game are addressed without any prejudice.¹¹² The topics of “Plaisir, Délice, Volupté” are also covered at great length,¹¹³ whereas “Loisir” is mentioned only in passing.¹¹⁴

Public Games in Old Norse Sagas

Children’s play finds its continuation in adults’ play, both in the past and in the present, even if there are, of course, gradual differences. In the medieval Icelandic sagas, for instance, we are constantly informed about games and drinking at the major festivals organized for the public, but we are not necessarily told what kind of games were played. In the *Laxdaela Saga* from ca. 1245, for instance, we read:

There were huge crowds at the assembly that year and there was a great deal of celebration, with drinking and games and every form of entertainment.¹¹⁵

111 Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollstaendiges Universal-Lexicon Aller Wissenschaften und Kuenste*, vol. 38 (Leipzig and Halle: Zedler, 1743), 1624–29. He presents a well-balanced view of gambling games aimed at cheating the playing partners, mathematical games, entertaining games, and social games. In fact, Zedler lists quite a number of games and describes some of their features.

112 “Jeu,” *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*. Vol. 8. New facsimile ed. of the first edition from 1751–1780 (1765; Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1967), 531–43. There is no room here to evaluate the quality of this entry, but the sheer length of it within this encyclopedia demonstrates unmistakably that a. gaming was widespread and highly appreciated, b. that it was highly acknowledged as an important part of public and private life, and c. that the author/s were fully aware of the long history of game and play extending far back to antiquity. The danger of gambling, however, also stands out explicitly: “Tant de personnes de tout pays ont mis & mettent sans-cesse une partie considérable de leur bien à la merci des cartes & et des dés, sans en ignorer les mauvaises suites, qu’on ne peut s’empêcher de rechercher les causes d’un attrait si puissant” (532).

113 *Encyclopédie* (see note 112), vol. 12 (1765), 689–92.

114 *Encyclopédie* (see note 112), vol. 9 (1765), 680.

115 *Laxdaela Saga*, trans. with an intro. by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson (London: Penguin, 1969), 64.

In the *Egil's Saga*, also from the thirteenth century, we are informed, for instance:

Skallagrim took a great delight in trials of strength and games, and liked talking about them. Ball games were common in those days, and there were plenty of strong men in the district at this time.¹¹⁶

And when the men are not feasting, playing games, or watching horse fighting, they exercise in a variety of athletic activities, as we hear, for example, in the contemporary *Njál's Saga* about Gunnar Hamundarson:

He shot with a bow better than anyone else, and he always hit what he aimed at. He could jump higher than his own height, in full fighting gear, and just as far backward as forward. He swam like a seal, and there was no sport in which there was any point in competing with him and it was said that no man was his match.¹¹⁷

However, we are hardly informed about women's activities during their free time, though we can be certain that they enjoyed watching those competitions organized by the men. We witness them in their roles as wives, as heads of the family, as mothers, as workers on the farm, as travelers, etc., but they are granted virtually no attention by the Saga poets when it concerns pleasure and leisure.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, the Icelandic corpus of textual evidence confirms that pleasure and leisure mattered significantly in that society as well.

Gaming and Leisure Activities in Historical Terms

To complete the circle of our examination of this large topic, let us revisit briefly what we have understood so far and how we could proceed from here. We would be well advised to study toys and games as mirrors of the culturally determined life cycle, as we know only too well even today because every child needs toys adequate for its development.¹¹⁹ At the same time, it deserves mention that

116 *Egil's Saga*, trans. Bernard Scudder, ed. with an intro. and notes by Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (London: Penguin, 1997), 67.

117 *Njál's Saga*, trans. with intro. and notes by Robert Cook. *World of the Sagas* (London: Penguin, 1997), 35; see also 44. As to the game of 'horse fighting,' see the contribution to this volume by Carlee Arnett.

118 Jenny Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

119 Annemarieke Willemsen, "The Age of Play: Children's Toys and the Medieval Life Cycle," *Ludica: Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco* (Rome: Viella, 1995), 169–82; Sándor Petényi,

adults enjoy playing games just as much as children, though the toys, or cards and dice differ to some extent from those given to the young players, such as the top.¹²⁰ Life does not simply consist of work; there is always a certain element of leisure, which is being filled with pleasure. Even medieval society demonstrated a clear awareness of the necessities to work physically to earn one's bread, even if the nobility operated mostly in a different framework due to its social and military obligations.¹²¹

All cultures throughout the world are determined by those conditions, though differences arise from period to period, due to changing constellations and values, especially when religion enters the picture and imposes strict rules of behavior, such as during the Protestant Reformation, when the practice of gambling was also banned as an illegal activity.¹²² Nevertheless, even the most conservative societies allow their children to play, and grant the adults some time of relaxation, whether we think of – no insults or wrong categorization intended (the following list is only a random selection of general denominations) – Old Catholics, Greek Orthodox, the Mormons, fundamental Orthodox Jews and Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, and so forth, that is, throughout time and all over the world. Every game and every gamer represents a mirror of society at large and of the dominant culture.

Games and Toys in Medieval and Early Modern Hungary. Medium aevum quotidianum: Sonderband, 3 (Krems: Medium Aevum Quotidianum, 1994).

120 Antonia Fraser, *A History of Toys* ([New York]: Delacorte Press, 1966); Angela Schofield, *Toys in History*. Eyewitness Books (Hove, Brighton, UK: Wayland, 1978); D. W. Gould, *The Top: Universal Toy, Enduring Pastime* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter; distributed by Crown Publishers, 1973); Sándor Petényi, *Games and Toys in Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*. Medium Aevum Quotidianum, Sonderband III (Krems: Medium Aevum Quotidianum, 1994); Deborah Jaffe, *The History of Toys: From Spinning Tops to Robots* (Stroud: Sutton, 2006); Henryk Paner, "Infancy and Adolescence, Education and Recreation," *Lübecker Colloquium zur Stadtarchäologie im Hanseraum*. Vol. 8: *Kindheit und Jugend, Ausbildung und Freizeit* (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 2012), 321–34.

121 Gregory M. Sadlek, *Idleness Working: The Discourse of Love's Labor from Ovid Through Chaucer and Gower* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

122 Ingrid Seppel, "Kurzweil getrieben ...: Bürgerliche Freizeitgestaltung im 16. Jahrhundert nach den Aufzeichnungen des Hermann Weinsberg," *Volkskultur am Rhein und Maas* 22 (2004): 21–32; *Augsburg During the Reformation Era: An Anthology of Sources*, ed. and trans. B. Ann Tlusty (Indianapolis, IN, and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2012), 160–84.

Hunting for Pleasure

Playfulness and fun make life entertaining and worth living, which quickly emerges as a timeless, fundamental aspect of all cultural history, even though we have often not paid enough attention to this phenomenon, thus simply ignoring critical issues that ought to be considered all the time in order to do justice to the complexities of people's existence both in the past and the present. In the world of medieval courts, that is, for all pre-modern aristocracy, hunting proved to be a major pastime,¹²³ and there is hardly any courtly romance or short verse narrative where this sport is not mentioned at least once, whether in Marie de France's *Guigemar* (ca. 1200), in Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (ca. 1210), or in the various *Melusine* narratives (e.g., Jean d'Arras, 1393; Couldrette, 1400; Thüring von Ringoltingen, 1456).¹²⁴ King Arthur regularly goes hunting and thereby experiences miraculous adventures, such as in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*.¹²⁵ Hunting quickly turned into a sport, an athletic and an artistic activity involving many skills and splendid public displays, especially because it soon bloomed into a full-blown spectacle of major proportions involving the entire court society, both as actors and as spectators. Hugo of St. Victor, in his *Didascalicon de studio legendi* (ca. 1128), even counted the hunt as a form of philosophy, that is, as a part of the mechanical arts, next to the arts of acting, sea faring, and medical skills. Sophisticated hunters needed to understand both the wild animals as prey, their living conditions, and the environment they live in, and they had to develop very elaborate hunting techniques, weapons, and organizational strategies to achieve their goal, as reflected by numerous hunting regi-

123 John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Paolo Galloni, *Il cervo e il lupo: caccia e cultura nobiliare nel Medioevo*. Quadrante, 60 (Rome: Laterza, 1993); see also the contributions to *Jagd und höfische Kultur im Mittelalter*, ed. Werner Rösener (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997); cf. also Baudouin van den Abeele, *La littérature cynégétique*. Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 75 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996); Martina Giese, "Graue Theorie und grünes Weidwerk? Die mittelalterliche Jagd zwischen Buchwissen und Praxis," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 89 (2007): 19–59.

124 Monika Schausten, "'dā hovel ir iuch selben mite': höfische Jagdkunst im Spiegel klerikaler Kritik am Beispiel des 'Tristan' Gottfrieds von Straßburg," *Semantik der Kulturkritik*, ed. Niels Werber. Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik, 161/41 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2011), 139–63; Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France: A Critical Companion*. Gallica, 24 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2014), 119–22.

125 Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, ed. Janet Cowen (see note 97), vol. 1, 125 (Book IV, ch. 6). The pursuit of the hart is a common motif, such as in Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain* (ca. 1160) or Hartmann von Aue's *Iwein* (ca. 1190/1200), each time drawing the protagonist/s into a new marvelous world of bliss or sorrow.

mens, all of which strongly contributed to the development and realization of the ideal of *curialitas*, a most elaborate system of public entertainment.¹²⁶ As Burckhardt Krause emphasizes, the hunt required “ein differenziert ausgebildetes mimetisches Können ... und ein beträchtliches körperliches Leistungsvermögen sowie große Körperdisziplin. ...” (a mimetic ability, with many differentiating skills, considerable physical abilities, and a great bodily self-discipline).¹²⁷

Despite some differences in hunting techniques and hunted animals selected according to the hunter's gender, women were equally involved in this pastime, both as spectators and as participants.¹²⁸ As the fourteenth-century didactic poet Hadamar von Laber (ca. 1300–after 1354) illustrated in his courtly love allegory *Jagd*, every dog involved in the hunt could represent an aspect of the pursuit of love, such as the lover's heart, his psychological and moral qualities, his behavior, and even the lady's favors. Each dog carries the specific name mirroring the aspect dealt with, such as ‘heart’ and ‘patient endurance.’¹²⁹

Hunting is both an exercise and a physical challenge, it provides entertainment and also food, and the best hunters are those who know how to catch any animal just as they wish, such as Siegfried in the *Nibelungenlied* (ca 1200) or as Bertilak de Hautdesert in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (ca. 1370/1380). Many medieval secular frescoes and manuscript illustrations display hunting scenes, such as in the famous *Book of Hours* by the Limbourg brothers, commissioned by the Duke de Berry, the *Très Riches Heures* from ca. 1412–1416 (calendar leaf for December).¹³⁰

126 Burckhardt Krause, *Die Jagd als Lebensform und höfisches ‘Spiel’: mit einer Interpretation des ‘bast’ in Gottfrieds von Straßburg Tristan*. Helfant Studien, S 12 (Stuttgart: helfant edition, 1996), 32–37. See also the excellent collection, *Jagd und höfische Kultur im Mittelalter*, ed. Werner Rösener. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 135 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997).

127 Krause, *Die Jagd* (see note 126), 34. As to the role of experts employed by the court, including hunters, see Timo Reuvekamp-Felberg, “Experten und Expertenwissen am Fürstenhof des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts,” *Höfe und Experten: Relationen von Macht und Wissen in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Marian Füssel, Antje Kuhle, and Michael Stolz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 19–38.

128 Katharina Fietze, *Im Gefolge Dianas: Frauen und höfische Jagd im Mittelalter (1200–1500)*. Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, 59 (Cologne, Vienna, and Weimar: Böhlau, 2005).

129 Christoph Huber, “Hadamar von Laber,” *Killy Literaturlexikon: Autoren und Werke des deutschsprachigen Kulturraumes*, ed. Wilhelm Kühlmann. 2nd, completely rev. ed. Vol 4 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 563. *Hadamars von Laber Jagd*, with intro. and commentary by Karl Stejskal (Vienna: Hölzer, 1880).

130 *The Limbourg Brothers: Nijmegen Masters at the French Court 1400–1416*, ed. Rob Dückers and Pieter Roelofs (Nijmegen: Ludion, 2005). For excellent copies of the images online, see

Most intriguingly, in the Middle English alliterative romance, hunting takes place both in the forest and at the edge of the forest (Bertilak), depending on the type of animal, and also in the bedroom (Bertilak's wife). Each time, however, the real target is Gawain whose character is mirrored in the three animals that his host captures each day, the deer (speed and dexterity), the boar (strength and fierceness), and the fox (cunning, smartness). At the same time, Bertilak's wife tries to seduce him with her physical attractiveness, but she basically fails because her guest maintains his honor and does not accept any of her explicit and implicit offers out of respect for his host, his sense of doom because of the impending decapitation by the Green Knight, and, of course, his realization that he could not possibly return the wife's sexual favor to her husband as part of their wager. In this regard, he outperforms the deer, the boar, and the fox by means of his rhetorical skills and his courtly manners, escaping all of the huntress's traps and snares. He accepts her kisses, to be sure, but those he can easily 'extend' to Bertilak. Only when the wife offers a life-saving belt, does Gawain fail since he keeps that belt and does not turn it over to his host.¹³¹ The latter, however, knows about this as well, and only nicks his neck with the axe as a punishment for his little lie. This then concludes the game which the Green Knight played with Gawain, King Arthur, and the Round Table, and both honor and mutual respect have been re-established.

Hunting could also substitute for love, such as in the case of Guigemar in Marie de France's eponymous *lai* (ca. 1190/1200) where the young man is grown up but does not know anything about love and does not care about the other gender. Hence, to pass his time, he goes hunting, during which, however, he is badly wounded by his own arrow that had bounced back from a doe that he had killed. The animal tells him, however, before it dies, that he would have to find help from a lady far away and experience love, his real wound, which subsequently happens, indeed. Hunting, in other words, proves to be the everyday

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tr%C3%A8s_Riches_Heures_du_Duc_de_Berry#Calendar_gallery (last accessed on July 4, 2018).

131 There are many good editions of the text; here I draw from *The Works of the Gawain Poet: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. Ad Putter and Myra Stokes. Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 2014); see also *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*, ed. Helen Cooper and Keith Harrison. Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); for further studies on the issue of hunting, see Marcelle Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974); Anne Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1993). For critical reflections on the relationship between hunter and the hunted prey, see Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 2013).

activity for members of the aristocracy and marks the passing of their time, but it is not simply entertainment to pass empty time; instead it creates the framework to make life-changing decisions.¹³²

In one important example, hunting even constitutes the entire scope of activities for the young protagonist Parzival in Wolfram von Eschenbach's eponymous romance from ca. 1205.¹³³ After Parzival's father Gahmuret has died in battle in exotic lands, his widow, Herzeloyde, after having delivered her son, withdraws into a sylvan solitude, Soltâne, where she hopes to raise her child, Parzival, all by herself. This promises to be a safe distance away from the world of knighthood, the cause of her personal suffering, as the narrator himself emphasizes (Book II, ch. 112, vv. 19–20). Herzeloyde orders all her people under greatest threat never to talk about the outside world in order to protect the child from the evils coming from the courts and manly activities (Book III, ch. 117, vv. 22–28). However, he quickly searches, once he has grown into a youth, for some form of entertainment, and naturally turns to hunting by means of self-made bows and javelins, killing many birds in the woods (Book III, ch. 118, vv. 4–6).¹³⁴

Parzival's innocence and naïveté are still very evident at that point since he cries over the loss of the sweet bird songs without understanding the causality of his actions. Once Herzeloyde has learned the reason for his childish grieving, she orders all birds to be killed until her son requests a stop to this 'murder,' which reflects his deep inner sense of virtues as inherited from his father (Book III, ch. 119, vv. 10–11). Apparently, since he does not undergo any serious or noteworthy educational training, and grows up entirely unsupervised, he dedicates all of his time to hunting or to roaming the forest, which means that he is, at that point, still outside of culture and will experience that only once he has left the forest and hence has abandoned his childish entertainment in favor of knightly pursuits.

132 *Lais: texte original en ancien français; manuscrit Harley 978 du British Museum*, ed. Nathalie Desrugilliers-Billard (Clermont-Ferrand: Éd. Paleo, 2007); for a most useful introductory study of many relevant aspects in Marie's works, see now Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France* (see note 124).

133 Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival* (see note 82). For the major role of the forest as a place of refuge, see Albrecht Classen, *The Forest in Medieval German Literature: Ecocritical Readings from a Historical Perspective*. Ecocritical Theory and Practice (Lanham, Boulder, et al.: Lexington Books, 2015).

134 I have discussed this episode already at greater length in Albrecht Classen, *The Forest in Medieval German Literature* (see note 133).

Nevertheless, Parzival, at an already somewhat older stage in his young life, turns to hunting large prey and becomes a master in that art, not allowing any animal to escape his javelins. The narrator does not elaborate much further about the hunt in this section, but it is entirely clear how important this activity was both for entertainment and for food, of course. Moreover, Parzival's performance as a hunter, even when he resorts to his self-made weapons, underscores the nature of hunting as one of the quintessential activities for people in his social class. It appears as if he is learning this art by himself and easily gains mastery in it, whereas he has no teachers giving him training in music, dancing, singing, performing poetry, jousting, etc.

Similarly, in the final section of Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan* (ca. 1210), when the two lovers Tristan and Isolde have already retired to the love cave, a kind of utopia for them,¹³⁵ they find entertainment in hunting, though they have no need for food. Sometimes they listen to bird song, sometimes they play their own music, and sometimes they ride on their horses to hunt animals by means of crossbows: "si riten under stunden, / sô si des geluste" (17248–49; occasionally they took their horses, as it pleased them). As the poet clearly emphasizes, they have no need to secure nourishment and go hunting for sheer pleasure: "niuwan durch die kurzen zît" (17268; only to pass their time).¹³⁶

Their happiness is, however, contingent on the external circumstances, as virtually everything in life is, and the discovery by King Mark happens fast because he also enjoys hunting, especially because he feels lonely without his wife and his nephew, so he can, with the help of one of his hunters, come across the love cave despite its secretive nature. Love and hunting thus become intimately entangled, both being activities of leisure, and yet existential in their symbolic significance, intertwining life, honor, love, and death as the ultimate outcome of the dangerous game of the erotic exchanges within the context of the hunt.¹³⁷

135 Tomas Tomasek, *Die Utopie im "Tristan" Gotfrids von Straßburg*. Hermaea: Germanistische Forschungen, Neue Folge, 49 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1985).

136 Burkhard Krause, *Die Jagd als Lebensform* (see note 126), 130–88; see also Marcelle Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1974); Armand Strubel and Chantal de Saulnier, *La poétique de la chasse au Moyen Age. Perspectives Littéraires* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994).

137 To avoid any possible misunderstanding here, I do not intend to rely on Denis de Rougemont's highly seductive interpretation of courtly love, which was predicated on concepts developed by Richard Wagner and then Friedrich Nietzsche. See now Albrecht Classen, "Denis de Rougemont: Erforscher des *Tristan*-Mythos und Begründer eines neuen Liebes- und Todes-Mythos," *tristan mythos maschine 20. jahrhundert ff*, ed. Robert Schoeller and Nathanael Busch (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, forthcoming).

Very early on, once young Tristan had arrived at Mark's court, he taught the hunters how to carry out their job in a more artistic fashion, which subsequently prompts the king to promote Tristan to his master hunter (3419). Here, however, in the love cave episode, the master hunter becomes the hunted himself, as is the case with the entire court company at a later stage, when King Mark goes hunting because he is deeply distressed over the loss of his wife and nephew despite his heavy charges against them. We are strongly reminded of the principle of any game, where there are rules and a game board that easily make the player into a winner or a loser, and while the lovers have had the upper hand, so to speak, for a long time, despite their love pangs and sorrow, now the tide has turned against them.

Mark's hunting company fails to track down an unusual deer, but then they reach the vicinity of the love cave and decide to set up their camp there. In the morning, with the help of one of his huntsmen, Mark personally discovers the love cave, and the sight of the two lovers separated by a sword causes him so much trouble in his mind that he breaks off his hunt and returns to the court (17620–25).¹³⁸ For Mark, his pleasure activities turn into pain and suffering affecting him deeply, while the two lovers enjoy hunting and playing music as part of their out-of-this-world erotic experience. Nevertheless, they also demonstrate great fear when they hear the sounds of the hunting party and prepare themselves for potential discovery. Once that has actually happened, with Mark being deceived once again, they are allowed to return to the court, where the game of love becomes much more difficult because the king scrutinizes them most diligently and so eventually catches them *in flagrante*, which forces Tristan to leave for good. Thus, that part of the game comes to an end (18177–18404), and the subsequent events turn into a bad game where the rules are unclear, confusing, and contradictory. Little wonder that Tristan therefore becomes confused and almost begins to betray his true love, Isolde.

In the Middle Ages and well into the seventeenth century, hunting also often involved the use of birds of prey, and was regarded as one of the highest forms of the art of hunting, requiring extensive training of the birds, as best illustrated by Emperor Frederick II's famous book of falconry, his *De arte venandi cum avibus*,

138 Here I will quote from Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan: Text und kritischer Apparat*, ed. Karl Marold. Unveränderter vierter Abdruck nach dem dritten mit einem auf Grund von F. Rankes Kollationen verbesserten Apparat besorgt von Werner Schröder (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977); see also Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan und Isolde*, ed. Walter Haug and Manfred Günter Scholz. 2 vols. Bibliothek des Mittelalters, 10 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2011); which is especially useful for the commentary in vol. 2.

from the 1240s.¹³⁹ Although he derived much inspiration from Aristotle's *De Liber animalum* in the Latin translation by Michael Scot, Frederick relied mostly on his own experiments and observations and made greatest efforts to learn as much as possible about the nature of falcons and related birds of prey in order to perfect his own skills and that of his courtiers in the art of hunting with those birds.¹⁴⁰ One of the most famous, and oldest courtly stanzas in Middle High German (*Minnesang*) by Der von Kürenberg (ca. 1160), contains explicit references to hunting with falcons as a metaphor of love, entailing the primary need to tame the young falcon at first, that is, the beloved lady. Love, life, and game thus intertwine with each other in a highly sophisticated manner.¹⁴¹ Tristan, in Gottfried's romance,

139 *Von der Kunst mit Vögeln zu jagen: das Falkenbuch Friedrichs II.: Kulturgeschichte und Ornithologie; Begleitband zur Sonderausstellung "Kaiser Friedrich II. (1194–1250). Welt und Kultur des Mittelmeerraums" im Landesmuseum für Natur und Mensch Oldenburg*, ed. Mamoun Fansa and Carsten Ritzau. Schriftenreihe des Landesmuseums Natur und Mensch / Landesmuseum für Natur und Mensch, 56 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2008). See now the contributions to this volume by William Mahan and Maria Raid.

140 See already Charles H. Haskins, "De Arte Venandi cum Avibus' of the Emperor Frederick II," *The English Historical Review* 36.143 (Jul., 1921): 334–55; id., "The Latin Literature of Sport," *Speculum* 2.3 (Jul., 1927): 235–52; for an online text edition (1942), see <https://www.scribd.com/doc/20486846/De-Arte-Venandi-Cum-Avibus-1> (last accessed on June 22, 2018); for an English translation, see Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, *The Art of Falconry Being the De arte venandi cum avibus*, trans. and ed. Casey A. Wood and F. Marjorie Fyfe (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1961). This famous treatise has been discussed numerous times both in print and in digital form.

141 Ulrich Müller, "Krisen, Gewalt und Kriege der Liebe in der mittelhochdeutschen Literatur," *Krisen, Kriege, Katastrophen: Zum Umgang mit Angst und Bedrohung im Mittelalter*, ed. Christian Rohr, Ursula Bieber, and Katharina Zeppezauer-Wachauer. Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit, 3 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018), 293–314; here 295–97. Cf. also the contribution to this volume by William Mahan. Beate Kellner, *Spiel der Liebe im Minnesang* (see note 104), identifies the love songs in Middle High German courtly literature (*Minnesang*) as a medium for social games at court, at least in metaphorical terms, with the poet competing against each other (251). This might help us fundamentally in analyzing courtly love poetry at large, which was not simply an artistic enterprise, but a strategy to get every member of the court involved and engaged through the discourse on love. No good game without challenges! However, Kellner does not argue specifically (or does not even intend to do so, despite the key word in the book title), as I and all the contributors to this volume do, that we ought to read the *Minnelieder* as a medium for courtly intellectual games; instead, she proposes to consider them as expressions of various types of poetic performances, that is, we should perceive them in their "medialen Konstitution und ihrer *Mouvance* und *Variance*" (28; medial constitution and their *mouvance* and *variance*). She also suggests that these *minne* songs should be regarded as a poetic expression of courtly imagination ("inszenierte[] Imaginationen," 299), a staged fantasy that, on the other hand, cannot yield true understanding of the feelings in the heart of the other person (497). When Kellner examines the poems by Walther von der Vogel-

likewise demonstrates his extensive skills in falconry, which becomes, apart from his interest in playing chess, a major reason why the Norwegian merchants kidnap him in order to sell this astonishing individual for a high price. Not everyone joining a game can count on winning, which is representative of life, and so also in the case of Tristan.

After the display of valuable birds of prey has attracted Tristan and his playmates, along with their tutor, to enter the ship, the protagonist discovers a chess board and is immediately so enthralled in that game that he does not notice what impression he is making on his environment, unless we would have to read his performance as a deliberate strategy to shine in public with all of his skills. Specifically, however, the narrator only informs us that he is so engaged in playing chess, while performing some music and acting out his own game to everyone's delight, that the merchants can secretly lift the anchor and sail away with him. This specific entertainment thus surreptitiously constitutes a major catapult for Tristan, suddenly moving him out of his old world and forcing him to explore, at first against his own will, of course, the new territory of his uncle, King Mark of Cornwall.

God obviously loves this game player, as we would say, because a major thunderstorm threatens the ship with the merchants, so they decide to drop the young man off at a forlorn coast, which, indeed, calms down the storm and saves all their lives, which strongly evokes biblical images. Significantly for our topic, gaming continues to dominate Tristan's life also at Mark's court, where he bedazzles everyone with his abilities as a huntsman, as a musician, as a polyglot, and also as a player of chess. Little wonder that this triggers one catastrophe after the other in his life, but he always reaches a higher level subsequently, and can thus carry, so to speak, his gaming skills (chess, hunting, jousting, etc.) also to Ireland where he encounters his future love. There, however, his games take him to another, much more difficult level be-

weide, however, she is willing to concede that here a real form of intellectual game is performed: "Dabei werden die Damen ... letztendlich von den Sängern wie Spielfiguren geführt und zum Einsatz gebracht" (251; Ultimately, the ladies are moved around and utilized, at least by the singers, like figures on a board). Apparently, for her, the concept of 'game' remains an abstract metaphor (257), which does not fully imply, as I have suggested throughout this study, the experimental exploration of courtly love for education and stimulation, hence for the constitution of courtly culture at large. Instead, Kellner observes in the *Minnesang* a medium for self-reflection and the search for the fulfillment of erotic and spiritual ideals (498, 503–04). For her, 'game' thus boils down to 'fictionality' and the act of composing and performing poetry (ibid.). That is, of course, a perfectly valid approach, but moves us into a different, much more abstract direction compared to the one pursued here. For a contrastive view, in line with my own perspective, see also the contribution to this volume by Fidel Fajardo-Acosta.

cause they then involve the princess Isolde, whom Tristan wins for his uncle as his wife, while he himself will accidentally drink the metaphorical love potion together with her when they travel from Ireland to Cornwall. From that time on, these two protagonists realize increasingly that they lose the control over the game of their lives and become victims of the power of love which they cannot control.

While Tristan was a *magister ludi* at the beginning of the romance, at the end he realizes that he has turned into a pawn on the metaphorical game board of the play of love itself.¹⁴² After all, the two lovers are first discovered by Tristan's friend, Marjôdo, who traces Tristan's footsteps and reaches the place where they are hiding, with the door simply blocked by a large chess board.¹⁴³ Being exhausted from their playing, obviously the real game of chess and the play of love as well, Tristan and Isolde are asleep and thus have let their guards down and consequently lose their own game in political terms because they have been discovered and exposed. From that time on, Marjôdo, jealous of Tristan's fortune of enjoying Isolde's love, whom he longs for himself, pursues them with all of his hatred and tries to destroy them. In short, the rules of the game have changed for the lovers; once having been the hunters of their own happiness, they now turn into the object of the hunt by the members of the

142 Christine Casson-Szabad, *Spiel der Welten: Fiktionalität als narratives Paradigma in Mittelalter und Postmoderne: von Gottfrieds "Tristan" bis Peter Handke*. Erlanger Studien, 134 (Erlangen and Jean: Palm und Enke, 2004); Franziska Hammer, "Das Spiel mit dem Irrweg: poetologische Strategien in Gottfrieds Tristan," *Irrwege: zu Ästhetik und Hermeneutik des Fehlgehens*, ed. Matthias Däumer. Studien zur historischen Poetik, 5 (Heidelberg: Winter, 2010), 305–20. For the notion of game as a metaphor of life in late medieval literature, see Albrecht Classen, "Erotik und Sexualität im Märe des Spätmittelalters: Sprachwitz, Intelligenz, Spiel und sexuelle Erfüllung," *Eros und Logos: Literarische Formen des sinnlichen Begehrens in der (deutschsprachigen) Literatur vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Albrecht Classen, Wolfgang Brylla, and Andrey Kotin. Popular Fiction Studies, 4 (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2018), 47–69. As to the concept of the "magister ludi," both in the Middle Ages and today, see note 25 above.

143 Albrecht Classen, "Chess in Medieval German Literature: A Mirror of Social-Historical and Cultural, Religious, Ethical, and Moral Conditions," *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: A Fundamental Thought Paradigm of the Premodern World*, ed. Daniel E. O'Sullivan. Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 10 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 17–44. See also Jenny Adams, *Power Play: The Literature and Politics of Chess in the Late Middle Ages*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Michael Schwarzbach-Dobson, *Exemplarisches Erzählen im Kontext: Mittelalterliche Fabeln, Gleichnisse und historische Exemple in narrativer Argumentation*. Literatur – Theorie – Geschichte (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 131–45.

court and the king himself, very similar to the situation in the much later *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (late fourteenth century).¹⁴⁴

We could also take into consideration the famous story told by Boccaccio in his *Decameron* (ca. 1349–ca. 1351) about Federigo degli Alberighi and his love, Madonna Giovanna (day 5, story 9), which takes place in Florence and the nearby countryside. She does not respond to any of his wooing, although he wastes all of his money in her service; eventually he has to leave the city and retire to a very simple farm, entirely impoverished, except for a most splendid falcon, which he regards as his most precious possession. When Giovanna's husband passes away, she also retires to the countryside, and thus her son strikes a friendship with Federigo, whose falcon he deeply admires and would love to receive as a gift. Almost like in a case of love-sickness, he falls badly ill and admits to his mother that getting that falcon would recover his spirit, hence his health. She naturally feels very uncomfortable to request that falcon from Federigo, considering his long and unsuccessful wooing and her own harsh behavior toward him. However, for her son's sake, she finally overcomes her hesitation and goes to visit Federigo. Unfortunately, instead of asking him directly for the falcon, she requests that he prepare a meal for her and her companion, which would be a gesture on her own part to repay him for all of his failed efforts, gracing him with her presence at his dinner table.

Federigo, overjoyed, immediately agrees, but he is so poor at that point that he has nothing in the house to make a meal with, except for the falcon. Although this bird of prey is his greatest treasure, he does not hesitate a second to kill it and to have it prepared for their culinary enjoyment. Only after the dinner, the lady reveals what her real intention had been, to ask for the very falcon she just has eaten, as a gift for her son. Tragically, soon after her son dies, and then the mother's brothers strongly urge her to remarry. In that moment it dawns upon her how much Federigo has really demonstrated his noble character, especially when he sacrificed his last treasure to honor his beloved lady, so she finally changes her mind and marries him, which thus concludes the story with a happy end.

While the falcon itself does not emerge as an active participant in this account, it proves to be, as many scholars have already recognized, the central motif of this story. Both Federigo and Giovanna's son, very similar to Tristan, are passionate about the sport of hunting with falcons and other birds of prey,

¹⁴⁴ See now the contributions to *Homo ludens, homo loquens: El juego y la palabra en la Edad Media / Homo ludens, homo loquens: Le jeu et la parole au Moyen Âge*, ed. María Pilar Suárez Pascual. Colección de estudios, 161 (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2014).

and this falcon itself, hence hunting with this kind of bird, is identified as a most honorable symbol of courtly culture and courtly entertainment.¹⁴⁵ By ingesting the bird, parallel to the highly popular motif of the ‘eaten heart,’ the lady has unintentionally accepted the lure and thus finds herself bonded to Federigo as the most worthy man to marry. Federigo, in turn, by giving up the central icon of his pleasure and leisure activities, finally gains the heart of the lady he has wooed for such a long time. Both characters have to realize that the rules of their games have shifted as they find themselves on a new game board with switched roles, so to speak, once Federigo is reduced in terms of material possessions to the falcon and has nothing else left to offer her for dinner. Game, love, and life are here intriguingly interlaced with each other, and because Federigo commits virtually everything he owns to winning his lady’s love, he ultimately gains the highest prize, her heart. We could also argue that the male protagonist at the end turns away from his private game with the falcon to a game involving his lady, and both together can thus achieve the true goal in life, happiness together in marriage.¹⁴⁶

Modern authors of short stories, or novellas, such as the German writers Paul Heyse (1830–1914) and Werner Bergengruen (1892–1964), explicitly drew from Boccaccio’s literary creation to develop their own theory addressing the very nature of this genre, the novella. Whether they also would have accepted the ludic element in the employment of this motif with the falcon, cannot be determined here.¹⁴⁷

145 I will engage with Boccaccio’s *Decameron* more in detail below; for a text edition and an English translation, see note 227. For the universality of this motif with the falcon, see now the contributions to *Raptor and Human: Falconry and Bird Symbolism Throughout the Millennia on a Global Scale*, ed. Karl-Heinz Gersmann and Oliver Grimm. Advanced Studies on the Archaeology and History of Hunting, 1.1 (Kiel and Hamburg: Wachholtz, 2018).

146 See, for instance, Dario Del Puppo and Musumeci, Salvatore, “Predators of the Heart: Nobility, Eroticism, and Changing Food Practices in the Tale of Federigo degli Alberighi (Decameron V.9),” *Table Talk: Perspectives on Food in Medieval Italian Literature*, ed. Christiana Purdy Moudares (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010), 73–84; Maria Pia Ellero, “Le leggi d’amore: A proposito di Decameron, V 9,” *Strumenti critici* 28.3 (133) (2013): 363–83.

147 Wilhelm Pötters, *Begriff und Struktur der Novelle: linguistische Betrachtungen zu Boccaccios “Falken”*. Konzepte der Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft, 49 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1991); Sascha Kiefer, *Die deutsche Novelle im 20. Jahrhundert: eine Gattungsgeschichte* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2010). The issue here is not on pleasure or leisure, but on the literary category of the novella.