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Johannes Pauli and His Social Criticism. A Past Voice for Our Own Time? Pedagogical Reflections on the Relevance and Usefulness of Sixteenth-Century Sermon Narratives Until Today

Abstract: Contrary to many Menetekels as to the demise of the Humanities and hence the study of pre-modern literature, an open-minded and more flexible approach to the history of literature strongly suggests that there are many opportunities for the future classroom invested in the topic of human interaction, social and ethical agendas, and communication. In fact, if we recognize the literary archive as a storehouse of ideas, experiences, and concepts regarding the challenges of the human existence, we face a highly productive epistemological opportunity building intellectual, ethical, and moral bridges between the past and the present. Drawing from the enormously popular sermon stories by the Franciscan Johannes Pauli, this study demonstrates the timeless value of his narratives and hence an intellectual promise for contemporary students, still developing and ascertaining the labyrinth they live in. As Pauli certainly proves conservative, his *Schimpf und Ernst* provides a fascinating compass for those who have realized the many shortcomings and failures in society, Eastern or Western, including our contemporary, seeking alternative voices strongly grounded in timeless and universal human values.

Keywords: relevance of the Humanities, the value of pre-modern literature, Johannes Pauli, Franciscan ideals, social criticism, ethical and moral warnings

Introduction

The questions concerning the relevance of the pre-modern world for us today become increasingly urgent, and there are good reasons to worry about a steady decline of the Humanities, of Language Studies, and also Medieval and Early Modern Studies because universities tend not to replace professors in any of those fields when they retire and seem to be quite content when that field of research is simply starved to death. Correspondingly,

students know less and less the various medieval and early modern languages (Latin or any of the vernaculars), are less familiar with pre-modern history and culture, and there is a steady decline in funding for research in pre-modern studies at large.

By contrast, the public seems to be increasingly interested in the Middle Ages as such, as documented by countless medieval fests, tournaments, movies, video games, enactments, stores selling medieval objects, tours, music, and popular art. At various sites, groups of people currently recreate the medieval world using medieval tools only, building a castle or producing food in the traditional manner[1].

This paper intends to bring back to light one of the most influential sixteenth-century German authors, Johannes Pauli, to argue that the history of medieval and early modern literature provides numerous excellent examples of human conditions, forms of behavior, ideas, values and conflicts that continue to speak to us directly or that address critical issues of relevance for us today in their own, maybe even inspiring, ways. The pre-modern world was not worse or better than our own, but it produced alternative approaches, ideas, concepts, and perceptions that might well be valuable for us to rethink conflicts, relationships, social systems, ethical and moral ideals. At the same time, which would be extremely important to know for new readers, many of the issues addressed then pertaining to ethical behavior or the lack thereof, sinfulness, ideals, honesty, loyalty, or dignity, prove to be just the same that occupy our minds today, or at least ought to be brought back to our close attention. Our archives and libraries are thus like storehouses of human experiences that only wait for us to retrieve past understandings or knowledge that could be utilized once again for our contemporary issues[2].

Pauli's *Schimpf und Ernst* was, in the modern sense of the word, a true bestseller throughout the entire century and far beyond, which encourages us to draw from his observations as reflections of universal concerns about society at large at that time. This preacher was an influential Franciscan who held many different (teaching and administrative) roles within his Order, but we can also identify him as a major German author who used the literary framework for his didactic and moralizing intentions, drawing freely from the wide range of classical, medieval, and Renaissance literature. Certainly not a reformer or a supporter of the Protestants under Martin Luther, Pauli was nevertheless, a strong critic of the social and ethical conditions both within the Church and in society at large.

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[1] The research on this topic is legion by now, which signals how much a new phenomenon has emerged in public life, both East and West. See, for instance, K.J. Harty, *The Reel Middle Ages: American, Western and Eastern European, Middle Eastern and Asian Films About Medieval Europe*, Jefferson, NC, and London 1999; P. Masters, *The Knights Templar in Popular Culture: Films, Video Games and Fan Tourism*, Jefferson, NC, 2022; *Mediävistik 2021: Positionen, Strategien, Visionen*, ed. W. Drews, M. Müller and R. Toepfer, Heidelberg 2021.

[2] I have recently reflected on the same topic, drawing, however, from a different range of literary texts and analyzing practical data from teaching medieval literature; A. Classen, *The Relevance of the Middle Ages – Revisiting an Old Problem in Light of New Approaches and Teaching Experiences in a Non-Western Context*, w: *New Chaucer Studies: Pedagogy and Profession*, 4.2 (2023):128–37, ed. G.M. Sadlek; https://doi.org/10.5070/NC34262332.

However, he demonstrated his literary brilliance by way of formulating his at times rather drastic and sharp comments contained in entertaining stories that many times ring incredibly true until today because people's shortcomings and failures have not changed much since the pre-modern era. The list of the 'Seven Deadly Sins,' for instance, is as relevant today as it was in late antiquity. Corruption in politics, the economy, and also in the religious spheres continues to be a serious problem, and hence medieval laments and advice in that regard prove to be insightful until today.

Scholars have already discussed Pauli's *Schimpf und Ernst* from a variety of perspectives, and we have available a solid critical edition of the first imprint from 1522[3]. Undoubtedly, Pauli's work exerted a huge influence until the early nineteenth century, if not beyond, especially because he demonstrated an amazing skill in presenting fundamental insights into the weaknesses of human beings by way of offering entertaining narratives reflecting on those. Subsequently, here I want to investigate to what extent Pauli's prose stories can serve us well for pedagogical purposes and how we would include them in a university seminar on the history of German literature or language, if not in a variety of related classes addressing ethical, moral, political, and religious issues past and present.

Undoubtedly, the central question for most students certainly pertains, at least in our day and age, to the relevance and hence usefulness of the study materials. If literary texts do not appeal directly, or concretely after some preliminary studies, or if they seem to be too esoteric or abstract, distanced from contemporary reality, then there is no surprise as to the declining interest in any kind of Humanities classes. After all, universities, particularly in the West, have often become corporatized, with students being the customers whom the professoriate has to serve in return for payments, which has very little to do with research. However, more than ever before, we are in greatest need to reflect on those ethical and moral issues and to implement any possible insights that would provide at least some sort of answers in those specific regards[4].

Even though pre-modern literature might seem far-removed from our students' horizon in the twenty-first century, there are good reasons to suggest that literary works such as Pauli's *Schimpf und Ernst* could offer a meaningful springboard for the renewal of the Humanities at large under the current conditions. Granted, Pauli was a deeply traditional Franciscan preacher, and he responded very much to the concerns of his own time. Nevertheless, as this paper will try to demonstrate, the author constantly addressed issues in his short narratives that appear to be just as much with us today as in the past. Indeed, countless times, Pauli examined problems in human life that invite many discussions

[3] J. Pauli, *Schimpf und Ernst*, ed. J. Bolte, 2 vols., Hildesheim and New York 1972.

[4] I have addressed these issues already from a number of perspectives, see *The Relevance of The Humanities in the Twenty-First Century: Past and Present*, ed. A. Classen. Special issue of *Humanities Open Access*, June 2020, https://www.mdpi.com/journal/humanities/special_issues/pas_pre; and A. Classen, *Humanities in the Twenty-First Century: The Meaning and Relevance of Medieval and Modern Literature*, Chisinau, Moldova 2022.

until today because they are surprisingly provocative even for us in the twenty-first century[5].

Contrary to contemporary assumptions, when we turn backward, we often find critical keys for doors that we need to open today. *Schimpf und Ernst* proves to be one of those keys, and I will attempt to show how much and in what ways we could utilize those sermon stories for current discussions. This analysis hence promises to address also the fundamental question regarding the relevance of literature in the first place, and then of the Humanities at large.

At this point, there is no English translation of *Schimpf und Ernst*, even though there are available, in quite large numbers, Latin, Dutch, French, and Danish translations from the early modern age. Modern scholarship has examined Pauli's collection quite frequently, but then mostly intra- or transdiegetically only[6]. Here, I intend to study this major text collection with a focus on their timeless value, and thus on their effectiveness in a literature class. But let us first gain an overview of Pauli's biography and works, which can easily convince us of his major importance as an early modern author. Subsequently, I will probe why and how we might want to revisit *Schimpf und Ernst* once again as a springboard for essential discussions about ethics, morality, individual values, and ideals both in public and in the classroom.

Pauli's Biography and his *Schimpf und Ernst* (1522)

The Franciscan preacher and author, Johannes Pauli, was born in the Alsace (perhaps in Thann, northwest of Mulhouse) around 1450/1454 and died there around 1522. In 1479, Paul joined the Franciscan Order in Thann and worked fairly widely as a preacher

[5] E. Parra Membrives, *Herzog Ernst als Fantasy Roman: Trivialität und Mittelalter*, in: *Japanisch-deutsche Gespräche über Fremdheit im Mittelalter: interkulturelle und interdisziplinäre Forschungen in Ost und West*, ed. A. Classen and Manshu Die, Tübingen 2018, pp. 187–198.

[6] See, for instance, Y. Takahashi, *'Eulenspiegel'-Schwänke in 'Schimpf und Ernst'. Wie Eulenspiegel von Johannes Pauli interpretiert wird*, „Eulenspiegel-Jahrbuch" 1987, 27, 39–50; S. Coxon, *'Da lacht der babst': Zur komischen Erzählmotivik als Mittel der Kohärenzstiftung in Johannes Paulis 'Schimpf und Ernst' (1522)*, in: *Schwanksammlungen im frühneuzeitlichen Medienumbruch: Transformationen eines sequentiellen Erzählparadigmas*, ed. S. Plotke, S. Seeber, Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift, Beiheft 96, Heidelberg 2019, 223–41. Pauli appears commonly in the standard literary histories, but most authors present only global aspects and do not engage with individual examples. Since Pauli wrote at a time when the Middle Ages had not quite come to an end and when the Protestant Reformation was just about to explode, recent scholars have even ignored him altogether; see D.E. Wellesbery, J. Ryan, *A New History of German Literature*, Cambridge, MA, and London 2004. Nineteenth-century scholars had paid some credit to him, see, for instance, A. Koberstein, *Geschichte der deutschen Nationalliteratur bis zum Ende des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 5th rev. ed. K. Bartsch, Vol. 1, Leipzig 1872, 407; A. Hildebrand, *Johannes Pauli*, in: *Hauptwerke der deutschen Literatur: Darstellungen und Interpretationen*, ed. M. Kluge, R. Radler, Munich 1967, 67–68, by contrast, claims Pauli as one of the major sixteenth-century authors. Since the time when I had submitted this article, my own English translation has appeared in print: *A Translation of Johannes Pauli's Didactic Tales: Lessons from the Past for Our Future*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2024; as a paperback in August 2024

and official of his Order in Southwestern Germany in Villingen (1490–1494), Basel (1498), Bern (1503/1504), Strasbourg (1504–1510), Schlettstadt (1515), and Thann (since 1519). He gained major notoriety through his edition of the sermons by the popular preacher Geiler von Kaysersberg (1445–1510), the publication of his most influential collection of comic and religious stories, *Schimpf und Ernst* (first appeared in 1522), and through twenty-eight sermons recorded by a nun of the St. Clare Order in 1493/1494. Here, for instance, body and soul debate each other about who might hold a higher rank, or in which reason and will are engaged in a discussion. Pauli voiced severe criticism of his fellow clerics, targeting, for instance, their hypocrisy, deception, and religious deviation.

Altogether, however, Pauli is best known today for his collection of entertaining and didactic narratives (*Schwänke*) collected in his *Schimpf und Ernst* (Joke and Earnestness), published in 1522[7]. Those served primarily for the purpose of making sermons more lively, so we can assume that the author specifically targeted members of his Order, preachers, noblemen, and a generally educated urban audience. The anthology contains 693 short prose narratives, 231 of them with a serious content, and 462 determined by humor, though both aspects are intimately intertwined. Pauli drew much inspiration from classical Latin literature, the Bible, and a variety of medieval sources – there are at least forty sources. Many times, however, Pauli simply relied on his own experiences or oral anecdotes. We can also assume that he somewhat engaged with the tradition of Arabic stories through Christian translations, such as Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis* or Etienne de Besançon's *Alphabetum narrationum* (late thirteenth century). Pauli mentions such famous figures as Aristotle (no. 611), Macrobius (no. 502), Valerius Maximus (nos. 113, 120, 502, etc.), Aulus Gellius (no. 392), Plutarch (no 622), and Diogenes Laertius (no. 471, 475); he drew from the *Vitae patrum*, Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, Caesarius von Heisterbach's *Dialogus miraculorum*, the *Gesta Romanorum*, Heinrich Steinhöwel's *Dialogus creaturarum*, Geiler's sermons, and the anonymous collection (perhaps by Hermann Bote) of *Till Eulenspiegel*. Pauli addresses such global topics as wisdom, adultery, corruption in the Church, the problems with uncontrolled anger, etc. Apart from groups of global themes, *Schimpf und Ernst* appears as a literary kaleidoscope, which made it so easy for posterity to enjoy and to cull from it at liberty. The author only offered the two major categories as headings, „Von Schimpff" or „Von Ernst", and sometimes a combination of both.

For Pauli, judging from this major collection, the world was in very bad shape; people were increasingly lacking in morality and ethics, and they were losing their firm control of the social, economic, ethical, and moral conditions. Consequently, he regarded it as his urgent task to admonish them to return to the proper path, for which the literary discourse

[7] C. Schröder, *Johannes Pauli, der Begründer der deutschen Schwankliteratur*, „Franziskanische Studien" 1926, 13, 393–97; S. Schmitz, *Weltentwurf als Realitätsbewältigung in Johannes Paulis „Schimpf und Ernst", vorgeführt am Beispiel der lasterhaften Frau*, Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 346, Göppingen 1982.

proved to be most effective because the countless negative examples served to provide pilot lights in the readers' lives. As the very first story signals, truth is no longer desired, and those who tell it are badly punished. Hence, this large collection served him as a literary medium to teach, to entertain, and to admonish his clerical contemporaries. He also encouraged others to contribute to future editions and to improve his book (prologue, 3–4).

He completed his *Schimpf und Ernst* in Thann in 1519, where he died shortly thereafter. This collection, once published in 1522, immediately turned into a bestseller and deeply influenced many later writers, such as the prolific Nuremberg cobbler and composer of Shrovetide plays and poems, Hans Sachs (1494–1576), who utilized about 180 of Pauli's texts for his own purposes. The oldest edition from 1522 (Strasbourg: Johannes Grüninger), the most extensive version compared to all subsequent re-publications, is the only one in which the author was involved himself directly. The table of content lalso ists fourteen texts that are not included in the anthology. Later editions also did not supply those, and increasingly Protestant values and ideals dominated. Those stories that appeared to be anti-Protestant were eliminated more and more, while new, often rather crude and even graphic narratives, including fables, *facetiae* by Poggio Bracciolini, and stories by Boccaccio entered the new versions. The Augsburg imprint of *Schimpf und Ernst* produced by Heinrich Steiners (1534) offered twenty-one new stories and woodcut illustrations copied from the Strasbourg edition by Hans Weiditz. Major changes as to the arrangements of the texts appear in the three earliest Frankfurt imprints.

Throughout the sixteenth century, *Schimpf und Ernst* was reprinted forty-two times, and its popularity continued during the following centuries (e.g., Frankfurt 1602, 1608, 1612, 1613, etc.; Strasbourg 1630, 1654, 1677, etc.; Hall 1723; Freystadt [near Neustadt, Bavaria] 1771; Leipzig 1822; Vienna 1839; Munich 1856; Stuttgart 1866, etc.). A Latin translation of Pauli's collection appeared in 1568, a Dutch one in 1554, 1576, and 1680, a French one in 1578 and 1591, and a Danish one in 1625, 1677, 1701, 1749, and 1781.[8]

[8] For major studies on Pauli that have been published in the last few years, see A. Classen, *Die deutsche Predigtliteratur des Mittelalters im Kontext der europäischen Erzähltradition: Johannes Paulis Schimpf und Ernst (1521) als Rezeptionsmedium*, „Fabula" 2003, 44.3/4, 209–36; idem, *Deutsche Schwankliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts: Studien zu Martin Montanus, Hans Wilhelm Kirchhof und Michael Lindener*, Koblenz-Landauer Studien zu Geistes-, Kultur- und Bildungswissenschaften, 4, Trier 2009; S. Coxon, *'Da lacht der babst': zur komischen Erzählmotivik als Mittel der Kohärenzstiftung in Johannes Paulis 'Schimpf und Ernst' (1522)*, in: *Schwanksammlungen im frühneuzeitlichen Medienumbruch: Transformationen eines sequentiellen Erzählparadigmas*, ed. S. Plotke, S. Seeber, Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift, Beiheft 96, Heidelberg 2019, 223–41; B. Gotzkowsky, *„Volksbücher": Prosaromane, Renaissancenovellen, Versdichtungen und Schwankbücher. Bibliographie der deutschen Drucke*, Part 1: *Drucke des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, Bibliotheka Bibliographica Aureliana, CXXV, Baden-Baden 1991, 536–61; J. Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, ed. H. Rölleke, Deutscher Klassiker-Verlag im Taschenbuch, 16, Frankfurt a. M. 2007; Ch. Meierhofer, *Alles neu unter der Sonne: das Sammelschrifttum der Frühen Neuzeit und die Entstehung der Nachricht*, Epistemata, Reihe Literaturwissenschaft, 702, Würzburg 2010; A. Mühlherr, *Johannes Pauli*, in: *Deutsche Dichter der frühen Neuzeit (1450–1600): Ihr Leben und Werk*, ed. S. Füssel, Berlin 1993, 125–37; A.E. Pearsall, *Johannes Pauli (1450–1520): On the Church and Clergy*, Medieval and Renaissance Series, 11, Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter 1994; H.-J. Uther, *Pauli, Johannes*, in: *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, ed. R.W. Brednich, Vol. 10.1, Berlin and New York 2000, 661–70.

Although *Schimpf und Ernst* slowly faded in popularity during the eighteenth century, Pauli was still consistently identified as a major authority by writers such as Friedrich Nicolai, who extensively drew from his work for his *Vademecum* (1764–1792), and the Brothers Grimm, who resorted to two stories in *Schimpf und Ernst* in their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812; first included in the second edition from 1815; here according to the 3rd ed., 1837, nos. 145 [Pauli no. 437] and 151 [Pauli no. 261). Many points raised by Pauli, criticizing his contemporaries, still seem to be rather virulent today, so we might claim that *Schimpf und Ernst* has lost very little of its topicality also for modern readers. Although we clearly recognize the preacher in this author, the texts themselves do not constitute sermons and are certainly not particularly religious[9].

Pauli's Advice, Warnings, Ridicule, Satire, and Laments

My intention here is not to present a specific pedagogical model or to work with a particular methodology relevant to the teaching of literature. So, I am not going to introduce a teaching unit based on Pauli's narrative. All that I would like to argue about and elaborate here in some detail is that there are countless opportunities to engage with Pauli's short prose narratives for many different topics, and this also today, making his tales relevant even in the current context. Any university seminar dedicated to the history of satire, irony, ethical and moral comments, generally to the history of German literature and language, but then also to the history of religion, the history of the political discourse, to economic and social history could profit from Pauli's *Schimpf und Ernst*. Despite the historical distance between his and our world, we can easily profit from his insights into countless shortcomings among people, which then constitutes an ideal platform to discuss with our students or fellow readers the central concerns formulated by him.

The extensive biographical and bibliographical survey above served the purpose to explain why this author matters so much, both within his own time and also until today. Next, I will examine individual *Schwänke* (or jest narratives) and identify universal themes and topics addressed there. Although *Schimpf und Ernst* dates from 1522 in its first edition, the author demonstrates a deep transhistorical sense of what makes up human existence and how a humorous approach to human failures and foibles can facilitate a significant learning experience.

So, the task here consists of demonstrating what fundamental, universal, and timeless issues Pauli addressed and thus emerged as a major literary voice with great relevance also for us today. My premise is that if we can detect relevance, then his texts would be

[9] A. Hildebrand, *Johannes Pauli*, in: *Kindlers Neues Literatur* Lexikon, ed. W. Jens, Vol. 13, Munich 1991, 8–9, calls it a „Predigtbuch ohne Predigt" (9). He also notes that Pauli was not determined by a pessimistic worldview; instead, he was filled with a „behagliche[n] Humor" (9), in a way smiling about people's shortcoming all over the world, in all social classes, among both genders, etc.

valuable for our seminars in literature, philosophy, religion, ethics, gender, etc. After all, from ancient times until today, genres such as fables, parables, anecdotes, verse narratives, and calendar tales have appealed to people throughout the world because they address basic concerns, formulate specific criticism, and suggest, at least indirectly, concepts of how to amend shortcomings and failures, problems and crises.

Finally, the premise for this study consists of the concept that the study of literature matters, not just for aesthetic or ethical reasons. Instead, we examine poems, novels, plays, and many other texts from the past and the present in order to listen to the chorus of different voices, to become acquainted with the wide range of ordinary and extraordinary issues in life, to confront conflicts and learn about solutions. Most importantly, the topic of communication and miscommunication has always mattered centrally, from ancient times until today, as countless poets particularly of short verse and prose narratives (*fabliaux*, *mæren*, *novelle*, ed.) have confirmed.

Reflecting on the literary discourse from the Middle Ages and beyond, for instance, in which the relationship between the genders was explored from many different perspectives, allows us to determine how much poets have always probed all kinds of human conditions, hence communication as well, from which we can learn today to improve our own skills and to avoid the catastrophic consequences of failed communication[10].

Overview of Pauli's Text Selection

Since ancient times, especially since when the Old Testament was composed, the search for wisdom has been of critical importance, as philosophers, theologians, and poets have signaled ever since. Naturally, Pauli begins with this topic in the first section of tales, addressing it from various perspectives. As the frontispiece with its narrative indicates, the purpose of this collection is to review a wide range of situations in human life viewed through a serious and a humorous lens. Directly following the Horatian principle of *delectare et prodesse*, the author emphasizes that the stories would be „nuetzlich und guot zuo Besserung der Menschen" (useful and helpful for the improvement of people).[11] The cover page repeats this message more or less, underscoring the combination of „kurtzweilig und auch das ein jeglich Mensch im selber davon Exempel und Leren nehmen mag und ist im nuetzlich und guot" (5; entertaining and useful for every person to take an example and teaching from it, which will be useful and good). The first section deals with truth, the second with young women, some of whom are good, while others are evil. The third covers the topic of the Fourth Commandment, i.e., the parents'

[10] A. Classen, *Verzweiflung und Hoffnung. Die Suche nach der kommunikativen Gemeinschaft in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, Beihefte zur Mediaevistik, 1, Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, et al. 2002.

[11] For technical reasons, I spell out all superscripta, which does not change anything in the sound of the words.

teaching, while the fourth addresses fools or foolish people who in a way understand reality better than others. The fifth section focuses on members of monasteries and their shortcomings, whereas the next highlights the foolishness of priests. The role and influence of the devil is addressed in the next section, and the following deals with people lacking any education.

Beginning with section ten, Pauli engages in the lives of the ordinary people, such as those who deceive people when they sell horses. In the eleventh section, we hear of lawyers and judges, and in the twelfth, the topic centers on married life. Section twelve targets those who are guilty of laziness, section thirteen with those who engage with magic and necromancy, and the fourteenth ridicules those who pretend to be pious and devout. In sections fifteen and sixteen, we hear of cases reflecting on greed, and section seventeen treats usury. Section eighteen deals with adultery, section nineteen, with prostitutes, and section twenty discusses punishments for adultery.

There are many more topics covered without any specific order, which do not need to be listed further. Often, Pauli addresses religious concerns, but then he also talks about examples reflecting on the value of patience (section sixty-one), the danger of deception and cheating (section sixty-four), or on military strategies (section seventy-eight). Many times, the author simply collected whatever anecdotes he had heard of, irrespective of the thematic connection. For instance, in story no. 567 („Schimpf"), a man has taken a loan, pledging his loyalty and virtues as guarantees. When the time has arrived to pay back the credit, he does not have the money and simply tells the other man to keep his loyalty and virtue; that way, he would at least know where to find them (vol. 1, 325). Another humorous example would be story no. 606 in which a bird rests on its back, stretching out its leg upward. When another bird comes by and inquires about the purpose, the first bird affirms that it props up the sky with its leg. But at some point, a leaf falls down from an oak tree, frightening the bird so much that it quickly flies away. In his epimythium, the author correlates this with many people who believe that they are irreplaceable within their society or at their workplace. However, as the narrator emphasizes, once they have died, everything continues to function just as before, which demonstrates their presumptuousness as to their own existence (vol. 1, 339).

In short, we face here a vast corpus of didactic anecdotes or parables, many of which prove to be rather mundane and simply entertaining or didactic, easily fitting for enlivening a sermon or teaching a lesson in ordinary life. Nevertheless, many times, Pauli also included profound accounts of deep truth concerning human society at large, pertaining to virtues and vices, the Seven Deadly Sins, or foolishness and smartness.

Wisdom

Instead of analyzing the collection as a whole, impossible within the limited space of an article, I will focus on a short selection of tales to examine closely what message they

might entail and how that message could have meaning for us today as well.[12] Considering the enormous breadth of themes and topics covered here, our best approach can only be a paradigmatic discussion in order to determine how individual narratives could be used also in a modern classroom, whatever the specific topic might be (see above). Undoubtedly, the historical and cultural context proves to be quite different, representing the world of the early sixteenth century. However, employing a philosophical and ethical lens, we can easily recognize how much Pauli had already a strong grasp of fundamental problems within human society.

Wisdom and truth, above all, prove to be highly critical values, and yet, they are constantly in danger of being eclipsed by people's disinclination to observe or pursue them. Ultimately, we could argue, there would be no more important topic to be addressed in any educational setting. The very first story illustrates the horrible fact about this situation in a both facetious and yet also frightening scenario. A nobleman has a fool at his court who openly reveals to him what the other servants at the court have done during the lord's absence. Those indulge in food and drink at the nobleman's cost, who, once having been informed about their practices by the fool, reprimands the servants. Those get finally mad at the traitor and once beat the fool badly during the lord's absence. Each hit on his naked back they accompany with the statement: „'Se, se, das ist die Warheit" (7; See, see, that is the truth).

When the nobleman returns and inquires, according to his custom, with the fool about the evil habits of the other people, the fool refuses to answer and screams in terror: „es ist kein boeser Ding uff Erdtreich dan die Warheit. O nenn mir die Warheit nit!'" (7; there is no more evil thing here on earth than truth. Oh, do not talk about truth). Asked about the meaning of that statement, he points out the scars on his back, which concludes the account.

The narrative speaks for itself; and yet, the message provided proves to be complex and powerful. The fool had not promised anyone not to reveal what they were doing behind the nobleman's back. They all were fully aware that they deceived their lord and cheated on him by consuming his foodstuff and drinks against his will. In a way, the fool betrayed them all, but he was just naïve and told the truth as he had observed it with his own eyes, without thinking of possible consequences for himself. Since the servants were only too aware of having broken the rules in court, they tried to cover their tracks, as any criminal or sinful person would do. Punishing the poor fool in such a cruel fashion only highlighted their evil mindset and ruthlessness.

But the 'traitor' was a fool who had no understanding of the consequences of his telling the truth to the lord. For him, there was no alternative but to tell the truth about the debaucheries during the nobleman's absence. However, the severe beating, which left

[12] Only recently, I published an anthology of relevant texts from the pre-modern world that contain important comments on wisdom at large. However, Pauli's texts are not yet included there. A. Classen, *Wisdom from the European Middle Ages: Literary and Didactic Perspectives. A Study, Anthology, and Commentary*, Berlin 2022.

bad scars on his back, traumatized him so deeply that he no longer was prepared to tell the truth and kept quiet when asked about what had been going on at the castle during the lord's absence. The fool does not fully understand, so it seems, what 'truth' really means in this context, although he is fully aware of the danger to his own well-being if he were to continue telling the 'truth.' Identifying truth as the worst thing here on earth, simply signals the fool's utter ignorance about all those concepts. His only worry was that he might be beaten once again.

The implications of the entire story prove to be quite easy to understand and they shed light on society at large. The servants misuse and abuse the lord's property, and they resort to bad violence in order to repress the voice of the one prepared to tell the truth. But once the fool has received the terrible punishment, he keeps quiet since the truth is written on his back, as he states himself[13]. Reading this story through an allegorical lens, we can easily recognize what Pauli had in mind, relating the nobleman to God and the servants to the people here on earth. Their greed and carelessness threaten to destroy the world, although they are not allowed to utilize all the lord's resources. All the nobleman's admonishments and chastisements lead to no consequences until the servants tie up the fool and whip him bloody. From then on, he is no longer willing to relate the truth.

In short, Pauli intended to point out that truth is rejected here on earth; people do not obey the lord's orders and eat and drink from his cellar. In order to keep their criminal debaucheries a secret, they resort to violence and thus can force the only one willing to tell the truth to keep quiet. Unfortunately, the story ends with that, and we do not learn anything about the nobleman's actions against the servants or how he might protect the fool from their viciousness.

Hence, we are indirectly encouraged to read this tale allegorically. The servants are the members of the human community, and although they ought to obey their lord (God), they fail deliberately in that regard. After all, as this introductory story reveals, there is no truth here in this world; instead, violence represses truth, and those potentially willing to reveal the truth are cruelly crushed.

Indeed, people cannot tolerate hearing the truth and commonly prefer fantasy and imagination over facts. This observation, which certainly applies to our modern times as well – allegedly, the spreading of 'fake news' by the news media – finds powerful expression in the third story where a vagrant entertainer and a farmer meet. The former had been rejected by everyone else in the village because of his habit of always telling the truth. The farmer, however, considers this actually a virtue and invites him into his house, offering him a good meal together with his wife. Looking around, the vagrant notices that the host has a growth at one of his eyes, that the wife has only one healthy eye, and that one of the cat's eyes is oozing out. When the farmer then invites the guest to tell him some truth, the other man would like to refuse to do so because „ir werdent zornig und

[13] There might be an intricate analogy to Franz Kafka's famous novella *Die Strafkolonie* (written in 1914, revised in 1918, and published in 1920) that would deserve to be examined at greater length.

boeß ueber mich" (8; you will get angry and furious with me). He as a vagrant has experienced enough to know that people cannot handle truth. However, the farmer then forces him to do so after all, so the guest comments that in the entire house, there are only three healthy eyes if counted together. This statement angers the farmer so much that he throws the homeless man out of the house. We are not told anything else, but the author concludes with his global comments in his epimythium.

The vagrant's experience simply confirms that people do not like to be confronted with the truth and are disinclined to display mercy and pity for those who are worse off than they. But Pauli is not just a traditionalist and conservative critic who would insist on the absolute necessity always to tell the truth. He quickly adds that it often would be advisable not to speak up the full the truth since that could cause harm. Keeping silence in many different situations would be advisable since it would avoid bickering and fighting among people (9). The truth in itself would be such a noble value that it should be addressed only under special circumstances; it would be better for most people to try to avoid conflicts and to demonstrate pity and mercy. After all, as already St. Paul had stated in his second letter to the bishop of Ephesus, Timothy (2:2), and referenced here, members of the clergy ought to be patient and approach other people's resistance to truth with modesty and humility (9).

Although Pauli was professionally a Franciscan preacher, he advised his colleagues through this story to abstain from rigid and radical admonishment and to keep in mind people's common weakness in being confronted with truth. Not many people would be able to handle truth in its stark presence, misconstruing it as a form of criticism and personal attack.

We might have expected this preacher to say the opposite since not telling the truth would constitute a sin in his eyes. However, apparently based on his own experiences, he understood the intricacies of human communication and the dangers if one were to blurt out inconsiderately and in a hurtful manner what one would truly think about the others. Basically, Pauli urged his audience to operate more diplomatically and to weigh carefully when it would be advisable to tell the truth and when one should keep quiet. As the vagrant in this story had to realize, if he did not already know it only too well, most people cannot tolerate to listen to the truth and turn with aggression against the one who confronts them with it.

Despite the simplicity of this story, it lends itself exceedingly well as a basis for a critical examination of the critical issues of communication. As important as truth would certainly be in the strict sense of the word, it often can easily hurt the other person. A good communicator would keep such sensitivity in mind and would know how to weigh and balance the words in the exchange with another person. The farmer in that story was surprisingly friendly and hospitable at first, but he then quickly turned hostile and aggressive after he had 'forced' the vagrant to tell him a 'truth.' He did not expect that the truth would pertain to himself and his wife, and hence he bargained for more than he was willing to swallow.

Of course, there was no need at all for the vagrant to make this statement about the three eyes; instead, he could have commented on anything else without hurting his hosts' feelings. Pauli's narrative thus turns out to be an excellent example of a problematic, if not conflictual communicative situation. The homeless man knew only too well that his remark about their physical appearance would be regarded as an insult, and yet he could not help himself and so harmed himself in the end, not having a roof over his head for the night.

Drawing on an account by the Roman writer Valerius Maximus (first century, *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri IX*), Paulerius reports in the eighth tale of an engraving or image on a column which always revealed what some people had done wrongly. A man wanted to steal something one day, but he went to the column first with a hammer and threatened the image that he would smash its head if it were to tattle on him. Once the theft had been done and people asked the image about the truth of the matter, it only dared to say, as if it were alive, in Latin, that people have become worse and that the one who would dare to speak the truth would get his head smacked: „frangitur sibi caput" (12).

Even more drastically, in the ninth jest narrative, a married woman is committing adultery every night, and each night, a rooster crows, which the lady's cook can interpret[14]. The first one reveals straightforwardly that the woman is disloyal to her husband. The rooster is killed for that and eaten. The second night, the other rooster announces that its fellow had to die because it had told the truth. Again, the animal is slaughtered and fried. The third rooster, knowing only too well what its companions had to suffer, comments on the woman's adultery with the words, 'listen, see, and be quiet if you want to live' (12).

The subsequent tales deal with rather different topics, though they also address the wide range of human foibles, foolishness, and wrong behavior. One of those addresses a rather complex issue of major legal implications, ultimately also dealing with truth and how it could be manipulated. A young woman publicly accuses her wooer of having raped her. The judge informs her that he would first have to call the man in to defend himself before he could decide on this case. While she returns home to await the decision the next day, the judge sends one of his servants after her who is to pretend that he wants to rob her. Faced with that threat, she screams loudly and attracts people's attention, who rush to her defense. The next day, when the judge interviews her again, she is upset to see the servant at court. The judge then inquires about this attack and then notes that she

[14] We recognize here a direct allusion to the rooster crowing in the night after Christ's arrest after St. Peter had denied three times that he was one of the Lord's disciples. According to Matthew 26:33–35: Peter replied, „Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will". And: „'Truly I tell you,' Jesus answered, 'this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.' But Peter declared, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And all the other disciples said the same". And 74–75: „Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, 'I don't know the man!' Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: 'Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly". Quoted from the online version at: https://www.biblica.com/bible/niv/matthew/26/ [accesed: 4.07.2023].

had known well how to defend herself in that fake situation. He then argues that she would have been able to do the same against her wooer when he wanted to sleep with her; hence, as he concludes, she was not raped and has to let go of this charge against the young man (16).

Undoubtedly, the case as it is presented here constitutes a most problematic one, both then and today[15]. Her attempt to bring the young man to trial fails because she pretended to have been victimized by him, which the judge identifies as a lie. We are not told what the actual situation might have been or what had taken place between these two people[16], but the focus rests, once again, on the difficulties people have with telling the truth. It is easier and more effective, so it seems also in this tale, to make up a story for one's own advantage than to accept truth or facts because those could be painful and discomforting.

The issue addressed here proves to be highly problematic in many respects and reminds us, of course, of very similar charges raised even today, whether by a woman or a man, against a person of the opposite (or same) sex who used violence to gain a sexual favor, that is, rape. For the judge, the challenge consisted of finding the truth, and he learned about it through a highly unusual experiment. Modern readers might, of course, construe here a claim that Pauli was determined by a patriarchal mindset and would not have viewed men's sexual violence as something condemnable. In story no. 129, however, we are explicitly told how a firm and resolute judge responded to the case of rape, taking justice into his own hand when no one else was prepared to do so.

Having fallen ill, he has to take to bed, but he clearly hears a woman outside screaming. A servant tells the judge that his own nephew had had some 'fun' with a virgin („hat mit ihr geschimpfft", 87), indicating that he had raped her, as the judge understands only too well. However, he is too weak to get out of bed and take action, but when his nephew once visits him, the judge makes the young man hug him, and in that position, he can stab him from behind and kill him. When he is about to die and wants to receive the last sacraments from a priest, he refuses to confess that crime because he does not consider it a sin: „'Ich habe es fuer kein Suond. … Ich hab es nit von Neid gethon, mir ist nie kein Knab lieber gewesen dann der allein, ich hab es in Straffe Weiß gethon (87; I do not consider it a sin. I did not do that out of envy; I have not loved any boy more than him; I did it as a punishment [for rape]". The priest is not convinced at all and is about to leave, when the judge calls him back and shows him that God had miraculously placed the Eucharist on his tongue, acknowledging him as a just judge and that rape deserves the death penalty.

An almost similar account is then provided in the seventeenth tale where two women haunt a young rich man, hoping to force him to marry them. Both sleep with him the

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[15] For pedagogical reflections on this torturous issue, see now the contributions to *Teaching Rape in the Medieval Literature Classroom: Approaches to Difficult Texts*, ed. A. Gulley, Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2018.

[16] The following tale specifically addresses the phenomenon of prostitution that had become very common particularly in late medieval cities, as the narrator emphasizes himself. See now A. Classen, *Prostitution in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: The Dark Side of Sex and Love in the Premodern Era*, Studies in Medieval Literature, Lanham, MA, Boulder, CO, et al. 2019; paperback 2021.

same night, and both become pregnant with his child, but when they then seek out support from the courts, it proves to be extremely difficult, and one judge after the other refers the case higher or lower until it reaches the village court again. There, the judges decide that the two women would have to be treated as prostitutes and would have to pay the young man a fine because they had forcefully imposed themselves on him: „und solten sie Hueren blyben nach als vor" (17; they were to remain whores as before)[17].

Judgments

Just as in our day and age, one of the central concerns affecting all of society pertains to the legal courts, the performance of judges, the honesty of the lawyers, and the validity of the laws. In the tenth section, Pauli took it upon himself to provide numerous examples of problems in that regard, and voiced his strong opinion about fair judges, honest attorneys, and the great need to have an unbiased and just legal system. Considering that the entire discourse on truth as in section one is closely connected with justice as in section ten, it proves to be useful to focus on some examples dealing with the legal process as presented by Pauli. We could easily reach an agreement that both topics, truth and justice, have always been closely associated, so the poet's choice of relevant stories, again borrowed from a variety of sources and developed here further for his purposes, strongly suggests the relevance of those texts for a modern seminar on or discussion of many different topics, including philosophy, ethics, religion, sociology, anthropology, and literature, of course. No society can claim to be democratic, free, or just if the legal system is corrupt. The very same issue comes to the fore in Pauli's narratives.

In the first one (no. 113), reflecting on a judicial strategy by the Athenian statesman and orator Demosthenes (384 B.C.E.–322 B.C.E.), the narrator emphasizes the crucial need to have lawyers who are determined to present the truth: „wan der Fuersprech sol guot, frum und wahrhafftig sein" (78; because the lawyer should be good, virtuous, and honest). Pauli here relied on Cicero as his authority. Otherwise, the lawyer would be nothing but a liar, a loudmouth, and a gossiper. In the following story, the focus rests on the ethical ideals of judges who must search for the truth, irrespective of the social and economic standing of the plaintiff or defendant. Reflecting on the conditions in the past, the author suggests that the people ought to put blinders on the judges to avoid that they would form an opinion based on the appearance of the plaintiff, for instance; they ought just to listen to the case as brought to the court, and avoid any subjective opinion.

[17] Recent scholarship has intensively explored the topic of prostitution in historical terms; see, for instance, S. Burghartz, *Zeiten der Reinheit. Orte der Unzucht. Ehe und Sexualität in Basel während der frühen Neuzeit*, Paderborn, Munich, et al. 1999; D.M.H. Hemmie, *Ungeordnete Unzucht: Prostitution im Hanseraum, 12.–16. Jahrhundert*, Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna 2007; J. Page, *Prostitution and Subjectivity in Late Medieval Germany*, Studies in German History, Oxford 2021. However, the examples provided by Pauli have not yet been considered in any of those historical studies.

In the story no. 115, a rich merchant loses his money purse which contains 800 ducats. A carpenter finds the purse without knowing the owner. A week later, the priest announces during his sermon that the honest finder of that purse would receive 100 ducats as a reward. Once the carpenter has learned of this promise, he takes the purse to the priest to receive assurance about the promised award. Once the merchant, having been called in, has counted the money, he hands over five ducats as a gift claiming that the carpenter had already taken 100 ducats. This then results in a legal fight, and the court is asked to decide the case. Both men swear an oath, the merchant that the purse had contained 900 ducats, and the other that he did not take any money from the purse for himself and had found only 800 ducats. The judges then decide that both men had sworn a valid oath, except that the merchant would have to keep looking for the one who had found his purse, whereas the carpenter could keep the one he had picked up until someone would come and claim it.

According to the epimythium, which invites the audience to reflect on the wider implications of this account, the merchant deserved to lose all of his money because he had lied and displayed disloyalty out of greed, not willing to pay out the promised reward. The narrator concludes with the proverb: „Wer zuo vil wil, dem wuert zuo wenig" (80; He who wants too much will receive too little).

In story no. 120, again drawn from Valerius Maximus, a young man is deeply enamored with the daughter of a prince, and one day, when he encounters her and her mother on the street when they are about to attend church service, he runs up to her, hugs her, and kisses her in front of all people. While the daughter cries, the mother is greatly incensed and has the perpetrator arrested and thrown into prison. Later, when questioned by the prince, he states that he had no evil intention and simply acted out of great love for the princess and all women (83). This seems to be enough as evidence for the king who then wants to condemn the culprit to death.

Surprisingly, however, at that moment, his wife intervenes and wonders about how he could so easily have those executed who love them, when it would be completely unclear how they would treat those who hate them. This wise opinion changes the prince's mind who then lets the young man go without any punishment.

Most important, as is commonly the case in Pauli's stories, the subsequent commentary (epimythium) represents his own understanding of the message contained in his classical source. He argues that judges should aspire for mercy and mildness in their judgments. It would better to err on the side of those two virtues than to exact too harsh and mean judgments (83). In the conclusion, he then remarks: „Es ist besser Got antwurten von zuo vil Senfftmuetikeit wegen dan denen, dy zuo vil hert sein" (83; It is better to be guilty in the eyes of God because of too much gentleness than because of too much harshness).

In story no. 122, we hear of two friends, one of whom is appointed as judge. The other asks him one day for a favor in legal matters since his case appears to be rather weak. The judge refuses, however, because it would be against God's wishes. The friend retorts that it would be useless for him to have this friendship if he could not use it to his advantage.

The judge, however, retorts that their friendship would be useless to him if it would cause him to bring God's wrath upon him and to lose his soul to eternal condemnation (84).

In story no. 124, a widow does not have any success with the case she has brought to the court, and this even for years. One day, while she is chatting with her friends on the street, one of them advises that she ought to grease the judge's hand, meaning, she should bribe him. The widow, unaware of the implications, takes this metaphorical advice literally, and when she then meets the judge shortly after, she smears some butter on his hand. The judge is greatly surprised and does not understand what is going on until the widow explains to him what the other woman had suggested. The judge feels so ashamed that he hence proceeds with the case quickly, whether in favor of the plaintiff or not, which we are not informed about (84–85). Finally, in story no. 125, two men are fighting at court over a matter of importance. One of them bribes the judge with a new cart, whereupon the other sends two horses as gifts. When the judge then has to make a decision, he favors the latter, telling the former that he could not do it any other way but to follow the horses with the cart (85).

As we learn in the epimythium, judges and lawyers have become corrupt, taking money from the various parties, revealing to be biased. Quoting the Prophet Isaiah (5), Pauli laments that judges tend to make good things bad, and bad things good, that is, they reverse the order of all things and allow injustice to enter the world (85).

Conclusion

The wealth of Pauli's *Schimpf und Ernst* prevents me from extending the discussion much further especially because most of the narratives speak for themselves in their moral and ethical messages. It would hence be time to evaluate what we have observed and draw some final conclusions regarding the pedagogical values of this large corpus of texts.

At their core, most of these narratives address universal themes and concerns, such as the meaning of truth, telling the truth, judging fairly, unbiased, and free of corruption. Lawyers and judges are severely condemned if they prove to be guilty of wrongdoing, favoring one party over the other due to some secret payments. Unfortunately, the political reality today seems to have repeated what had happened already at Pauli's time, if we think of the various charges against the justices of the US Supreme Court at current times (2022, 2023), or of the charges by the European Union against the legal 'reforms' in Poland that allegedly undermine the Democratic process[18]. But there cannot be any justice, honesty, or dignity if there is no longer any will to uphold truth or to seek truth.

[18] See, for instance, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/18/opinion/supreme-court-clarence-thomas-corruption.html; https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/06/22/supreme-court-corruption-alito/; https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/democratic-shame-supreme-court-wrong-corruption, etc. As to the situation in Poland, see https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65809525; or https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/6/5/top-eu-court-rules-polands-justice-reform-infringes-eu-law [accssed: 4.07.2023].

Much was wrong during the early sixeenth century, and Pauli emerges as a major spokesperson against the general malaise. Much is also wrong in our current world, if we measure the conditions today with those explored by this author. We cannot, of course, confirm whether those laments addressed true concerns, although there are many other voices that provided similar evidence supporting Pauli's overarching arguments. The astounding success of *Schimpf und Ernst* in the early modern book market, however, proves that the reading and listening audiences responded with great interest in this collection of didactic and entertaining short narratives (*Schwänke*). In other words, it appears that Pauli hit raw nerves with his criticism and revealed through his accounts what some of the major shortcomings were at his time.

His targets were people at all stages in life and in all social classes, and yet, the author did not simply voice bitter complaints and raised a moral voice. Pauli succeeded in reaching his audiences not only because he addressed so clearly what concerned them all. He also managed to formulate his warnings and objections in an often humorous and entertaining way. Thus, Pauli proved to be a brilliant commentator of his time and world, and at the same time, he left behind a major corpus of highly influential tales that deeply shaped the further development of sixteenth-century German literature, if not of later centuries as well.

From a pedagogical point of view, many of Pauli's tales prove to be of timeless value. They are easy to understand even today despite the fairly strong Swabian dialect form of the language used here. In other words, *Schimpf und Ernst* promises to appeal also to modern audiences since they easily uncover such universal and timeless problems in human life. In short, they offer themselves exceedingly well for a critical examination of many issues in our existence, past and present. As I have illustrated, especially truth and justice are at the forefront of concerns we all certainly share. Without both being upheld most seriously, much of society cannot prosper. In other words, Pauli's comments bear great consequences for modern readers as well and might be more useful in terms of ethics, virtues, and vices than many modern texts.

But we also need to keep in mind that the poet was a rather modest and humble critic of people's shortcomings. According to his opinion, it would not always be advisable to confront everyone with the absolute truth, especially when it would not be necessary to address everything directly and almost brutally. In the case of justice, however, Pauli does not demonstrate any willingness to compromise; instead, here he demands complete fairness and objectivity, strongly appealing to judges and lawyers to uphold the laws.

In terms of teaching Pauli's *Schwänke*, we easily recognize the great opportunity to address universal concerns and themes, to examine them through a historical lens, and thus to recognize their timeless character. The literary analysis thus allows us to examine various early modern discourses concerning private and public life. Thus, these short prose narratives emerge as powerful mirrors of people's everyday conditions, shortcomings, weaknesses, and character, whether at court or in the farmhouse, whether in the city or in the countryside.

In short, there is no doubt in my mind that *Schimpf und Ernst* can serve exceedingly well as teaching material in a wide variety of seminars or in school classes. These stories are, as the title indicates, both entertaining and didactic, which guaranteed their enormous success over the centuries. Unfortunately, currently, the opposite is the case. Publishers such as Philipp Reclam jun., traditionally invested in making texts available for the classroom, can no longer sell editions or translations of early modern German literature at large because students have no interest in that cultural-historical period and because professors thus leave it aside[19]. This leads to a vicious cycle because without offering relevant courses, students will not even have an opportunity to enroll. But since there are not available relevant textbooks, professors shy away from developing those courses.

The book market has always tended toward profitability, and yet, without republishing important works, such as Johannes Pauli's *Schimpf und Ernst*, this literary treasure trove will remain in the shadow of public attention and suffer from being ignored, as the entire early modern period is. Of course, we should not design our courses and make course offerings depending simply on the basis of what students would like to take, as important as that might be for motivational purposes. Instead, the real task of a university department or a school would be to educate, hence to present courses and study materials that are important and relevant. But this amounts to a preaching to the choir and might be unpopular today when the University has become transmogrified into a play area with students being customers and professors being sales clerks, so to speak. In fact, Johannes Pauli would have much to say about that, and it seems high time to return to some of his stories as critically important literary works that address fundamental concerns also of our own time, such as truth, corruption, justice, communication, gender relationships, intelligence, and so forth.

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[19] This was confirmed to me by the director of the copy-editing department of the Reclam Verlag, Wilfried Vollmer, via email, July 6, 2023.

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