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Performing didacticism in Early Middle High German poetry. Poet, audience and creed in Arme Hartmann's *Rede von deme heiligen gelouben*¹

In the introduction to her book *Contrary Things*, Catherine BROWN draws a distinction between what she terms the 'performative' and 'constative' elements of medieval didactic texts – that is, between how they teach and what they teach.² Although a distinction between the 'how' and the 'what' is unavoidable, it is impossible to separate them into two discrete elements; BROWN relates this to the twofold definition of the Latin term *doctrina*, meaning both content and process of teaching, both the knowledge imparted and the act of instruction. In this sense, she argues that medieval texts teach as much about teaching as they do about their supposed subject and suggests that the doctrine taught is less the final aim of the text than what she terms the 'pretext of textual teaching'.³ As such, an investigation of the poetics of didacticism seems inescapable: "Teaching [...] is poetic in the etymological sense: *poesis* is (a) *making*, and medieval didactic texts constantly and instantly show us this making of *doctrina* in textual and hermeneutic process."⁴ BROWN'S comments thus draw attention to two vital aspects of medieval didacticism, both of which I will return to in the course of the essay: the importance of teaching by doing – that is, teaching as some kind of performance – and the role of textuality in teaching and learning. Using the fundamental indivisibility of textual teaching and poetic making as a starting point, in this essay I investigate more closely the possibility of didactic performativity, exploring the way in which a text may create – and to a degree enact – its own didactic scenario and engage dynamically with a hypothetical audience. It is my contention that the notion of didactic 'performativity' has the potential to be a helpful tool to explore and better comprehend the poetics and dynamics of medieval vernacular didactic poetry. That is, that – particularly in cases in which the context of composition and reception are unknown – a performative reading can clarify the mechanics of a text and thus offer a new way into the dynamics of vernacular writing.

¹ I am grateful to Mark Chinca for his thoughtful and helpful comments on an earlier version of this essay.

² Catherine BROWN, *Contrary Things. Exegesis, Dialectic and the Poetics of Didacticism* (Figurae: Reading Medieval Culture), Stanford 1998, p. 7.

³ BROWN (note 1), p. 9. She is not the only person to stress the self-reflexivity of medieval didactic literature in this manner. See also for instance Christoph HUBER, *Lehrdichtung* (B. II. Mittelalter), in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol. 5 (2001), cols. 107–112, here col. 107.

⁴ BROWN (note 1), p. 10 (her italics).

There is often talk of a ‘performative turn’ in cultural studies. That is, a drive to comprehend cultural phenomena as in some way attached to specific conditions of performance either external or internal to the cultural artefact.⁵ The starting point remains J. L. AUSTIN’S theory of performative utterances: utterances that *do* something and are themselves the performance of an action, classic examples being baptism or the marriage vow.⁶ The combination of AUSTIN’S theories and their later deconstruction by DERRIDA and Judith BUTLER, amongst others, with the influence of theatre and cultural studies, has led to a broad interest in thinking about how verbal or textual communication *does* something.⁷ In other words, an interest has developed in uncovering both what occurs within communicative acts and what these communicative acts bring about – an interest “animated by an anti-hermeneutic impetus which is suspicious of the assumption that meaning, authorial intention, identity, substance, or essence could be pre-existing in works of art or literature, or even theatre performances and everyday actions.”⁸ A distinction persists in scholarship between ‘performance’ as a specific staging or an event and ‘performativity’ as the speech act, but the wide range of meanings of the English word ‘to perform’ and its cognates has led to rather flexible terminology and applicability.⁹

⁵ See Cornelia HERBERICHS/Christian KIENING, Einleitung, in: ID. (eds.), *Literarische Performativität. Lektüren vormoderne Texte (Medienwandel, Medienwechsel, Medienwissen 3)*, Zurich 2008, pp. 9–21 (here p. 9), who describe this as a tendency to understand cultural phenomena “als dynamische, prozessuale [...], die auf einen raum-zeitlichen Vollzug angelegt sind und ihre eigenen Vollzugsbedingungen mit sich führen oder auch zeigen.”

⁶ J. L. AUSTIN, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. ed. J. O. Urmson/Marina Sbisa, Cambridge MA 1962.

⁷ Excellent overviews of the development of performativity in critical theory and practice are offered by: Andreas HETZEL, *Performanz, Performativität*, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol 10 (2011) cols 839–862; Andrew PARKER/Eve Kosofsky SEDGWICK, *Introduction: Performativity and Performance*, in: ID. (eds.), *Performance and Performativity*, New York/London 1995, pp. 1–18.

⁸ Almut SUERBAUM in collaboration with Manuele GRAGNOLATI, *Medieval Culture ‘betwixt and between’: An introduction*, in: ID. (eds.), *Aspects of the Performative in Medieval Culture (Trends in Medieval Philology 18)*, Berlin/New York 2010, pp. 1–12, here p. 5.

⁹ PARKER/SEDGWICK (note 6), p. 3, write of the “oblique interaction between performativity and the loose cluster of theatrical practices, relations and traditions known as performance.” A clear distinction between ‘performance’ and ‘performativity’ is offered by Ingrid KASTEN, *Einleitung*, in: ID./C. Stephen JAEGER (eds.), *Codierung von Emotionen im Mittelalter (Trends in Medieval Philology 1)*, Berlin/New York 2003, pp. XII–XXVII, here p. XVIII: “Während Performanz ein kulturelles Ereignis – wie die Aufführung oder Lektüre eines literarische Werks – bezeichnet, das sich situational und je einmalig vollzieht, lässt sich mit der Kategorie Performativität erfassen, wie etwas durch Handlungen und Interaktionen vollzogen, vergegenwärtigt oder auch erzeugt wird.”

Such flexibility means that contextual precision can be necessary in order to grasp the potential helpfulness of a performative reading. When it comes to medieval studies, performativity has been embraced enthusiastically, and in a variety of different guises.¹⁰ In particular, performativity is employed to investigate and clarify two key aspects of medieval culture and textual production: first, the interaction between the text as written object and its reception, frequently in the context of an oral performance; second (and more broadly) the understanding of medieval culture as a culture of presence ('Präsenzkultur').¹¹ HERBERICHS and KIENING expand on these aspects with respect to literary texts by pinpointing three particular areas of investigation: first, the way in which texts can be understood not just as representations but rather as embodiments that realise something of religious or secular importance (i.e. legitimize secular authority or embody the presence of Christ); second, the performative dimension to the repeatability of medieval literature, as well as the elements of repetition contained within individual texts; third, the way in which the mediality of manuscript culture (through paratexts, for instance) creates or comments upon a situation of performance.¹² There is thus often an emphasis on the way in which aspects of performance are 'written in' to the text, with the effect of what HOLSINGER calls the "simultaneous distance and intimacy between the performed and the performative."¹³ This refers not only to the way in which literal situations of performance are indicated or made present within the text, but also the way in the text in its own right becomes a context in which performance occurs. When it comes to didactic texts, we can see how these concerns are played out in terms of the potential performativity of both the act of teaching and the desired result of teaching. In the former case, the text may point to an external teaching situation in which it is to be performed; alternatively, this act of teaching may be staged in some way within the text itself. Commenting on the broad definition of medieval 'didactic' literature, not least because of an

¹⁰ An excellent overview is provided by Bruce W. HOLSINGER, *Analytical Survey 6: Medieval Literature and Cultures of Performance*, in: *New Medieval Literatures 6*, ed. David LAWTON/Rita COPELAND/Wendy SCASE, Oxford 2003, pp. 271–311.

¹¹ Hans Ulrich GUMBRECHT, *Diesseits der Hermeneutik. Über die Produktion von Präsenz* (edition suhrkamp 2364), Berlin 2004.

¹² HERBERICHS/KIENING (note 5), pp. 12–19.

¹³ HOLSINGER (note 10), p. 275. See also SUERBAUM/GRAGNOLATI (note 8), pp. 2–3, who argue that: "Study of the performative aspects of medieval culture allows a focus on the ways in which medieval texts, but also medieval forms of recording human behaviour and action, manage to convey both presence and absence simultaneously, thereby creating a space which is open to interpretation."

arguably partially instructive purpose to the majority of medieval texts,¹⁴ LÄHNEMANN and LINDEN suggest that the didactic in medieval literature is best conceived not in terms of generic definition but rather in terms of a mode of speech. It is “lehrhaftes Sprechen als Modus dichterischer Rede”, which may or may not constitute the whole of a text, and can thus be understood as a “rhetorische Performanz”.¹⁵ As I hope to demonstrate in this essay, one key element of this mode of speech is the creation and establishment of the didactic voice, which may be assumed in a literal performance of the text or endowed with a kind of intratextual ‘presence’.

The desired result of teaching as inscribed within the text can also be viewed as in some way performative. A didactic text may encourage a kind of performance – a devotional performance, perhaps – after its reception; equally, the reception (or indeed composition) of the text may also consist in such a performance itself. Here we can turn to the etymological meaning of ‘performance’ as a kind of completion. Victor TURNER stresses the fact that the Old French term *parfournir* means furnishing forth, completing, carrying something out thoroughly,¹⁶ a similar connotation can be attributed to the Middle English *performen*, which can also have the sense of to fulfil or complete.¹⁷

In this essay, I investigate these aspects of didactic performativity through a close reading of the so-called ‘Rede vom heiligen glouben’ [‘Discourse on the sacred creed’] (known hereafter as ‘Rede’) by a poet known as ‘Armer’ [poor] Hartmann. A relatively substantial work of just under 4000 lines, the ‘Rede’ consists in an exegesis of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed

¹⁴ See, for instance, HUBER (note 3), col. 107, who argues that in the Middle Ages there is no distinction as such between ‘Gebrauchsliteratur’ and ‘schöne Literatur’: “Im mittelalterlichen Literaturverständnis ist Lehrhaftigkeit als Vermittlung von Wissen und als Handlungsanleitung zum Lebensvollzug eine Grundanforderung, die sich auf den Ebenen der Textproduktion und –rezeption je neu stellt.” The broadness of the term ‘didactic’ is also stressed by Regula FORSTER/Romy GÜNTHART/Christoph SCHANZE, Einleitung, in: Regula FORSTER/Romy GÜNTHART (eds.), *Didaktisches Erzählen. Formen literarischer Belehrung in Orient und Okzident*, Frankfurt a. M. 2010, pp. 7–19, here pp. 10–13.

¹⁵ Henrike LÄHNEMANN/Sandra LINDEN, Was ist lehrhaftes Sprechen? Einleitung, in: ID. (eds.), *Dichtung und Didaxe. Lehrhaftes Sprechen in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, Berlin/New York 2009, pp. 1–10, here p. 2.

¹⁶ Victor TURNER, *From Ritual to Theatre. The Human Seriousness of Play*, New York 1982, p. 13. A performance, he states, is therefore “the proper finale of an experience.”

¹⁷ On this aspect of medieval performativity, see Annie SUTHERLAND, *Performing the Penitential Psalms in the Middle Ages: Maidstone and Bampton*, in: SUERBAUM/GRAGNOLATI (note 8), pp. 15–37.

and offers a broad introduction to various aspects of Christian theology and life.¹⁸ Written around 1150, the text belongs to the period of writing and language conventionally known as ‘Early Middle High German’ (1050-1170), and more specifically to the body of religious poems on various themes that make up much of its output. Textual production of this period is often characterized as didactic, in particular due to the increasing importance of the religious education of the laity in the wake of monastic reform.¹⁹ Yet despite this characterization, there has been little investigation of the didactic strategies employed. The perceived functionality of texts of this period is, it seems to me, symptomatic of the tendency in scholarship to view Early Middle High German writing as largely un- or embryonically literary – and there is no doubting the fact that it is neglected in favour of the ‘classic’ texts of the subsequent period. Without taking away from the fact that these are texts that *do* something, a focus on performativity can shift our gaze onto *how* this doing is effected, both in terms of intratextual (rhetorical) strategies and performative situations of reception. As such, we may be able to get a better handle on both the way in which individual texts may function and the literary tools early German authors had at their disposal.²⁰

¹⁸ Introductions to the text are offered by Konrad KUNZE, *Der arme Hartmann*, in: *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (1978), cols. 450–454; Heinz RUPP, *Deutsche religiöse Dichtungen des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts. Untersuchungen und Interpretationen (Bibliotheca Germanica 13)*, 2nd ed. Bern 1971, pp. 134–216; Francis G. GENTRY, *Der arme Hartmann*, in: Will HASTY/James HARDIN (eds.), *German Writers and Works of the Early Middle Ages: 800–1170 (Dictionary of Literary Biography 148)*, Detroit 1995, pp. 10–13. For a recent book-length study of the text, see Christine KÜHN, *Ze lere den tumben. Hartmanns “Rede vom heiligen Glauben” (Lateres 9)*, Frankfurt a. M. 2013.

¹⁹ Walter HAUG, *Allegorese und Entscheidung: Literaturtheoretische Positionen in frühmittelhochdeutscher Zeit*, in: ID., *Literaturtheorie im deutsche Mittelalter. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts. Eine Einführung (Germanistische Einführungen)*, Darmstadt 1985, pp. 46–74, here p. 46, writes of “ein[en] drängende[n] Bildungsanspruch der Laien”; Christian KIENING, *Freiräume literarischer Theoriebildung. Dimensionen und Grenzen programmatischer Aussagen in der deutschen Literatur des 12. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 66 (1992), pp. 405–449, here p. 409, states that texts of the period share the “gemeinsame Grundfrage nach der Möglichkeit volkssprachlicher Vermittlung von Heilswissen an ein kaum lateinisch gebildetes Publikum.” See also instance Gisela VOLLMANN-PROFE, *Wiederbeginn volkssprachiger Schriftlichkeit im hohen Mittelalter (1050/60-1160/70)*, (*Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Neuzeit I/2*) Königstein/Ts 1986, pp. 15–22.

²⁰ There is therefore an inevitable overlap between my investigations here and a more traditional rhetorically-focused approach; amongst other things, I will look closely at the persuasive techniques employed in the language of the text. But the emphasis here is different. Although medieval rhetoric is as much about writing as it is about speaking (see Martin CAMARGO, *Defining medieval rhetoric*, in: C. J. MEWS/C. J. NEDERMAN/R. M.

When it comes to function and situations of reception, however, we have to contend with the fact that there is something of a black spot in terms of contextual knowledge about much Early Middle High German writing; in the majority of cases we know nothing or almost nothing about author, audience and the intended context of reception or performance. Hartmann's 'Rede' is no exception. Although there is general agreement that it was aimed at least partially at lay people, anything more specific is unknown and the status of the poet remains contested.²¹ To make matters worse, the only known manuscript of the text, the so-called Straßburg-Molsheim manuscript, was burnt in the Siege of Strasbourg in 1870.²² The lack of a manuscript witness means that the text exists in even more of a void, and this means that certain aspects of performativity – the medial, that paratextual – are shut out to us. The resulting void that echoes around the text prevents our consideration of it as a potential object in a context of literal performance and allows us (even encourages us) to concentrate on the performative aspects inherent to the text itself – that is, the way in which the absent, unrecoverable performance is in some way replaced by a textually present performance. With this in mind, I start by exploring the nature and function of the didactic first-person voice in the 'Rede', as well as its interplay with the audience which is both present and absent. I then move to investigate Hartmann's presentation of the creed and how the text interacts with liturgy, and consider if the text encourages (or even consists in) some kind of devotional performance. In conclusion, two interconnected oppositions will emerge: first, the

THOMSON (eds.) *Rhetoric and Renewal in the Latin West 1100–1540. Essays in Honour of John O. Ward*, Turnhout 2003, pp. 21–34), a rhetorical emphasis would theorize performance in the context of delivery or composition. Here I am concerned with a much wider range of performative phenomena: the delivery of the text, its 're-performance' by an individual reader or listener, its perlocutionary effects, and the relationship between the text and the ritual performance of the utterance (the creed) on which it is based. There is, however, no doubt that an investigation of rhetoric in Early Middle High German writing would be of great use to the field, and may help to establish something about the education and status of individual authors.

²¹ Hartmann was conventionally counted as one of the first German lay poets, especially as he appears to distinguish himself from priests in his 'Rede' (ll. 1065–1140); see RUPP (note 18), pp. 211–212. The status of the poet has recently been challenged by KÜHN (note 18), pp. 42–45, who suggests that Hartmann's theological education seems more substantial than previously thought.

²² This manuscript (Straßburg, Seminarbibliothek, Cod. C. V. 16.6. 4^o) also contained Heinrich's 'Litanei', the 'Straßburger Alexander' and the first 621 lines of 'Pilatus'; the individual texts had all been transcribed by the time of the fire. See <http://www.handschriftencensus.de/3680> and Christoph MACKERT, 'Eine Schriftprobe aus der verbrannten 'Straßburg-Molsheimer Handschrift'', in: *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 130 (2001), pp. 143–165.

authority (and hence distance) of the speaking voice, which is contrasted with a drive to create identity between author and audience, and second, the concurrent presentation of the material as both spoken and written, as both a vocal performance and a written object.

The construction of the didactic voice

The opening of Hartmann's 'Rede' sets out clearly the didactic function of the poem: the aim is, quite explicitly, *ze lere den tumben* [to teach the uneducated]. The first 34 lines establish a relatively conventional didactic process – an authoritative voice teaches the uneducated something important through the means of the text – but the way in which the importance of this subject is established, as well as (vitality), the way in which the poet constructs a position from which to speak with authority, is worth closer consideration. These opening lines are as follows:

Swer an der sele wil genesen unde mit gote in sime riche wesen,
der sol got minnen vor allen werlt dingen,
unde sol ime wesen undertan, sime gebote gehorsam.
den heiligen gelouben sal er ane scouwen,
damite wurde wir gote geeichenot, zo der Cristes scare gezeichenot,
dem ubileme tuvele verzalt unde den sundin also manicfalt.

Vernement waz man iu sage: den glouben alle sunnentage
singent gewisse di paffen zo der misse.
durh die gotis enste hetich di cunste,
von dem selben glouben woldich sprechen, bescheidenliche rechen
mit dutiscer zungen ze lere den tumben;
wande manige reden daran haftent, dar si luzil umbe ahtent.

Jedoch wil ich der rede beginnen, der helfe wil ich gedingen
an den himeliscen got, wander selbe alsus gebot:
aperi os tuum et implebo, [daz sprichit]: “tuo uf dinen munt, ich irvullen dir zestunt,
daz du maht sprechen, mine wort rechen.”
wandich den trost von dir han, so wil ich di rede understan.²³

²³ Armer Hartmann, 'Rede vom heiligen glouben', in: Friedrich MAURER (ed.), *Die religiösen Dichtungen des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts*, Bd. II. Tübingen 1965, pp. 567–628, here ll. 1–34. All quotations are from this edition and line numbers will be given hereafter in the body of the essay. MAURER sets out the texts in these volumes in long-line strophic form ('Langzeilenstrophen') with the aim of stressing continuity from Old High German verse, although he also gives line numbers which I reproduce here. His editions have proven to be quite controversial and the strophic form in which he sets out the poems is now viewed as largely unfounded. A concise summary of MAURER'S ideas and the response to them is offered by Robert G. SULLIVAN, *Justice and the Social Context of Early Middle High German Literature* (Medieval History and Culture 5), New York/London 2001, pp. 2–5.

[Whoever wants to save his soul / and be with God in his kingdom / should love God / above all worldly things, / should serve him / and be obedient to his commandments. / He should observe / the sacred creed, / through which we can be devoted to God / counted among the Christian throng, / separated from the devil / and all the manifold sins.

Listen to what I tell you: / every Sunday, at mass, / priests most definitely / sing the creed. / If, through the grace of God, / I were to have the skill, / I would like to speak about this same creed, / explain it comprehensibly / in the German tongue, / to teach the uneducated; / for many teachings are connected to it / to which they pay little attention.

I will begin my speech nevertheless, / I hope for help / from heavenly God, / because he himself commanded thus: / *aperi os tuum et implebo* [which means]: “open your mouth / I will fill it for you immediately, / so that you might speak / and explain my words.” / If I have your help, / then I will undertake this speech.]²⁴

The first twelve lines of this quotation set out a basic principle: whoever wants to achieve eternal salvation must love God, obey his commands and pay close attention to the creed, which itself can help to free us from the devil. This principle is expressed as a universal, impersonal statement; there is as yet no first-person voice. In the second twelve-line block, the creed is brought down to a more practical, contextual level: it is sung every Sunday by priests at the mass. A first-person voice then emerges, stating what transpires to be the aim of the poem (to teach the creed in German to the *tumben*, the uneducated or the lay) but – importantly – in hypothetical terms.²⁵ This statement is intriguingly complex, because it suggests that this first-person voice will in fact not explain the creed (for he does not have the skill), but at the same time implies that the creed is too important for it not to be explained to the laypeople in their own language. This leads the way into the third ten-line section, in which the voice declares he will begin his discourse on the creed nevertheless (*Jedoch*) and appeals to God for help and guidance. Such an opening therefore sets out clearly all elements of the teaching process and establishes their importance and authority: the subject to be taught (the creed, which brings us closer to God); the desired result of teaching (salvation); the audience to be taught (the uneducated/lay); the act of teaching (this text, the *rede* the poet will undertake); the teacher (*ich* [I], who despite his supposed lack of skill feels bound to teach such an important subject and is guided by God in doing so).

This first-person voice retains centre stage throughout the poem. A prominent teaching voice such as this is a common didactic technique, and enables a kind of personalization of the learning process through the establishment of roles of teacher and learner; one would expect

²⁴ This translation and all following translations are by SB.

²⁵ Although *tumb* can be used to connote foolishness or stupidity, it is also used to signify a lack of education – particularly a lack of Latin education – and by association therefore the laity. See Matthias LEXER, *tump*, in: *Mittelhochdeutsches Handwörterbuch*, Leipzig 1872-1878.

the learner to be either an intradiegetic learner given a role – even a voice – within the poem, or a extradiegetic learner or group of learners whose presence is implied and created through direct address, often through a second person pronoun, which is the case in our text. The first-person teaching voice we encounter is not a nameless teacher or wise man, but explicitly the voice of the poet himself, who names himself *ich arme Hartman* [I, poor Hartmann] (l. 3737). The poem thus does not consist in a narrative of teaching or a description of a teaching situation, but is *itself* explicitly that situation. As was made apparent in the opening of the poem, quoted above, Hartmann is explicit about the fact that his inspiration comes directly from God, but also that he does not have adequate skill for his subject matter. As a teaching voice, he does not hold himself apart from his audience as someone with special or blessed authority. The didactic process – which seemed in the opening of the text to be set out into distinct roles and functions – becomes quickly rather more organic, with the different parts of the process being brought together in various ways, primarily through repeated vocabulary. Some form of identity is thus established not only between the text and the teachings to be taught, both of which are referred to as *rede*, but also between poet and audience.²⁶

As we have already seen, Hartmann identifies his audience at the start of the poem as *die tumben*, which implies a lack of education, and specifically a lack of Latin as suggested by the reference to *duiscer zungen* [German tongues] that they might understand. We might expect the poet to legitimize himself as a teacher by elevating himself above these *tumben*, but he instead counts himself among them, referring to himself later in the poem in the same terms: *Ich unde andre tumben, / wi luzzil wir der kunnen* [I and other uneducated people, / how little we know of that] (ll. 423–24). This statement seems an odd conflation of two common topoi: on the one hand the authorial modesty topos and on the other the identification of author with audience, which functions to elevate the audience to a special level of understanding and to create a particular community of recipients, defined and brought together by the one text. Yet unlike Gottfried von Straßburg's *edele herzen* [noble hearts], for example – to name perhaps the most famous case of recipient creation in medieval German literature²⁷ – the community is here not created through blandishment or elevation but

²⁶ *rede* [discourse] is not an unusual term for a didactic text or for a teaching within it, but the frequency of its use within Hartmann's 'Rede' is striking. If I can count correctly, *rede*, *reden* and cognates appear 34 times within the text.

²⁷ Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*, ed. Karl MAROLD, 4th edn., Berlin/New York 1977. On the *edele herzen*, see Christoph HUBER, *Gottfried von Straßburg: Tristan (Klassiker-Lektüren 3)*, 3rd edn., Berlin 2013, pp. 39–48.

paradoxically through what seems to be a mutual lack. This lack does not, however, transpire to be a negative one and the opposition between *tumb* and *wis* [wise/educated] that one might expect does not come to pass. For Hartmann's identification of himself as *tumb* occurs after a section in which he describes learned Greek wisdom (including Platonic theories and astronomy), and it is about this sort of wisdom the *tumben* know very little. This self-definition functions, therefore, to disassociate the poet (and thus his text and audience) from a worldly, bookish 'wisdom', *di da sciere zezeit* [which dissipates quickly] (l. 428) and to associate it with the eternal 'wisdom' of Christ, which has nothing to do with human learning and *niemer nezeit* or *vertirbit* [never dissipates/is destroyed].²⁸

The association of poet and audience is not, however, simply concerned with a positive distinction from human secular learning; it is also a fundamental part of the didactic mechanics of the poem. The first-person voice, which as we have seen is established explicitly as the poet himself, has nonetheless a certain fluidity of reference and is able to assume different roles, which encourage active audience involvement. There are two particular instances of roleplay, both of which involve the introduction of imaginary situations constructed in such a way as to encourage the audience to participate in them. Both instances occur in the lengthy section of the poem in which Hartmann sets out what he terms the *rate* [guidance] of the Holy Spirit. The first roleplay occurs in the context of an inserted plaint of sin, and the second in a section on the transience of earthly things with the poet taking on the voice of a sinful man. This man has been too concerned with worldly things and now chastizes himself, his eyes full of tears:

her umbe beginnet sich selben	dicke sere scelden
swesliche tougen	mit weininden ougen.
Alsus sprihet ime selben zu:	owi mensece, waz wil du tu(n),
daz du got nit nevorhtes,	neheine gute du newirkes (ll. 2383–2390)

²⁸ Morgan POWELL, *Die tumben und die wisen. Wolframs 'Parzival'-Prolog neu gedeutet*, in: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 131 (2009), pp. 50–90, here pp. 72–73: "Der Arme Hartmann beansprucht für sich auch mehr als nur Inspiration durch den Geist; er stellt die so vermittelte Weisheit deutlich über die Gelehrtenkultur mit ihren sieben *artes*, der nun ihrerseits der Vorwurf des Hochmuts [...] und der Irreführung anhaftet." POWELL sees a connection between Hartmann and Wolfram von Eschenbach, arguing that both use the word *tump* to distinguish themselves from learned methods and establish a new form of communication: "In beiden Fällen wird die Exklusion aus dem Gelehrtentum als Vorbedingung eines alternativen Kommunikationsraums gesetzt." (p. 71). On the relationship between *tumbheit* and Hartmann's self-definition as an explicitly German poet, see also Sarah BOWDEN, *Auf Deutsch lehren. Deutsch und Latein in ausgewählten frühmittelhochdeutschen Texten*, in: Henrike LÄHNEMANN/Nicola MCLELLAND/Nine MIEDEMA (eds.), *Lehren, Lernen und Bilden in der Literatur des deutschen Mittelalters* (forthcoming).

[Thus he himself begins / to chastize himself very severely, / secretly and in silence / with tearful eyes. / He speaks to himself as follows: / alas, man, what should you do, / since you never feared God / nor did any good deeds.]

This self chastisement then continues for approximately 200 lines. In order to teach his audience about the sins of the world, the poet could have chastized them directly; instead, he performs the role of a sinful worldly man chastizing himself. This sinful man refers to himself, however, in the second person. The constant use of second-person pronouns (*du, dine* [you, yours]) maintains a connection to the audience due to the performative context of the poem that has already been established. As such, the poet addresses them without addressing them explicitly, thus enabling a more subtle didactic strategy.

Such a strategy of role-playing that involves a flexible second-person pronoun that only implicitly refers to the audience is reminiscent of the *memento mori* poem known as ‘Von des todes gehugde’ by the so-called Heinrich von Melk, and not least because it deals with the same themes of sinful worldliness. In this poem we see two inserted scenarios: in the first, an imagined woman looks at the corpse of her dead husband and is addressed as *du* [you], and in the second an imagined young man is encouraged to look at the grave of his dead father. Here, the young man is addressed as *du*, but this time not only by the poet but also by his dead father who is reanimated and given the first-person voice. The creation of new *du*-audiences within the poem inevitably has the effect of encouraging the ‘real’ audience (which is also directly addressed as *du*) to participate in these imagined scenarios in a more active fashion – even to reenact them in their own minds. Such participation is encouraged by performance directions which both animate the imagined figure and implicitly urge audience members to put themselves in his or her place. The young woman is thus introduced with the direction *Nu ginc dar, wip wolgetan* [Now go there, beautiful lady!] (l. 597) and the young man must *merche aengestlichiv dinc / vnt ginc zu deines vater grabe* [pay attention to the terrible things / and go to your father’s grave] (ll. 664–65).²⁹ Later, he must also imagine for himself how the corpse of his father might speak to him: *nv gedenche an die sinne, / wie er dir antwurten solde, / ob ez der natawer rechte verdolde / oder ob sein got wolde verhengem.* [now think of the way, / in which he would answer you, / if the rules of nature might allow it / or if his God would allow it to happen.] (ll. 690–93). Couching the speech of the dead father

²⁹ All quotations are from: Heinrich von Melk, *Von des todes gehugde. Mahnrede über den Tod*, ed. Thomas BEIN (RUB 8907), Stuttgart 1994.

in terms of hypothetical imagining is clearly a splendid way for Heinrich to get round the theological problems of a speaking corpse, but it also offers a way for an audience member to internalize the speech and somehow make it part of his own mental experience.

Something very similar happens in the example from the 'Rede' quoted above, but here there is a fundamental difference. Unlike in 'Von des todes gehugde', recipients of the 'Rede' are not encouraged to envisage a situation in which they are being addressed explicitly by someone else, imagined or otherwise (in fact much like the situation of reception of the poem, but just transposed into another context). Instead, they are encouraged to put themselves in a situation in which they address themselves – the sinful worldly man is not addressed by someone else, but by himself. The result is a different kind of participation that breaks down the hierarchy between teacher and audience, who have already been established as similar in terms of shared *tumbheit*. The speech of the repentant worldly man is not the only instance of this; earlier in the poem, the ideal confessional speech of a penitent sinner is also set out. As was also the case with the speech of the worldly man, the recipients of the poem are presented with an utterance framed and 'staged' as an ideal speech act, which they are implicitly encouraged to reactivate in their own minds and in some way to perform themselves – both in the future, but also 'now' in their reception of the text. We can go one step further here by pointing out that the inserted speeches of both the ideal penitent and the sinful worldly man are introduced as *tougen* [secret/silent] (l. 1763; l. 2385). This could suggest a kind of reception external to the actual audible performance of the poem. The audible, bodily performance of the poem could be transposed and taken up in a concurrent internal performance on the part of the recipients; that is, they could 'perform' these speeches silently and internally themselves at the same time as they are hearing them spoken to them or (possibly) even reading them on the page.

The effectiveness of these two assumed roles of penitent sinner and worldly man is heightened by the fact that it is almost impossible to tell where they come to an end. There is no complete framing of either inserted speech; both the staged voice of the penitent and that of the man regretting his worldly excess simply glide unnoticeably back into the voice of the poet himself. When examples of forgiven sinners are introduced at the end of the penitent man's confession (from l. 1837), it is impossible to tell whether we should think of them in the voice of the repentant sinner (as embellishments to his confession) or the didactic voice of the poet; equally, there is no explicit end point to the speech of the worldly man. One could argue that this bespeaks a lack of compositional clarity, yet it seems to me a vital part of the poem's didactic strategy that the different speaking voices cannot be clearly delineated – a

strategy that involves both maintaining a sense of the poet as a named authority and encouraging active participation in his enterprise through the assumption of his voice, resulting in poet and audience forming a kind of community. The way in which the audience is encouraged to participate in the act of teaching in this manner increases in significance if we consider its guiding subject matter: the creed.

The performance of the creed

The entirety of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed is cited in Latin during the course of the ‘Rede’, is translated – sometimes closely, sometimes more loosely – into German, and is the subject of exegesis. In many respects, the use of the creed as a framework for the poem is unsurprising. The creed, along with the *paternoster*, was central to lay theological learning in the mid 12th century, so it is surely a good place to start the process of teaching the uneducated (*lere den tumben*); there is also evidence that lay people were encouraged to learn the creed by heart, and even in the vernacular.³⁰ Yet the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed used by Hartmann is not necessarily the creed that lay people would learn; evidence suggests that there was more encouragement for them to learn the simpler apostolic creed. The more complex Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed, although introduced to the liturgy of the mass during the time of Charlemagne, was by the 11th century only said on Sundays and feast days, something to which Hartmann himself alludes when he states that it is sung by priests *alle sunnentage* [every Sunday] (l. 14).³¹ The fact that it is sung by priests only is also of importance: this is not a creed Hartmann’s audience would have said themselves but one which would have been said on their behalf. The resulting distance between a lay public and this particular creed could, therefore, explain Hartmann’s decision to foreground it here.³²

³⁰ The role of capitularies in encouraging that the creed be learnt by heart is discussed by KÜHN (note 18), p. 69.

³¹ For a broad overview of the role of the creed in medieval liturgy and catechesis see Josef Andreas JUNGSMANN, *Missarum Sollemnia. Eine genetische Erklärung der römischen Messe*, 3rd edn., vol. 1, Vienna 1952, pp. 591–606 and KÜHN, pp. 69–76. Throughout her study, KÜHN discusses at length the particular variant of the creed Hartmann uses; although there were many different variants of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed – including the problematic *filioque* variant – Hartmann’s quotation of it fails quite to comply with any. The differences in Hartmann’s citations are primarily spelling variants rather than changes of theological importance, which leads Kühn to conclude that creed texts were most likely less fixed than we have hitherto assumed.

³² This is the argument made by KÜHN (note 18), p. 76, who states that “Die Tatsache, dass das Verständnis dieses so zentralen Gebetstextes den Gläubigen innerhalb des Gottesdienstes verschlossen bleiben musste, erklärt Hartmanns Wahl seines Bekenntnisses.”

Yet even if a lay audience would have had less contact with the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed in comparison to the Apostolic, it would not have been completely alien. We cannot assume that Hartmann's public would understand every word, but the fact that this creed would have been heard on a regular basis suggests at least an aural recognisability (a familiarity with its sounds, especially likely as it was sung) as well as a knowledge of the essential facts of its content and context. The latter is, I would argue, particularly important. For the creed (in whichever form) has a specific context for performance, which in this poem is made explicit: its context is every Sunday during the mass. This contextual placeability – a ritual context – is absolutely central to the meaning and effectiveness of the utterance of the creed.³³ It is often stated that there is a performative dimension to the ritual utterance of a liturgical text (i.e. the uttering of the text *does something*);³⁴ equally, the uttering of liturgical texts is often said to function as 'social performance', that is, an act that has a socially constitutive function.³⁵ The creed, whether spoken by the congregation or on their behalf in this ritual context is both a statement of personal faith as well as community action that identifies and defines a community of believers.³⁶

In Hartmann's 'Rede', the creed is uttered in its entirety, but broken down and removed completely from its context, which must surely have an effect on its function and performative potential. Each quotation from the creed is followed by a translation or paraphrase in German, which is in turn followed by exegesis or further reflections on its content. The exegetical process itself is not complex, but functions rather through association or expansion; in essence, the Latin quotations from the creed act as starting points for the

³³ Bruno QUAST, *Vom Kult zur Kunst. Öffnungen des rituellen Texts in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Bibliotheca Germanica 48), Tübingen/Basel 2005, pp. 19–27, offers an overview of the ritual text in which he states (pp. 24–25): "Der im Wortlaut feste rituelle Text wird von spezifischen Handlungselementen des Ritus begleitet. Die lokale und zeitliche Festlegung der rituellen Handlung sowie eine spezifische Handlungseinbildung des rituellen Textes bilden die konstitutiven Parameter eines rituelle Kommunikationsraums oder *Vollzugsrahmens*."

³⁴ QUAST (note 33), p. 25

³⁵ C. Clifford FLANIGAN/Kathleen ASHLEY/Pamela SHEINGORN, *Liturgy as Social Performance. Expanding the Definitions*, in: Thomas J. HEFFERNAN/E. Ann MATTER (eds.), *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, Kalamazoo 2005, pp. 635–652. On performativity and liturgy more broadly, see HOLSINGER (note 10), pp. 292–295.

³⁶ In this respect Brian STOCK writes of 'textual communities', that is communities established by the shared and repeated 'performance' of a text: Brian STOCK, *Listening for the Text. On the Uses of the Past*, Philadelphia 1996. See also PARKER/SEDGWICK (note 6), p. 2, who state that "performativity has enabled a powerful appreciation of the ways that identities are constructed iteratively through complex citational processes."

exposition of further, related Christian teachings. The first quotation from the creed offers a good example:

Credo in unum deum patrem omnipotentem	factorem celi et terre
visibilium et invisibilium:	nu ir daz latin habit vernomen,
nu vernemet ze dute dabi,	waz di selbe rede si.
Ich geloube an einem got,	di mir ze lebene gebot,
vater alemehitic,	gewaldic unde creftic,
di da hiz geworden	den himel unde di erden
unde allir dinge gelich	sihtic unde unsihtich.
Andris nist got neheiner	sundir dirre einer. (ll. 61–76)

[[...] now you have heard the Latin, / now hear, in order to explain it, / what the same teaching is. / I believe in one God, / who commanded me to life / almighty father, / powerful and strong, / who commanded into being / heaven and earth / and all things / both visible and invisible. / There is no other God / except this one.]

This discourse on the nature of God then continues for approximately 100 lines. Although both the creed and its translation are spoken in the first-person voice, they are clearly separated from one another and the status of the translation marked out as such. There is, however no explicit statement about when the translation ends – it simply flows seamlessly into further praise and explanation of God. In later instances, there is even no introduction to the German explanation; the Latin words simply segue into their German equivalent.³⁷ The change in language inevitably separates the ritual text from its explanation and exegesis, but does not prevent the German text from itself functioning as a profession of faith.

I suggest, therefore, that the explanation of the creed can function as a devotional performance in its own right. For the poet, an act of teaching and of explanation is also an active profession of his own belief. Furthermore, if we bear in mind the ways (discussed above) in which the audience is encouraged to assume the voice of the poet, then we begin to see how receiving the poem can also function in much the same way; even the very fact of having an ‘I’ speaking the creed means that it is much harder to retreat from directly appropriating this devotional voice.³⁸ We can thus comprehend the didactic mechanism of the poem as one of teaching *by doing*; the poet explains the creed in a way that is also *performing* the creed, and the audience understands the creed through actively engaging in the performance of it as well.

³⁷ I. e. *Et in unum dominum / Jhesum Christum [...] / per quem omnia facta sunt. / Ich geloube an sinen einborn sun / Jhesum Cristum [...]* (ll. 179–90).

³⁸ On the use of the first person to encourage an engaged and active reception, see SUTHERLAND (note 17).

To take a step further, we could go so far as to suggest a similarity between the reception of this poem and of the creed (in its conventional context). The Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed would, as we have seen, have been spoken or sung on behalf of the congregation; its context, therefore, is one in which someone else is appropriating one's own first-person term of reference. The person speaking the creed is both speaking for themselves and for others, and as such the first-person 'I' is both a personal, singular 'I' and a communal 'I', the 'I' that brings together the community of believers. The recipients are then encouraged to internalize and make their own the voice that speaks for them, and thus to participate in some way in this external performance. The first-person voice in the 'Rede' is not dissimilar. It is a voice that is both its own voice (and a voice of someone authoritative), and a voice that is equally the voice of those listening to it.

This comparison is, however, limited, for the poem is not and never can be the creed. It may resemble a ritual performance and function in a similar kind of way, but it can never be (nor should it be) a ritual performance in its own right. It can, however, help its audience to engage with the 'real' performance of the creed in a more mentally and spiritually active fashion thanks to the new understanding gained. The decontextualisation of the liturgy means, therefore, that it could potentially take on a new dimension when recontextualised; it is transformed for the audience thanks to their own transformation (into better Christians), which is itself enabled through the performance of the creed in the new context of the poem. Transformation is set into motion in the poem through the direct statement of "I will explain something to you", but is in fact effected through much more complex and creative means.

Conclusion: voice and page

The effectiveness of the creed in its liturgical context depends on its fixed, written basis – it is a spoken utterance with a textual grounding, and it is this textual grounding that enables reliable and meaningful iteration. Hartmann stresses this textual basis in his 'Rede', stating that he quotes the creed *so man in den buchen vindit* [as one finds it in books] (l. 60). Such a statement need not suggest that Hartmann refers to one specific written source, but rather that a framework of bookish authority is central to the effectiveness of his teaching.³⁹

Such authority is not just important for the creed, but also for the poem as a whole. Despite his clear determination to share voice with his audience, Hartmann demonstrates a self-

³⁹ KÜHN (note 18), p. 291, thinks that this direct connection Hartmann makes to written sources sits oddly with his unusual variants on the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed.

awareness as an author in a manner that is surprising for a vernacular text of this period. When discussing the Last Judgement, he says that he will not go into too much detailed because he has written about it elsewhere, and his audience can refer to that work instead:

nu newolle wir nuwit langer	an dirre rede hangen,
wande wir hie vore haben geredet,	vil bescheidenliche geseget,
alse wir von den wisen han vernomen,	wi iz dan alliz sal comen
zo deme grozem urteile	der werelt algemeine.
daz nehabe wir niwit vermeiden,	iz ist alliz gescriben
ze gehorenne unde ze gesichte	in dutiscer scrifte.
swer daz buch wille lesen,	der mach iz alliz da vernemen,
so wirz mit unsen sinnen	aller best mohten vinden. (ll. 1625–40)

[Now we do not want to continue any longer / with this matter, / because we have spoken of it before, / talked of it very clearly / as we heard it from the learned men, / how everything will come / to the great judgement / of all the world. / We have not avoided this at all, / it is all written down / to be heard and seen / in German writing. / Whoever wants to read the book / can hear it all there, / as we could best find it / with all our intelligence.]

This remarkable statement raises a number of questions about Hartmann’s audience, his own social position and the status of German textual production at the time of writing, all of which merit more extensive exploration than I am able to undertake within the bounds of this essay. For a start, the suggestion that the audience could *lesen* [read] and that the text was there *ze gesichte* [to be seen] as well as *ze gehorenne* [to be heard] seems to throw doubt on the argument that they were uneducated *tumben*. On the other hand, the possibility of reading might not necessarily refer to actual or plausible conditions of reception but perhaps to the biblical meaning of the conceptual pair of ‘hearing and seeing’ as a means of receiving religious teachings and messages.⁴⁰ Most important in the context of this exploration, though, is that the passage is saturated with words both of *voice* (*geredet*; *geseget*; *vernomen*; *gehorenne*; *vernemen*) and of *page* (*gescriben*; *gesichte*; *scrifte*; *buch*). This may well, as argued by D. H. GREEN, point to Hartmann as one of the earliest vernacular authors to thematize explicitly the possibility of mixed reception,⁴¹ but equally the combination of voice and page can be seen as key to the didactic enterprise which relies on the interplay of shared voice and identity between author and audience on the one hand and written, authorial

⁴⁰ See for instance Mark 4: 9, Matthew 11: 15 and 13: 16. In the words of KÜHN (note 18), p. 34, “Das bereitwillige ‘Hören und Sehen’ wird zu einem Bekennermerkmal der Gläubigen, wohingegen der Ungläubige dadurch gekennzeichnet wird, dass er sich den Worten Christi ‘verschließt’.”

⁴¹ D. H. GREEN, *Medieval Listening and Reading. The primary reception of German literature 800–1300*, Cambridge 1994, p. 226. GREEN suggests that Hartmann is the earliest author to use some form of the “double formula” *hoeren oder lesen* [listen to or read].

authority on the other. Whereas GREEN takes the presence of both voice and page in a literal (and not invalid) sense as evidence of mixed reception, I take them in this instance more metaphorically as emblems of different didactic strategies, characterized respectively as the possibility of sharing a common voice and the impossibility of sharing the didactic authority of the written work. The references to reading need not, therefore, imply that Hartmann's audience could themselves read but that his other text – and by extension this one as well – are conceived as written objects that have the potential to be read: Hartmann's corpus is fixed and authoritative. Much like the creed itself, Hartmann's poem has a written basis, which not only enhances its status but also suggests a reliable repeatability – this text is a devotional performance that has the potential to be *done again*.

The possibility of active engagement and participation in the 'performance' of the text is therefore dependent on the maintenance of written authority, both of the text itself and of the creed on which it is based. Earlier in the essay I discussed the opening of the poem in order to show how the purpose of the didactic enterprise and the various roles (teacher, learner) inherent within it were established. These roles were then, as we have seen, broken down in some way in the course of the poem. At its end, however, they are reestablished. Before concluding with a short prayer, the poet speaks of:

di da horent sprechen dise rede rechen,
di ich arme Hartman von deme heiligen gelouben han getan (ll. 3735–3738)

[those who heard said / this well-ordered discourse, / which I, Arme Hartmann, / have made about the sacred faith.]

Any identity between first-person voice and audience is dissolved; the voice is now the teacher again, the audience those who hear and learn. The poem is once more quite clearly determined as a teaching text: it is a *rede* about the creed. The poet also restates his own humility, referring to himself as *arm* [poor] and then referring to the inadequacy of his enterprise: *Konde wir unse rede baz, / gerne tete wir daz* [If we could make this discourse any better, then we would do it gladly] (ll. 3743–3744). We have, therefore, gone full circle, and returned to the roles set out at the opening of the poem. Such a clear framing of a poem that seems to depend on performative participation is striking yet not surprising. As we have seen, the flexibility of the voice, the fluid implied ownership or agency of the voice is predicated on textual strategies; the possibility of the repetition of this fluidity is only guaranteed by at least some sort of textual (written) stability. The possibility of repetition is also predicated upon the fact of clear circumscription, for one cannot repeat something unless it is clearly articulated, i.e. it has an end. Hence we return to one sense of 'performance' discussed earlier, which is

‘something complete’, or ‘something finished’. For all its delicate blurring of the roles of teacher and student, speaker and listener, learned and ignorant, for the ‘Rede’ to be a performance in this sense it must return to its audience the clearly articulated distinctions with which it began.