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## Atlantis from the Anthropocene: Anja Kampmann's Poems in *der hund ist immer hungrig*

### Abstract

The article examines how the three classically intended timelines (past, present, future) merge into the images of various landscapes (e.g. contaminated landscapes, scenarios of remnants), profoundly modified by human action and will. This subject matter will be addressed through the literary analysis, grounded on ecopoetic and ecocritical theory, of a selection of poems recently published within the collection *der hund ist immer hungrig* (2021) by a German writer and poet, Anja Kampmann.

**Keywords:** poetry in the Anthropocene, Anja Kampmann, contaminated landscape, Atlantis, Ark

### 1. “die zukunft und alles / was war”: an Introduction

The concept of “landscape” is commonly, though synthetically, interpreted as a portion of natural elements, gathered by the gaze into a harmonious *unicum*, which, from a subjective perspective, appears as a frameable unit (“Landscape” OED online): it is not incidental that this term was first used in art to indicate a particular painting genre, depicting views of pleasant natural scenarios (Jakob 2022: 14; Grisoli & Xie 2023; 343). In a way, it represents the visual declination of a *locus amoenus*, as well as an idealized image through which it seems possible to restore, at least artistically, the balance between human life and its environment. The contemporary era might be interpreted as “landscape’s age”, or more accurately as “omni-landscape’s age”, according to Michael Jakob, who adopts this term to characterize the high degree of its replication and diffusion (Jakob [2008]2009: 7). However, while on a daily basis we are subjected to landscape reproductions with aestheticizing tendencies, or a harmonizing “*Stimmung*”, the atmosphere or tonality conferring a sense of unity to the observed elements (Simmel 1913), Anja Kampmann, German poet and writer born in 1983, brings to life a multifaceted scenario, in which a highly poetic use of lights

and contrasts lets emerge scenes of personal and collective memories, often troubled by disturbing (or disturbed) environmental subjectivities. The traversed landscape is often constituted of barren soils, unnatural heat, intoxicated living beings, problematic historical events, or genetically modified animals and clones.

Rather than unveiling an idyllic topography, her poetry gradually reveals the deadly reality of the Anthropocene, a new geological era marked by human activity and its worldwide effects on the environment. The term “Anthropocene”, coined in the 1980s by biologist Eugene Stoermer, and later used together with Dutch Nobel Prize-winning chemist Paul Crutzen (2000: 17–18), refers to “the epoch of geological time during which human activity is considered to be the dominant influence on the environment, climate, and ecology of the earth, a formal chrono-stratigraphic unit with a base which has been tentatively defined as the mid-twentieth century” (“Anthropocene” OED online). The by now indelible trace of human activities on earth, destined to be visible for millions of years to come (Lewis, Maslin 2015: 171), obliges us to modify our conception of time and “our understanding of pasts, presents, and futures” (Wenzel 2018: 502) in order to reflect on the proximity to events that are reshaping the Earth’s face. Hence, “[r]ather than being a mere technical question of stratigraphy, [...] humanity’s geological agency and the nature and extent of the changes we have wrought on the Earth system raise problems of scale for the human imagination, necessitating new ways of thinking that are vastly more global and historical in scope than the narrow spatio-temporal confines of our ordinary daily lives tend to allow” (Craps 2018: 499). Instead of a straightforward flowing and homogenous progression, we assist to the coexistence of a “plurality of moments”, to quote Bergson ([1896] 1991: 219), that inhabit a peculiar *timespace* (Bal 2020: 122), observable in the structure of Earth, in atmospheric components or in the lithosphere, material archives and predictive sediments for the environment. As a consequence, on such a “palimpsestic planet” (Wenzel 2018: 503), human lives are involved “in a kind of deep-time negative capability, inducting us into the strangeness of a temporality that vastly exceeds both personal experience and intergenerational memory” (Farrier 2019: 5). In a viscous inhomogeneous shape, the contemporary moment encapsulates memory and prophecy, past and future, inseparable layers of the same reality.

The extension of human impact on a global scale, both intended in spatial and temporal terms, as well as the redefinition of the human subject, “as co-constituted through its intra-actions with the vibrant matter of the non-human” (Goodbody 2017: 266) constitute some peculiar characteristics of the poetic expression proper to the current geological era, as in Axel Goodbody’s theorization of ‘Poetry in the Anthropocene’. Within her collection of poems *der hund ist immer hungrig*, published by Carl Hanser Verlag in 2021, Anja Kampmann has addressed the ongoing intersection of human history with geological time (Morton 2013: 37) not only thematically, but also by means of stylistic devices, highlighting the porosity in time’s matter through the use of a peculiar verb tense. It is the German future perfect, known as “Futur II”<sup>1</sup>, which expresses what, in a future time, will constitute the past. The semantic structure of this grammatical form encompasses several timelines not only from a conceptual perspective, but also by its formal features, since it consists of the juxtaposition of the verb *werden* (‘to become’) conjugated in the present tense (though functioning as an auxiliary to indicate a future action), the past participle of the main verb, and the infinitive of the auxiliary *to be* or *to have*. The past, present, and future merge into one another, highlighting a specific topic of the collection: the imprint that current human life is

1 Anja Kampmann during her speech for *Eventi letterari del Monte Ventoso* (2 April 2023), introduces the topic of *Futur II*. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNt7bCX0RwI> on 30 June 2023.

leaving on earth's surface, and what is going to be left to future generations. In this context, calling back to a quotation from Roger Willemsen's *Zukunftsrede* (2018: 25), Anja Kampmann wonders in one of her poems, *ganz in weiß*, "was wird man sagen / falls man fragt wer / wir mal waren" (Kampmann 2021: 59, ll. 35–37), "what will one say / if asked who / we once have been"<sup>2</sup>. As from a rear-view mirror, she looks at the present life, gazing at ruins from the past or at predictive rubbles of some future times<sup>3</sup>, she looks at "die zukunft und alles / was war" (Kampmann 2021: 13), "the future and everything that has been".

As Roger Willemsen (2018) has theorized, "future has become the perspective on my vision of the present", and such a renewed vision of current events has unsettled the temporal distinctions concerning representation. In pursuing the following analysis within Anja Kampmann's collection *der hund ist immer hungrig*, three key concepts will be addressed, namely contamination, ark, and Atlantis, in the attempt to establish a link between a palimpsestic conception of time and its recognizability in the landscape.

## 2. Fractals of Time in "Contaminated Landscapes"

The understanding of temporal stratification in landscape's conceiving, especially in what concerns the retrieval of traces from the past, crosses the concept of "contamination" in the sense theorized by Martin Pollack in his study on European landscapes, which, despite an unspoiled and pristine appearance, hide mass graves dating back to collective murders conducted during the Second World War by the related regimes (Pollack [2014] 2016: 26). Behind the perpetration of such massacres there was a precise will to erase memory, as testified by the choice of remote places, and by the accuracy in deleting completely or covering up any trace that could have revealed the position of the buried corpses, their identity or the execution itself (*ivi*). In this sense, contamination affects various levels of territorial life: firstly, it causes the modification of landscape's features, since the executors would conceal graves' locations through the camouflage with natural elements of the area, through implantation of new vegetation or by rearranging the turned over soil; secondly, the memory of buried people is forever compromised and made inaccessible, with consequent corruption of the place's spiritual connotation; thirdly, the mutation in soil's components can affect the life and balance of the whole ecosystem, including human and non-human life, vegetal and inorganic elements. What emerges from Pollack's study is that, in an attempt to restore the memory of victims, massacres, and landscapes, it is necessary to focus on forgotten territories, and on human stories appearing in the books merely as cumulative numbers: the answers for future generations lay on the rim of time.

In *der hund ist immer hungrig*, contamination of temporal layering emerges in a visual sense already from the paratextual element of the volume's cover, verbally reflected in the first poem as well as in the author's footnotes. What the cover presents is the partial reproduction of a fresco set in a grove, with trees and bushes of different kinds (sycamore, ash, apple or cherry tree, reed and rose bushes), spreading out in a fractal scheme, in a repetition and progressive expansion within the painting's space. Embedded in the foliage, a man, apparently a hunter, advances accompanied by his hound which grabs, or rather rips through, another not clearly identified non-human animal, perhaps a deer, partly overlapping with it. This

2 Unless otherwise indicated, translations are those by the author.

3 "To "see" is a really common verb within the collection, mostly occurring in past tenses, and both referred to the lyrical-I, and to a more comprehensive *we* (Kampmann 2021: 10, 55, 74, 36, 82, 92).

hunting scene is a detail from the *Chambre du cerf* (“Deer Room”), located in Avignon Papal Palace, where Pope Clement VI, who had commissioned the fresco, had spent the year 1348 (Kampmann 2021: 113). Back to that time, two events had recently and profoundly shaken the life and shape of the continent: an earthquake in Friuli and the Eastern Alps, and the outbreak of bubonic plague: “hungrily the black breath spread across the land” (Kampmann [2021] 2022: 1, l. 20), through soil’s folds, being carried by tiny, quite imperceptible beings, always relegated to the margins of social life: fleas and mice, which threatened to penetrate even those woods-walls behind which Clement sought protection.

The verses of the first poem, entitled *es war das jahr* (“it was the year”, *ivi*), not only *re-construct* these scenarios through an ekphrastic poetic translation, but they also reveal the deep temporal stratification underlying it.

*es war das jahr*

es war das jahr in dem sich alles  
 beugte wars schlechte luft ein gas  
 vielleicht von jenem großen beben im friaul

was solls er hörte sagen hörte zahlen  
 der schwarze schlechte garten pest  
 war nun herangedrängt bis an die mauern des palasts

und es war sommer heiß  
 und clemens saß zwischen zwei feuern  
 er blieb er ließ sich bringen holz

und wein. und saß  
 zwischen zwei feuern  
 in manchen nächten stahl er sich hinein

sah alle jagd und sah den hunger  
 an den wänden hunde falcken hirschjagd  
 kritzeleien es war das jahr der pest

ein jahr das keines war die flammen  
 nur als farbe stiegen auf

ein negativbereich vor dem die spuren  
 dieser träume seltsam schwankten

und hungrig strich der schwarze atem übers land  
 im negativbereich verzerrt zwischen zwei feuern  
 saß clemens um ihn leuchtete die angst

gib mir ein bild gib mir die hohen  
 wände gib mir ein spiel gib mir die jagd

und jenen dunklen wald in dem sich  
 unergründlich suchen lässt  
 der weg  
 und der vorangeht kennt die spur

und der vorangeht kennt das schicksalslied der wünsche  
das ich sang.<sup>4</sup> (Kampmann 2021: 5–6)

The fairytale incipit of the poem (“es war”, l. 1) introduces right from the beginning its prevalent verbal tense, the *Präteritum*, which aims to express actions having taken place in remote pasts and theoretically having exhausted their consequences in the present. However, the narrated events hide a peculiar bond between 1348 – the year that was not (“das keines war”, l. 16), unspecified in the text but indicated in the footnotes –, and the writing time: the pandemic. The elements connecting the Black Death with Sars Covid-19 can be recognized in different occasions such as the reference to *bad air* (“schlechte luft”, l. 2), or the *heard* numbers and counting (l. 4), or the voluntary Clement’s isolation in the *Chambre*, which echoes the lockdown experience. As declination of contaminated landscapes (as in Pollack’s definition), the Covid-19 and Black Plague pandemics additionally pose comparable problems when it comes to the burial of deceased infected bodies. If in 14th century corpses would have commonly been buried in mass graves (Haensch *et al.* 2010: 3), during Covid pandemics, they were, at least partially, deprived of their identity, packed in specific anti-infection obscuring bags and declared untouchable ever after (Umair 2021: 84–85). Kampmann’s poetic *tableau* thickens the sense of time and distance through content and formal devices, as the overlapping of Clement’s direct speech in the present tense with the voice of narration in *Präteritum* demonstrates. Timelines’ multiplication permits to distinguish subjective visions and encounters in a collective event, it detaches individual experiences from a *symbiotic*, undefined surrounding, echoing the *Chambre du cerfs* technique, rare in the period, where human and non-human figures merge with and emerge from a dark, arborical background: “Man is not the dominating, often exclusive element anymore; nature is not reduced to an almost abstract indication anymore. It envelops human activity, which gets unfolded but by nature” (Roques 1960: 280).

If past and present events clearly appear in the poem’s verses, the sense of futurity may be detected with the aid of paratextual elements. In the footnotes Kampmann cites, in fact, a passage extracted from Francesco Petrarca’s epistolary poem on the plague, entitled *Ad seipsum*, in which he expresses his concerns about the future mnemonic legacy of those tragic, deathly events devastating Europe in that period, as well as the overwhelming feeling of powerlessness brought on by the epidemic: “The reason is probably God’s wrath, for I am convinced that our sins merit it; but perhaps it is only the disfavor of heaven as a result of a change in nature?” (Kampmann [2021] 2022: 1). In 1348, nature had registered some changes for which humans were recognized as responsible and these mutations manifested already through the strange and alienating perception of air, an omen of misfortune: air corruption was considered to be a cause of the plague during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The prophecy *motiv* is directly evoked in the poem’s last lines, by referring to the ‘fateful song of desire’ (l. 29), intoned by the lyrical-I and known by who is conducting the expedition in the woods, preceding the lyrical-I both in time and space.

4 “it was the year” (Kampmann [2021] 2022: 1): “it was the year in which everything/ bowed was it bad air a gas/ perhaps from that great quake in friuli// so what he heard it said heard the numbers/ the black bad garden plague/ had now advanced to the walls of the palace// and it was summer hot/ and clement sat between two fires/ he stayed he had wood brought// and wine. and sat/ between two fires/ some nights he stole into the hall// saw all hunt and saw the hunger/ on the walls ho-unds falcons stag hunt/ scribblings it was the year of the plague// a year not here the flames/ rose only as color// a negative range where traces/ of these dreams staggered strangely// and hungrily the black breath spread across the land// in negative range torn between two fires/ clement sat around him flickered fear// give me an image give me the high/ walls give me a game give me the hunt// and that dark wood/ where it can be mysteriously sought/ the way/ and who leads catches the scent// and who leads knows the fateful song of desires/ that I sang.”

A similar pattern in terms of contaminated timelines and sights is retrievable in the poem entitled *duvenstedter brook* (Kampmann 2021: 15), which emphasizes the need to comprehend historical events in the present the way they may affect our perception of the surroundings. In Hamburg “they say it wasn’t so bad” (*ivi*, l.1), since a Nazi Party official, close to Hitler and Göring and called “good *Gauleiter*”, Karl Kaufmann was administrating the city as *Reichstatthalter* (Kampmann [2021] 2022: 3). As Kampmann points out, however, there is no historical evidence of his generosity or kindness: as a matter of fact, he was among those in charge of sending Jews, opponents of the regime, homosexuals, and Romani to the first concentration camp, Konzentrationslager Fuhlsbüttel (Diercks 2005: 113), which he had personally authorized (*ivi*) in September 1933.

“Beginning in 1937, Kaufmann dedicated great effort to introducing red deer into the Duvenstedter Brook” (Kampmann [2021] 2022: 3), a park in Hamburg, for hunting reasons, by eradicating the animals from various European countries (such as Poland and France). If the attitude towards the deer, addressed as “*vieh*”, l.2, “livestock”, and “*das wild*” (l. 14), “game”, “wild animals”, reveals his will to preserve them only to satisfy his pleasures, humans are forced to face a similar cruel destiny and, deprived of their “worth” (ll. 10–11), they are uprooted, deported, chased, killed. Under his responsibility, as *Reich* commissioner for the navy traffic, almost 9000 people, already displaced in concentration camps, and then temporarily hidden on ships “*Cap Arcona*” and “*Thielbeck*”, died after the Ally bombing of Lübeck in 1944, burnt alive or executed by Germans before they could escape (Schawe 2010: 45). The “*soul gasps*” (l. 8), quoted after Paul Celan’s poem *Schneepart*, remain imperceptible to ear and sight, unknown to nowadays visitors of a paradisiac landscape that complements the still ongoing “splendid” multiplication of the deer (l. 19).

### 3. A Question of Naming: The Ark for an Altered, Mutated Posterity

If in *duvenstedter brook* land and landscape’s signs have let the secret and inaccessible stratification of events emerge, leading, or at least aspiring, to a *contaminated* resignification of the surrounding and of its understanding, poetry itself welcomes Anthropocene material changes and becomes the terrain for a specular resemantization, an alteration in language and imagery. The way Scaffai reconsiders the role of literature in such a context, namely as the “possibility of interpreting both ancient and present times, succeeding in being part of a continuum in which natural images acquire new meanings” (2017: 187), is thematized in a specific group of poems in *der hund ist immer hungrig*. The title of this section is *ein anderes blau*, “another blue”, which recalls a verse from Rolf Dieter Brinkmann’s *Gedicht* (1975: 41), “*Ich gehe in / ein anderes Blau*” (“I go into another blue”). In Brinkmann’s poem the lyrical-I wanders among the rests of a “[z]erstörte Landschaft” (‘collapsed landscape’, *ivi*, l. 1), experiencing otherness also through the estranging exposure to the profoundly altered metaphorical range of the colour “blue”. From Novalis’s “blue flower” to David Bowie’s “electric blue” (Röhnert 2017: 345), its chromatic experience works as a “*Südwort*” in Benn’s sense (for whom blue represents the South-Word “*schlechthin*”, *par excellence*, and which is evoked by Brinkmann’s verse as well), letting emerge “a primitive dimension, [...] an anamnesis” (Di Noi 2011: 136), the fragmented residues of a mythical reminiscence, multiplied by Brinkmann’s addressing to contemporary changes and by his glancing towards the future (“*Das blaue Futur*”, Brinkmann 1975: 102).

The poem opening Anja Kampmann's mentioned section unfolds a similar multifaceted anamnesis, it thickens "the present with an awareness of the other times and places" (Farrier 2019: 9). Its title, *deep blue* (Kampmann 2021: 29), conceals the identity of the first IBM computer capable of defeating the back then chess world champion Gary Kasparov ("unser held" "our hero" *ivi*: 114). In depicting the challenge disputed between humanity and machine, the reader witnesses the alterations in referentiality of metaphoric images inspired by a spiritual understanding of the surroundings: "they called him deep blue / maybe because they still believed / in the ocean and its ancient power" (Kampmann [2021] 2022: 5, ll. 1–3). The act of attributing a name embodies the estranging experience of an unprecedented relationship between environment, and new products of human action. Considered as an archetypical act, the Religions of the Book entrust the process of denomination to the hypothesis of Adam's infused science, expressing – as Beer discerns in *Darwin's Plots* – a close relationship between the role of language and anthropocentrism:

If the material world is not anthropocentric but language is so, the mind cannot be held truly to encompass and analyse the properties of the world that lie about it. Only by giving up the will to dominate the material world and to relate it to our own needs, conditions, and sensibilities will it be possible for us to find a language that gives proper attention to the nature of things. (Beer 1983: 45)

Hence, poetry, language and literature are invested in a fundamental responsibility: they must gradually abandon the desire to dominate the world and move away from what has long been regarded as the centre of the world, humankind. It invites us to welcome the margins, and their inhabitants, the "Randfiguren"<sup>5</sup>; human, non-human, inorganic. What is also true is that the commonality of destinies shared with non-human otherness had already been explored, among many, by Lucretius in the 1st century b. C., who did "nothing but repeat that the world was not made for us. Man is not its ruler. He is not superior to animals, his soul dies with his body" (Anedda 2022: 133). Notwithstanding this early warning, the future echo of his *lectio* remains forgotten and unheard. Similarly, the Anthropocene reveals how the progressive technological imposition of human needs damages the planet's other inhabitants, the sign of an apparently irreversible abandonment of the interspecies *kinship* Donna Haraway wrote of, especially referring to our connection and responsibility towards other life forms on earth (Haraway 2016: 2). To adequately face the danger of a centripetal tendency and progressive detachment from environmental elements, it appears necessary to reframe space as something "traversed, populated, occupied by a multitude of living beings endowed with different intentions" (Besse [2018] 2020: 23). Such an attitude reflects the protective scheme of the Ark, Noah's Ark, thanks to which most of the animals inhabiting earth during the Flood managed to survive (metaphorically) in the Genesis, until the present day. Through its defensive structure the ark "gathers and saves voices from the abyss of events" (Miglio 2022: 154), while its open side enables connections and "exchanges of (internal and external) spaces, of (past and future) times" (*ivi*: 158). As a consequence, the ark represents a bond among beings and a promise of bridging different timelines, of letting various voices – including the forgotten or inaudible ones –, and residues of a changing reality overcome the troubling contemporary moment. The possibility of the ark, intended as future legacy, is nurtured, contained, questioned within the arch of existence of the species, "mosaiksteinchen der arten"

5 Anja Kampmann expressed her interest in figures, usually marginalized by social life and literary representation, in her novel *Wie hoch die Wasser steigen* (2018), which deals with the workers' experience on oil drilling platform in the Atlantic.

(“tesserae of the species”, Kampmann 2021 [2022]: 110, l. 102) composing a world intended as a “knot in motion” (Haraway 2003: 6).

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I understand species as ‘flight ways’ [...], something like a ‘line of movement’ through evolutionary time. But it is much more than an empty trajectory, [...] species are engaged in an ongoing intergenerational process of *becoming* [...] in which individual organisms are [...] ‘participants’ in an ongoing and evolving way of life. [...] What is tied together is not ‘the past’ and ‘the future’ as abstract temporal horizons, but real embodied generations – ancestors and descendants – in rich but imperfect relationships of inheritance, nourishment, and care. These are knots *of* and *in* time. (Van Doreen 2014; 27–29)

Species are knots of a constantly negotiated thread that connects inheritance and future modifications when viewed through the prism of the present. Along this *flight way*, however, the Anthropocene has been troubling “temporal patterns of life and death, of being and becoming” (Bastian, Van Doreen 2017; 6), by playing with *immortality* in an unprecedented way.

Cloning experiments certainly represent an example of anthropogenic alteration of a lineage. This topic is addressed by Kampmann’s poem *an aiken cura* (“to aiken cura” *ivi*: 6), which deals with the story of the Argentinian polo horse Aiken Cura. After its death in 2006 due to a fall, the horse *owner*, Adolfo Cambiaso, decided to clone Aiken Cura, by recurring to the process of nuclear transfer from cells extracted out of the horse’s chest (the same technique used for Dolly, the first sheep clone). Aiken Cura is considered one of the first horse-clones in history.

#### **an aiken cura**

I  
 du wirst besessen immer noch  
 und ob du weißt was dir geschah  
 die frage nach dem rand aus dem man kommt  
 du zwiebelchen, du stück aus deiner haut  
 ich weiß nicht ob du weißt du bist nun du-du du-du du  
 was wundert. dein ende nach dem sturz  
 kein ende. wurd per pipette annulliert  
 ich denk mich in die mitte deiner was – im stall  
 acht mal dieselbe blässe nüstern pferdekopf und bein  
 wie eine halluzination auf stroh  
 wo keine krippe und kein sternenlicht  
 doch lass – dann trittst du vor die kamera  
 im schwung im schwung du weißt acht mal  
 und auf dem feld macht das keinen unterschied  
 wie krieg wo acht soldaten einer werden  
 wenn sie fallen ich sah  
 dich ja. ich sah dich schnell und donnernd  
 weit entfernt von tante dolly auf dem polofeld  
 aus mikroskop pipette und geduld  
 wurd gold. und die medaille treuer freund  
 wer nahm sie an? der ahn  
 das hautstück brust



oder der nachfahrfahr fahrfahr-fahrfahr-fahrfahr  
 (du hörst, es klingt schon wie galopp)  
 mit seiner schönen blässe? ich frag  
 wer stand denn da  
 warst du's  
 warst du nun da  
 an dem medaillentag?

## II

ach lieber nachfahrfahr  
 und dein galopp hält worauf zu?<sup>6</sup> (Kampmann 2021: 115–116)

The existence of a cloned being generates a parallel direction of the *flight way*, blurring the lines that separate past, present and future, now mingled into an indefinite nimbus. The present appears uncanny and paradoxical due to the existence of a cloned horse, which, according to past events, should have been dead. The future, in addition, is completely dubious, and uncertain, when it comes to Aiken Cura's potentially infinite lineage.

Cloning processes and the consequent ethical issues invest various communicative levels of the poem. In the first place, a precise rhythmic structure, characterized by the reiterated and prevalent use of iambus, replicates the image and sound of the disyllabic word "galopp" (ll. 27, 34). The insisted repetition of this rhythm and of the gallop gait reaches the last verse, with the meaningful and rhetorical question "und dein galopp hält worauf zu?" (l. 34), which echoes and contradicts the poem's incipit "du wirst besessen immer noch" (l.1).

Besides its rhythmic reflection, the cloning procedures emerge in *an aiken cura* through a careful repetition of sounds and words, as the case of the pronoun "du", "you" (lines 1, 2, 4, 5, 12, 13, 27, 28), and of the noun "nachfahrfahr", translated by Anne Posten as "descendantant" (Kampmann [2021] 2022: 6–7). Even though in German the term "Nachfahr" indicates the concept of posterity, the repetition of the word's second element, "-fahr", represents Kampmann's intention of giving resonance to the particular life status of the horse. Within the collection, the term "nachfahrfahr" recurs every time the author deals with the cloning processes<sup>7</sup>, although it is in *an aiken cura* that the word appears for the first time. The internal composition of the German word for "descendant" reveals a further link with the topic of the poem, since it implies a movement ("fahren") towards a direction ("nach", which also means "after" and "according to"), echoing the dynamism of a horse race, and an action that survives time to reach the future.

6 "to aiken cura" (Kampmann [2021] 2022: 6-7): "I//you still belong/ whether or not you know what they did to you/ the question of the edge from which one comes/ dear bulblet, dear piece of your own skin/ I don't know if you know you're now you-you you-you you/ a wonder. your end after the fall/ no end. annulled by a pipette/ I think myself into the middle of your what—in the stall/ eight times the same pale nostrils horsehead and leg/ like a hallucination on straw/ with no manger and no starlight/ leave it—then you're in front of the camera/ going going you know eight times/ and on the field it makes no difference/ like in war where eight soldiers become one/ as they fall yes I/ saw you. I saw you thundering fast/ far from aunt dolly on the polo field/ from microscope pipette and patience/ pays off. and the medal faithful friend/ who accepted it? the forebear/ the piece of breastskin/ or the descendantant antant-antant-antant/ (listen, it already sounds like a gallop)/ with its beautiful pallor? I'm asking/ who stood there/ was it you/ were you there/ on that day with the medal?//II// Ah dear descendantant/ and your gallop is heading towards what?"

7 Some examples of the term may be detected in the following poems: *chase* (36–37); *das blaue seigel (pleistozänpark)* (47–50); *ganz in weiß* (58–60).

As in *deep blue*, the reader witnesses the necessity to invent a new word that can describe an unprecedented phenomenon, the issue of attributing a name to “an animal or (theoretically) a person that is developed asexually from its parent to whom it is genetically identical” (‘Clone’ OED online). Again, mutation is reflected in language and imagery, profoundly contaminated by this technological *birth*. Scientific lexicon, related to the cloning process (e.g., “pipette” ll. 7, 19; “dolly” l. 18; “mikroskop” l. 19; “hautstück” l. 22), or to horse races (“stall” l. 8; “polofeld” l. 11; “schwung” l. 13; “medaille” ll. 20, 29; “galopp” ll. 24, 31), is juxtaposed to religious expressions referred to birth, nativity, and death: the reminded cloned animals, for example, are generated through breast skin, in analogy to Eve creation from Adam’s rib; the poem mentions the manger and the starlight (l. 11), or the horse’s “thundering” pace (l. 17), adjective with biblical and mythic resonances.

Lexical choices and sound structures lead to the last two lines, which conceal the ethical implications of a potentially infinite gallop gait: how can human beings genetically modify the *flight ways* of other species? How should the product of their technique be named, if it consists of replication and generation of new, yet paradoxical, descendants? By amplifying the inquiry uttered at the end of *deep blue* (“which blue do you believe / we’ll see today?”; *ivi*: 5, ll. 16–17) in light of an uncertain and potentially catastrophic future, Kampmann hopes that humans will be able to assume a defensive and protective stance toward other forms of life to forge a caring and sensitive kinship that will allow them to survive anthropogenic derangement.

#### 4. An Atlantis from the Anthropocene: Conclusion

To gradually conclude our study, we will review the idea in the paper’s title – that is, the concept of Atlantis, the legendary land that has more than any other captivated scientists, philosophers and explorers, inspiring them to search for its vestiges (Eco 2013: 182). The *motiv* of a sunken island hiding mysterious realities is peculiarly evoked within Kampmann’s collection. As a matter of fact, besides weakening time boundaries, it is interpreted as a warning, for present and future generations, about the image of our world and society that is destined to survive and transcend our lives: it represents an omen, the author’s “fateful song” evoked in the first poem. However, if the relicts of the future sunken island traditionally hide golden palaces and statues, the future Atlantis of Anthropocene unfolds an industrial rotten and spoiled reality.

In a poem, which pairs the title’s collection, *der hund ist immer hungrig* (Kampmann 2021: 33, “the dog is always hungry” [2021] 2022: 8), this scenario becomes perceivable, framed by a resigned lyrical-I. The landscape emerging from the verses is literally contaminated, poisoned, due to fracking activity that has been polluting freshwater in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada (Kampmann 2021: 114), while in the nearby Six Nations Reservation, Nestlé has been extracting millions of liters of water. Inhabitants of the area are deprived of their access to drinking water. The terrain is soaked with chemical agents; any living being is prevented from touching fracking surfaces (the population would shoot in the air to drive birds away from the polluted area); the deprivation of the only “good stuff” (“gute pump”, l. 6), which has ended up “bottled by a swiss company” (*ivi*), endangers the whole biosphere. The resignation towards a spoiled ecosystem and a damaged social life is expressed through the repeated monosyllabic word “tja” (ll. 4, 5, 10, 18, translated by Posten as “huh”), which marks the abandonment of any hope for change. The poem’s title is inspired by the story of Michael David Beamish, appearing in the documentary film “*Dark Eden*”, and his dog, which, injured by a shot, rapidly lost its understanding of the surrounding reality.

An archeological vision of our current, *thick* time is pursued in the poem *atlantis*. In a persisting present, the land appears flat, still, totally covered with industries, wastes, products of anthropic activity. The surface becomes the subject of a doubly directed perspective: it is glanced at from above in an undefined predicting vision of the environmental characteristics, and it is crossed from below in a horizontal movement that allows the landscape elements to be distinguished in the spatial perception of an unnamed subject (e.g., “close to” l. 4 or “away from here” l. 10). The poem provides context for what’s left of our planet – a land disfigured by wounds and scars, a contaminated atmosphere.

*atlantis*

noch mal verschnaufen vor der wanderschaft  
 die hunde flach am tankstellenrand  
 den buckel aufgeheizt in frühjahrssonne und alte  
 paare neben abgerollten kabeltrommeln  
 das personal der luft sitzt schwarzgefiedert weiter oben  
 drei schafe trinken  
 braunes flaches land  
 und die laternen stehn mit langer kordel  
 angebunden als wäre pilgerschaft der plan  
 fort von hier die hütten ganz in sich verschlossen still  
 und ohne namen, nur pappelflackern richtung donau  
 brücken frachter ladekran  
 noch ein paar hohe schlote (silberluft) chemie  
 und alles scheint im gegenlicht  
 erschlossen. keksdosen goldene kanister  
 irgendwo am rand von einem öl aus sonnenblumen  
 man fragt ob alles längst vergossen  
 und eingesickert in den grund partikel  
 in der luft wie reste von atlanten  
 und doch  
 die hunde schlafen  
 und braten sich das fell.<sup>8</sup> (Kampmann 2021: 104)

In *atlantis*, Anja Kampmann permeates her poetic discourse with the effect of *estrangement*, defined as “the unattended perspective on a reality which, under other light, was or appeared known and familiar” (Scaffai 2017: 26). We therefore witness the juxtaposition of elements referring to a deeper connection with nature (“wanderschaft” l.1; “frühjahrssonne” l. 3; “pilgerschaft” l. 9; “pappelflackern” l. 11) and terms related, instead, to urban and industrial landscape (“tankstellenrand” l. 2; “kabeltrommeln” l. 4; “bracken frachter ladekran” l. 12; “schlote (silberluft) chemie” l. 13; “öl aus sonnenblumen” l. 16). This

8 “taking a breather again before wandering/ the dogs stretched on the rim of a service station/ hump heated in early year sun and old/ couples close to unrolled cable drum/ the air crew/ sits black-feathered further up/ three sheep drink/ brown flat land/ and the street lights tied up with a long cord/ as by planning of a pilgrimage/ away from here huts locked in themselves still/ and nameless. just poplars’ flicker towards Danube/ bridges freighter loading crane/ still a pair of chimneys (silver air) chemistry/ and in backlight everything seems/ tapped. cookies boxes golden cans/ somewhere on the rim of sunflower oil/ it is asked if everything spilled long ago/ and seeped into the ground particles/ in the air like remnants of atlantes/ and yet/ the dogs are sleeping/ and roasting their fur.”

alienating process produces a split in the readers' certainties: which of the two semantic groups appears more familiar? Is it the vocabulary linked to nature, although its conceiving results closer to an idealized idyllic past or some reflection of *wilderness*, inaccessible to many (Morton 2018), or is it the *wastescape*, which frequently populates, instead, the gaze over our surroundings? With its spatial traits and peculiar perceiving modalities, the poem *atlantis* constitutes a "literary landscape" (Jakob [2008] 2009), whose subject shows the catastrophe faced by nature and its representations during the Anthropocene, the transformation in their features from those pertaining a *locus amoenus* to the images of a daily ecocrisis. The reference to Atlantis, as legacy of our time, is connected to that of the atlas (l. 19), a cartographical instrument of territory's visualization, which is however destructed and dispersed in the environment. Both Atlantis and atlantes, objects and tools of representation, are but "remnants" (l. 19), corrupted "particles" of reality dripping in the ground, suspended in the air. The legacy of our time is this slow and constant pervading of exogenous elements in every form and aspect of life, it is pollution.

If there is a material, technological, and industrial pollution, which exposes weather to conceivable risks, then there is also a second pollution, invisible, which puts time in danger, a cultural pollution that we have inflicted on long-term thoughts, those guardians of the Earth, of humanity, and of things themselves. (Serres [1990] 1995)

Ecological crisis inevitably endangers the mnemonic and prophetic legacy of time, compromising both the possibility of dipping into a mythic past, whose imagery must be reconsidered and thought of along with environmental changes and human responsibility of their origin, and the hope to survive an uncertain future. Anja Kampmann appears to address the need to produce a multifaceted and dialogic temporal dimension, which, when broadened and thickened, is frequently prompted by a scene or environment that has been observed, reproduced, and reshaped. Deprived of idealizations, depictions of nature are investigated in terms of historical contaminations concerning their birth, in their potentiality of salvation or death for Earth species, and finally in their ability to represent the contemporary moment in futurity. "In a substantially altered world, when sea-level rise has swallowed the Sundarbans and made cities like Kolkata, New York and Bangkok uninhabitable, when readers and museumgoers turn to the art and literature of our time, will they not look, first, and most urgently, for traces and portents of the altered world of their inheritance?" (Ghosh 2016). If Ghosh is concerned about contemporary literature's failure in addressing the consequences of the ecocrisis and that our time will be, for this reason, recalled as the *Great Derangement* in the future, then Anja Kampmann, through her poetic language, profoundly altered by anthropic hybris acts, reflects on the urge to subvert human besieging of surrounding life and space. *der hund ist immer hungrig* might be interpreted as an appeal for solidarity among living beings, as well as an invitation for the Atlantis that will endure into our time, both past and present, and in the future as part of a community of never-separable or separate destinies.

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