

*In the Garden of Evil*

*The Vices and Culture  
in the Middle Ages*

Edited by  
RICHARD NEWHAUSER

The centrality of the moral tradition for understanding the so-called “civilizing processes” at work throughout the Middle Ages bears reiterating for the modern reader. In the development of medieval western culture a precise catalogue of moral entities, transmitted by the clerical estate, was one of the elements in the *instrumentarium* of the processes of restraining the “passion,” “affections,” and behavior, and the vices functioned as part of this apparatus of (self-) control.

In spite of many recent treatments of the vices in the Middle Ages, for modern scholarship to a large degree only one book has served as a comprehensive guide to this area of medieval thought. It has now been fifty years since the publication of Morton Bloomfield's pioneering *The Seven Deadly Sins*. The present collection of essays offers the best new scholarship on the vices and aims thus both to re-examine the work begun by Bloomfield and to suggest possibilities for future research in this field in the coming decades.

The essays approach their subject from a number of perspectives and disciplines that at times are at variance with each other, but they are all in agreement on the way in which the moral tradition, articulated generally (though not exclusively) in the notions of the capital vices and supplemented by other discourses, opens the way to an essential set of readings of the cultural forces—and cultural changes—scholarship has identified in the Middle Ages. Their regular method is to elucidate aspects of medieval culture by the categories of the seven capital vices, either individually or as a whole, either within a theological discourse or complementary to it. At the same time, some of the essays also point usefully to the limitations of that list of seven deadly sins as a whole. The categories contained in the series of capital vices were constantly in flux; their textures of meaning and their referential vocabulary varied from work to work and even within the usage of a single author. It is the goal of this volume to define precisely those textures of meaning and to demonstrate how they have been woven together as responses to cultural needs.



PAPERS IN MEDIAEVAL STUDIES 18

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PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE OF MEDIAEVAL STUDIES

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This book has been published with the aid of a grant  
from the Mediaeval Moral Teaching Fund  
of the Mediaeval Studies Foundation.

#### Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

In the garden of evil : the vices and culture in the Middle Ages /  
edited by Richard Newhauser.

(Papers in mediaeval studies ; 18)  
Includes bibliographical references and index.  
ISBN 0-88844-818-X

1. Deadly sins. 2. Theology—History—Middle Ages, 600-1500.  
3. Civilization, Medieval. I. Newhauser, Richard, 1947- II. Pontifical  
Institute of Mediaeval Studies. III. Series.

BV4625.I52 2005

241'.3

C2005-903288-X

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Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies  
59 Queen's Park Crescent East  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2C4

PRINTED IN CANADA

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## *Introduction*

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In the *Horologium sapientiae*, composed by the German Dominican Heinrich Suso sometime between 1331 and 1334, the autobiographically accented figure of the Disciple complains to a personified Wisdom about the bewildering array of scholarly books overwhelming the eager student of the earlier fourteenth century. Suso would have been well informed on this matter; he had been charged up to this point of his life with the education and scholarly training of the Dominicans in Constance. What the Disciple wants from Wisdom is the briefest synopsis of all these treatises, commentaries, summae, and the like, to serve as the foundation of his spiritual perfection. Asceticism, for Suso, can obviously provide a refuge from the complexities of study as well as from the turmoil of life. The importance of the subject matter of the present volume of essays for the training of Suso's Dominicans, and a view of the wide diffusion of the medieval literature dedicated to its examination, is indicated by the fact that works on *moralia* are the first category mentioned by the Disciple:

There are so many books that treat the vices and virtues in an authoritative way ... that this short life would come to an end before one could study all of them or even read through them all.<sup>1</sup>

The centrality of the moral tradition for understanding not only Dominican education, but also the so-called “civilizing processes” at work throughout medieval culture, and the broad dissemination of the literature devoted to the analysis of moral questions, may have been implicitly comprehensible to Suso and his confreres, but these points bear reiterating for the modern reader. Though this perspective has not received sufficient attention up to now, in the development of medieval western culture a precise catalogue of moral entities, transmitted by the clerical estate, was one of the elements in the *instrumentarium* of the same processes of restraining the “passions” and “affections” (and

1. *Horologium sapientiae*, 2.3, ed. Pius Künzle (Fribourg/CH, 1977), 540-41. For a recent English translation, see Bl. Henry Suso, *Wisdom's Watch upon the Hours*, trans. Edmund Colledge (Washington, D.C., 1994), here 258.

behavior) described long ago, on a far different model, by Norbert Elias, though Elias himself, of course, was hardly concerned at all with either the Middle Ages or the socio-political functions of works of *moralia* in this period.<sup>2</sup> The primary purpose of the catalogue of moral concepts was to anchor a spiritual perspective in everyday life, and it was articulated as universally applicable in that it claimed to represent in the realm of ethics what was socially acceptable for all of Christendom. The vices, then, functioned as part of the apparatus of (self-) control just as surely—and perhaps even more directly—as did the expansion of state control detailed by Elias. Of course, as Barbara Rosenwein has pointed out in a critique of Elias, the series of restraints he located in the sixteenth century, and which other scholars have dated much before or after that period, actually amount to a series of ongoing limits on acceptable behavior: “historical change takes us from one set of conventions and restraints to another rather than through a process of civilizing.”<sup>3</sup> The point is that the vices played an important role in that movement of conventions, and one that was unacknowledged by Elias. Moral literature, in other words, has a more central place in intellectual history than has often been conceded by the rationalist and “scientific” interests of modern scholarship.

The essays in the present volume approach their subject from a number of perspectives and disciplines that at times are at variance with each other, but they are all in agreement on the way in which the moral tradition, articulated generally (though not exclusively) in the notions of the capital vices and supplemented by other discourses, opens the way to an essential set of readings of the cultural forces—and cultural changes—scholarship has identified in the Middle Ages. Their regular method is to elucidate aspects of medieval culture by the categories of

2. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1994). The work was first published in 1939. The study of the emotions, too, has drawn on Elias; see the introduction in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara Rosenwein (Ithaca and London, 1998), 2-3. As Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge, Eng., 2003), has shown, however, the word “emotion” was not used until the nineteenth century and then in terms of a very different concept of human inner constitution. Contemporary emotionology must still take Dixon’s work into account. Medieval authors recognized *passiones* and *affectiones* only, and these pre-emotional categories will be referred to as such in the Introduction. See also John Gillingham, “From *Civilitas* to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6<sup>th</sup> Series, 12 (2002): 267-89.

3. Barbara Rosenwein, “Controlling Paradigms,” in *Anger's Past*, 233-47, here 241.

the seven capital vices, either individually or as a whole, either within a theological discourse or complementary to it. In fact, while the essays regularly deal with categories contained in the list of seven vices, some also point usefully to the limitations of that list as a whole that were obvious to the medieval authors who made use of it (see the essays by Barton, Casagrande, Kent, Kuczynski, and Vecchio). The categories contained in the series of capital vices were constantly in flux, both synchronically and diachronically; their textures of meaning, their referential vocabulary, even the precise nature of what that vocabulary signified (no matter how conventional its terminology), varied from work to work and even within the usage of a single author. Elucidating the web of meanings involved in these categories goes beyond the more monotone aspirations of the older form of the history of ideas; the reader should not expect to find here, for example, the isolated and laboratory-like refraction of culturally important concepts into their “unit ideas” in the manner of an A.O. Lovejoy, for whom the history of ideas was metaphorically a type of analytic chemistry.<sup>4</sup> It is more accurate to think of the capital vices, as they are treated in this volume, as fundamental, conceptual fields bound firmly into the social and political life of the humans who articulated them, and comprehensible only when the specific social contexts of their articulation are taken into account. They are, in other words, conceptual fields similar to those described in the *Begriffsgeschichte* of a scholar such as Reinhart Koselleck.<sup>5</sup> Though the focus of the essays is always on the Middle Ages, they never fail to implicate the similarities and differences between medieval understandings of conceptual fields and contemporary ones. To speak with Koselleck, the essays all participate in a *Begriffsgeschichte* that “covers that zone of convergence occupied by past and present concepts.”<sup>6</sup>

4. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being. A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA, 1936; reprint New York, 1960), 3.

5. Fundamental, conceptual fields are described in the introduction to *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Stuttgart, 1994), 1:xiii-xiv; see also *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts: New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann and Melvin Richter (Washington, D.C., 1996); J.G. Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers, introduction to *Honor and Grace in Anthropology*, ed. J.G. Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers (Cambridge, Eng., 1992), 4.

6. Reinhart Koselleck, “Begriffsgeschichte und Sozialgeschichte,” in *Soziologie und Sozialgeschichte*, ed. P. Lutz, *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, Sonderheft 16 (1972): 116-31; English trans. as “Begriffsgeschichte and Social History,” in Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA and London, 1985), 73-91, here 90.

Using a common mnemonic device taken from the initial letters of the Latin names for the vices, the terminology used in speaking of these concepts can be summarized in the acronym SALIGIA.<sup>7</sup> The Latin, English, and Greek equivalents in this system are as follows:

<b>S</b> uperbia	Pride	Ἵπερηφανία
<b>A</b> varitia	Avarice	Φιλαργυρία
<b>L</b> uxuria	Lust	Πορνεία
<b>I</b> ra	Wrath	Οργή
<b>G</b> ula	Gluttony	Γαστριμαργία
<b>I</b> nvidia	Envy	Φθόνος <sup>8</sup>
<b>A</b> cedia	Sloth	Ακηδία.

They originated as a recognizable system in the somewhat technical and limited considerations of ascetic discipline in the works of Evagrius Ponticus (d. 399), who wrote for the hermit communities of fourth-century Egypt. Among other guidelines for the contemplative work of anchoritic monks, Evagrius developed a system of eight “evil thoughts” (*logismoi*) that largely overlap with the SALIGIA list (see the essay by Columba Stewart in this volume for the precise contents of Evagrius's system). Not until the *logismoi* were transmitted to the west by John Cassian (d. 433/35) for the use of coenobitic monks in the early fifth century were they transformed into the chief or principal vices (*vitia principalia*), first as a series of eight and then—in the work of Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604)—as seven capital vices with pride as their source (see Carole Straw's essay here for a comparison of Cassian's and Gregory's systems of vices). In monastic and lay communities of the early Middle Ages, the capital vices were considered the basic categories of evil, that is to say, of unsocialized forms of desire. With the need to develop a penitential theology that culminated institutionally in the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215/16), these vices also came to be understood as “deadly sins” (*peccata mortalia*), reflecting the distinction between the concepts of mortal and venial sin that proved

7. See Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* ([East Lansing, MI,] 1952; reprint, 1967), 86-87; Arthur Watson, “Saligia,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 10 (1947): 148-50; Otto Zöckler, *Das Leb rstück von den sieben Hauptsünden: Beiträge zur Dogmen- und zur Sittengeschichte, in besonders der vorreformatorischen Zeit*, in O. Zöckler, *Biblische und kirchen historische Studien*, 3 (Munich, 1893), 66ff.

8. While the rest of the Greek terms are common members of the monastic list of eight “evil thoughts” found in the work of Evagrius Ponticus, Φθόνος is included among the list of *logismoi* there just once, in *De vitii quae opposita sunt virtutibus*, 1,4, PG 79:1141, 1144.

to be productive in pastoral and scholastic theology. From this point on, priests were required to preach on the vices, and penitents giving confession were often examined on the basis of the same categories.

By the time Suso was writing, the teaching on the seven capital vices (deadly sins) had become the most widespread articulation of the moral tradition of Latin Christendom.<sup>9</sup> It was not inevitable that this would be so, for some of the most authoritative writers in the west gave little or no attention to this doctrine. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) developed a triad of different sins on the basis of 1 John 2:16 that he termed the “origins of evil”: pride, curiosity, and sins of the flesh.<sup>10</sup> Though the titles of two of Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sententiae* indicate that they deal with the seven capital vices (*De septem vitiis principalibus* [*Sent.*, 3.89], and *De septem vitiis* [*Sent.*, 3.98]), these works are in fact analyses of stages in the psychological development of sinfulness that Bernard (1090–1153) suggests are counteracted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>11</sup> In the *Liber de gradibus superbiae et humilitatis*, Bernard developed twelve “steps” of pride as opposites to the stages of perfect humility in the Benedictine Rule. Nowhere does Augustine or Bernard draw on the list of the capital vices to articulate a moral position. Though Thomas Aquinas (1225/27–1274) referred to the capital vices several times, his moral thought was based on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* which is organized around a wide list of virtues in which pairs of vices appear as opposite extremes to the virtue that forms the “golden mean” between them. Aquinas accepted the list of seven vices as traditional moral thought, but his analysis superseded this list in many ways.

The list of capital vices had clear limitations and ultimately was itself displaced by the Decalogue as the most authoritative classification of morality.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the resilience of this series of moral entities

9. John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford and New York, 1987), chap. 4.

10. *Confessiones*, 10.30.41, ed. James J. O'Donnell (Oxford, 1992), 1:135; *De vera religione*, 38.70, ed. K.-D. Daur, CCSL 32 (Turnhout, 1962), 233; *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 8.13, ed. Eligius Dekkers and Johannes Fraipont, CCSL 38 (Turnhout, 1956), 56.

11. Both works are edited in *Sancti Bernardi opera*, ed. Jean Leclercq, C.H. Talbot, and H.M. Rochais (Rome, 1957-77), 6.2:135-39 (*Sent.*, 3.89), 6.2:160-67 (*Sent.*, 3.98). See also Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo 14 de diversis* (“De septem donis Sancti Spiritus contra septem vitia”), in *SBO*, 6.1:134-39.

12. Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, “La classificazione dei peccati tra settenario e decalogo (secoli XIII-XV),” *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 5 (1994): 331-95; John Bossy, “Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments,” in *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Edmund Leites (Cambridge, Eng. and Paris, 1988), 214-34.

is such that the multitude of volumes on the vices and virtues which the Disciple in Suso's dialogue found so bewildering came to subsume the thought of Augustine, Bernard, and Aquinas in many of the most widespread expressions of moral theology. None of these authors' systems of moral entities proved to be so attractive that it could seize the popular imagination to the degree, and with the range of application, that was achieved by treatments of the seven capital vices to the very end of the Middle Ages and beyond. The importance of the vices in preaching, confession, and penance certainly accounts for some of this wide diffusion in the later Middle Ages, as does the authority of their ascetic origins for monastic writers throughout the medieval period, but there is more to it than this. Without some echo in human self-analysis, without the ability to appear as a valid classificatory system of evil to generations of commentators on moral psychology, the capital vices would not have achieved the recognition they enjoyed in the Middle Ages and far after that period, as well. This perceived explanatory power is a measure of the proximity of the vices to the diverse aspects of culture examined in the essays in this collection.

In spite of the voluminous production of treatments of the vices in the Middle Ages, for modern scholarship to a large degree only one book has served as a comprehensive guide to this form of medieval literature. It has now been fifty years since the publication of Morton Bloomfield's pioneering *The Seven Deadly Sins* and with every new treatment of the vices as *contemporary* sociological or psychological phenomena, or in popularized form in the print media and the visual arts—all of which can be considered part of the reception history of both the seven deadly sins and the scholarship on the sins—it becomes more urgent for medieval scholarship to re-examine the vitally important role the vices played in the period of their broadest and original dissemination.<sup>13</sup> Bloomfield was one of the first to explore this matter in English, and much of what is written about the sins today still depends directly on his work. Since Siegfried Wenzel's important article in 1968, however, there have been very few attempts to account for all

13. For examples, see S.M. Lyman, *The Seven Deadly Sins* (New York, 1978); Henry Fairlie, *The Seven Deadly Sins Today* (Washington, D.C., 1978); Thomas Pynchon et al., *Deadly Sins* (New York, 1993), a series of articles that appeared during the summer, 1993, in *The New York Times Book Review* and featured essays by Pynchon, Mary Gordon, Gore Vidal, John Updike, William Trevor, Richard Howard, A.S. Byatt, and Joyce Carol Oates; and the motion picture *Seven*, directed by David Fincher, starring Brad Pitt, Morgan Freeman, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Kevin Spacey (release: September 22, 1995).

of the capital vices in their full complexity in medieval history, thought, literature, art, and cultural practice.<sup>14</sup> Great progress has indeed been achieved in the ensuing years in the understanding of particular vices and supplementary hamartiological schemes, as well as in discrete questions of iconography, literary typology, and the influence of the vices on particular literary works. Furthermore, important texts on the vices insufficiently accessible to Bloomfield have been carefully edited since the publication of his work and are now available for scholarly examination. We have a more solid foundation today on which to carry forward the study of the seven deadly sins.

This collection of essays aims to present the best new scholarship on the vices and thus both to re-examine the work begun by Bloomfield and to suggest possibilities for avenues of future research in this field in the coming decades. Readers acquainted with the treatise on vices and virtues as a genre will recognize that the collection has been constructed on the model of this literary form, with one section *de vitiis in communi*, here arranged on principles of historical and geographical development, and another treating the *vitia in speciali*, following them not chronologically, but in their order in the SALIGIA catalogue of deadly sins.<sup>15</sup> In the brief synopses which follow, I have emphasized not just the content of the essays, but the ways in which they reconsider previous scholarship, and add to our knowledge of the vices and culture in the Middle Ages.

Evagrius and Gregory the Great have always loomed large in the scholarship on the vices, and they do so in the contributions in this volume, as well, and yet there have been few studies devoted exclusively to these authors' treatment of the vices. Columba Stewart's seminal contribution on Evagrius demonstrates comprehensively the influence of early Christian demonology, the Platonic tripartite model of the soul, and the ps.-Aristotelian treatise "On the Virtues and the Vices" on this decisive thinker's conception of the *logismoi*. Stewart shows that Evagrius's hamartiology was a product of Hellenistic moral thought and anchoritic monastic discipline: the authority of Origen supplied Evagrius with the basic categories for his list of "evil thoughts" while the tripartite model of the soul was a crucial element in his fundamental anthropology. Evagrius used the *logismoi* to teach the moral and psy-

14. Siegfried Wenzel, "The Seven Deadly Sins: Some Problems of Research," *Speculum* 43 (1968): 1-22.

15. For a description of the genre, see Richard Newhauser, *The Treatise on Vices and Virtues in Latin and the Vernacular* (Turnhout, 1993).

chological assessment needed in the contemplative work of the monks; from its inception, thus, the list of *logismoi*/vices was a common technique in the management of the passions. John Cassian, it has been noted, transmitted Evagrius's work to the Latin west, where it was enthusiastically adopted later by Gregory the Great. Why, however, did Gregory alter Cassian's list so radically, in effect turning it on its head? Carole Straw's essay is guided by this question and she answers it by pointing to the differences in both thinkers' conception of sin and the varying historical contexts and audiences for whom they wrote. For Cassian, sin is desire unchecked by discretion, and it happens involuntarily; Gregory has absorbed Augustine's thought: it is the insolent will defying authority that is the essence of sin for Gregory. Different contexts sustained these views: on the one hand Cassian's asceticism, focused on the heroic achievement of the individual in a monastic, even eremitic, setting who was desirous of perfection but undone in sin by that very desire; on the other hand, Gregory's work to harmonize the world of monks, clerics, and laity in the church where sin expressed itself as a refusal to balance carnal burdens and spiritual delights.

To say that the study of the vices is research in psychology is also to admit a closer connection between the history of the two areas than has generally been conceded, for as Edward Peters shows in the third essay of the first part of the collection, one tradition of psychology developed early in its history as part of a therapy for *passiones* and *affectiones* that was independent of its inclusion in a largely Aristotelian-inspired natural philosophy. Palaeopsychology, Peters's term for the study of how humans in the past thought humanity was internally constituted, reveals another model for understanding the human psyche in which the moral theology of Evagrius, Cassian, and Augustine laid a foundation that was only later supplemented by Aristotelian-scholastic psychology. Throughout the Middle Ages, he suggests, the language of moral theology often supplied the vocabulary to speak of human motivation in genres of writing that reached far beyond theology.

Of the areas touched on in Bloomfield's work, visual iconography, as opposed to the iconography of texts, has played a decidedly secondary role. Yet the visual and the textual supported each other in complex ways, as Gerald Guest shows in examining the remarkable production of the *bibles moralisées* in Paris in the first half of the thirteenth century. Focusing in particular on the earliest of these manuscripts, Guest demonstrates their place in the nexus of a new naturalism in image making with a resurgent interest in the vices and virtues among Parisian theologians that resulted in an innovative approach to the iconography of the vices. Here, the vices are not theorized as personifications or depicted in

diagrams, as was typical of the early Middle Ages, but rather are considered as social disturbances disrupting the relationships between clergy and laity and leading to the corruption of both by Jews and heretics.

Indicative of the renewed interest in the vices and virtues in the early thirteenth century is the work of John of Rupella, OFM, who, as Silvana Vecchio demonstrates, consciously set out to rectify the disordered state and insufficient theorizing of moral analysis he saw in earlier *summae*. John wanted to merge the scholastic analysis of sin with the practical considerations of pastoral treatments of the vices. His *Summa de vitiis*, all too infrequently studied up to now, marks a vitally important stage in the development of scholastic moral thought, and it demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses of the list of seven deadly sins in that context, as well. The capital vices supplied John with a psychologically acute depiction of evil, but he found them inadequate for pastoral use. Penitential literature, nevertheless, remained one of the pastoral genres in which treatments of the vices flourished, and proved responsive to lay needs, to the end of the Middle Ages and beyond. How this responsiveness might look specifically is the subject of Carla Casagrande's essay, focused on the project of the Dominicans in Pisa in the earlier fourteenth century to spread religious culture to the laity. In the *Specchio de' peccati* by Domenico Cavalca one finds a unique system of six "affects" or "motions" of the heart (that is to say, *affectiones* or *passiones*) which serve as the basis for this vernacular text's classifications of sins, and Cavalca urges his reader to an act of introspection that should result in the control of these passions. Casagrande's work, thus, is a contribution to the growing scholarship on the emotions that demonstrates in a comprehensive way how the analysis of passions in the Middle Ages might inform treatments of the vices and virtues.

Although there is no evidence that the series of the capital vices was used in preaching before around 1000, as Siegfried Wenzel points out in the first of a series of essays focusing on England in the Middle Ages, it was taken up after that point and became a commonplace in sermons following the Fourth Lateran Council. Using a wide array of Latin sermon collections from England (c. 1350–c. 1450), many of which have rarely been studied before, Wenzel examines texts that give evidence of having actually been preached to uncover their preferred images for the vices (spiritual combat and, even more frequently, diseases) and to show that they remained generally hortatory and less subtly analytical of human behavior and psychology than many expository treatises from the same period. It was inevitable that with changes in culture new areas of illicit behavior would be identified as in need of expiation, and Edwin Craun identifies one such example in the very act of making

excuses for having sinned, included by many pastoral authors as one of the sins of the tongue. Using mainly English sources, Craun examines how *excusatio peccati* became part of the pastoral movement's regulation of sacramental confession and fraternal correction. Because these excuses were transmitted in clerically scripted forms, they necessitated an ironic perspective that encouraged thinking of moral agency in a more rounded way. Drawing intentionality into the reading of these texts, Craun shows, was part of their technique to refashion the self in a more ethical framework.

Ruth Karras's essay on "the unspeakable vice" makes it plain how crucial it is to re-examine the vices after Bloomfield because her topic, namely the way in which sodomy undermined the gender order in late medieval England, was hardly anticipated by his work at all. The analysis of sodomy in English manuals on the capital vices and other documents shows important local differences from what one finds in continental sources. The efforts of the state to enforce its power in southern Europe led to prosecutions of sodomites; in England the same efforts were expressed in the violent repression of Lollards, and sodomy remained unmentionable. Karras's essay reminds us of the ways in which the language of morality is constantly also an expression of political aspirations. A final area remains to be taken up from the English Middle Ages, because its treatment by Bloomfield was insufficient, and it demands re-examination now, namely the status of the sins in the writings by mystics. As Michael Kuczynski shows, Bloomfield mistook their words for opposition to the standard list of the sins, when in fact they were juxtaposing the capital vices to what they perceived as a far greater problem, the elusiveness and intractability of sin itself. They do not so much reject classifications of the vices as conflate them for a purpose that is more subtle. In the writings by Richard Rolle and others, sin is to be confronted in its monolithic character, and by claiming to have successfully done just that, the mystics valorize the contemplative life they represent and their own efforts as contemplatives.

The contributions to the volume demonstrate the particularity with which the vices were treated in Italian, French, and English culture. Distinctive elements arose in the analysis and use of the vices in German-speaking areas of Europe, as well. One of these was the new approach taken to visualizing the vices that developed in the early fourteenth century in Austria/Bavaria in a monastic environment for homiletic use and employed information gathered from natural philosophy concerning animals more systematically than had been the case earlier. Nigel Harris and I study this development using the *Conflictus virtutum et vitiorum* "In campo mundi," a battle of vices and virtues in

the tradition of the *Psychomachia* that may have been composed by Ulrich, abbot of the Cistercian monastery in Lilienfeld between 1345 and 1351. We suggest that this text, edited and translated here for the first time, was used as a type of proto-emblem book on morality for a culture that then came to be increasingly characterized by its visuality. If demons populate the earliest texts on the vices, Meinolf Schumacher demonstrates that they also contain an element of theatricality that was actually dramatized in Weimar in 1776 with Goethe in the cast. Schumacher draws on two important Middle High German literary texts, the anonymous *Des Teufels Netz* and Ulrich von Etzenbach's Alexander romance, to show how catalogues of the vices could be reconceived as catalogues of devils. In the former work this occurs in the subtle interplay of text and image; in the latter, by a transformation of classical sources on the underworld into a version of the Christian concept of hell. Both works demonstrate an attempt to comprehend devils/personified vices "realistically" without accepting them as ecclesiastically defined dogma.

The second section of the volume begins with the two vices that stand at the head of the SALIGIA order and were separately claimed, at various times in their histories, to be the root of all the others: pride and avarice. Martin Stone's article on pride approaches the seldom-asked question of *why* pride was so often considered the origin of all evil by locating that question itself in the philosophical and theological context that served as the foundation for the discussion of sin, in particular by one of the most important moral theorists of the late Middle Ages, Jean Gerson. As Stone demonstrates, an understanding of how essential pride is for Gerson's concept of the moral self is crucial in accounting for the distance between medieval concepts of *superbia* and the modern philosophical tradition of thinking about pride that extends from Hume and Kant. Drawing on the anthropological thought of Pierre Bourdieu, my essay on avarice focuses not on the common perception that greed was considered the deadliest of the vices in the later Middle Ages, which can be found in Bloomfield's work and in many other treatments of this sin, as well, but rather on one of the stages in the redefinition of avarice that ultimately allowed some of its traditional appearances to re-emerge as laudatory and success-promoting market behavior. In the early Franciscans, I argue, one of the established techniques to combat avarice, evangelical poverty, reached an apogee in its development within the church, and austerity replaced total institutional *and* personal possessionlessness as orthodox practice.

That aspects of lust have attracted the work of two authors in this volume is itself a reflection of the predilections of modern scholarship

and the current interest in the study of sexuality. Bonnie Kent's contribution on *luxuria* also takes up one of the desiderata prominent in Wenzel's 1968 article, namely the study of the scholastic analysis of the vices. At the same time that academic theologians were turning to other sources of inspiration for their moral theorizing that reached beyond the seven deadly sins, they were also influenced by advances in the study of medicine. As Kent demonstrates in an essay focused on William of Ockham, explaining sexuality in physiological terms proved wholly compatible with the analysis of lust in Ockham's voluntarist theology. Gender paradigms that have rarely played a role in previous scholarship on the vices come into question again in Richard Barton's essay on anger. Examining a wide range of eleventh- and twelfth-century historical narratives from France, Barton develops a view of anger as a socio-political construct defined in various ways in public discourse to help create and utilize concepts of masculinity and to define and confirm beliefs about the legitimacy of secular authority. Like other essays in the collection, Barton's work adds ranges of meaning to the medieval conceptual categories also accessible in the capital vices; his work on the discourse of anger-as-"emotion" supplements in important ways the perspective of anger-as-sin. France is also the location for the work of the social historian Mireille Vincent-Cassy, but in this case in the later Middle Ages. Her study proceeds from a fundamentally new question about drunkenness, one of the forms of gluttony: in what ways is intoxication an expression of social difference? In a wide-ranging essay, Vincent-Cassy demonstrates how denunciations of drunkenness, descriptions of intoxicated behavior, characterizations of various types of wine and the inns (or palaces) in which they were drunk—all were expressions of class distinctions. Drunkenness, she concludes, concealed a challenge to the inegalitarian functioning of late medieval French society.

F.N.M. Diekstra focuses on the psychological insights and rhetorical display of theological texts in Latin and Middle English that treat envy. His study of pastoral *summae*, devotional treatises, and penitential manuals reveals these texts, in a way not often appreciated, to be fully alive to the paradoxical nature of this sin/"emotion" and able to present the full range of its interpretations through a fascinating palette of imagery. From patristic conventions to the psychophysical insights of vernacular moral theologians, the contours of envy that emerge from the moral tradition are far more subtle and insightful than has generally been recognized.

That treatments of the vices were medieval formulations of what we would today call psychology has long been understood, but the implications of that statement have not been worked out in detail. The last

essay in the second section of the volume is devoted to that process. Rainer Jehl responds to the notoriously difficult task of giving an adequate definition of the concept of *accidie* (sloth) by using the insights of contemporary work psychology and social medicine. With all that separates the contexts of the present-day workplace from early medieval monastic communities, where the initial descriptions of *accidie* were developed, Jehl demonstrates how the diagnostic profile that medical disciplines have drawn up for burnout syndrome can help elucidate the monastic experience of lethargy, melancholy, and hopelessness that is summed up in the term “*accidie*.”

The areas touched on in this collection of essays are numerous: from late antique and late medieval demonology to scholastic analytic philosophy, from sins of the tongue to “motions” of the heart, from penitentials and sermons to illuminations in the *bibles moralisées* and works in the *conflictus* genre, from discourse analysis to textual criticism, from gender and queer studies to social history and *Begriffsgeschichte*, properly so called. The study of the vices is ripe for participation in all these forms of theoretical discussion and cultural criticism. We have not attempted to be exhaustive in any of them, but rather to point the way to the fruitfulness of further treatments of the vices in medieval culture. The vast majority of that endless array of treatises on the vices and virtues at the disposal of Suso’s Disciple still remains to be studied.

## *Acknowledgments*

This project was conceived while I was a fellow at the National Humanities Center during the academic year 1999–2000. The volume would not have been realized without the financial support provided by a fellowship from the Center through the Lilly Endowment, and a Senior Level fellowship from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation / American Council of Learned Societies. The staff of the National Humanities Center provided essential library support to help complete some of the preliminary work that went into the volume. Discussions with the other fellows that year, in particular Stuart Clark, Bernard McGinn, and Marjorie Woods, proved invaluable for my conception of the volume. The essays were initially assembled and the first stage of the editorial work completed while I was a visiting fellow at Clare Hall, University of Cambridge, during the academic year 2000–01. This period of scholarship was made possible by a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship and support from Trinity University (San Antonio) while I was on sabbatical. When the essays had been assembled in the shape in which they will be found here, my colleague at Trinity University, Tom Jenkins, was kind enough to review the Latin; one of my former students, Jack Bonner, proofread and helped edit some of the essays. At the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies' Department of Publications, Jean Hoff provided continuing and invaluable editorial assistance at all stages of the volume's production. Above all, this volume owes much more to the patience and editorial skills of Andrea Németh-Newhauser than I can express.

Richard Newhauser  
Trinity University, San Antonio,  
summer 2004

### *List of Illustrations*

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## *Abbreviations*

- CCCM Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.
- CCSL Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.
- CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna.
- DSp* *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Ascétique et Mystique*. 17 vols. Paris: Beauchesne, 1932-95.
- EETS es Early English Text Society. Extra Series. London.
- EETS os Early English Text Society. Original Series. London.
- EETS ss Early English Text Society. Supplementary Series. London.
- GCS Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. Edited by the Kirchenväterkommission der Preussischen Akademie. Berlin.
- LCL The Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press; London: Heinemann.
- MED* *Middle English Dictionary*. Edited by Hans Kurath, Sherman Kuhn, and Robert E. Lewis. 13 vols. Ann Arbor, MI: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1952–2001.
- MSR* *Mélanges de Science Religieuse*. Vol. 1– . 1944– .
- MTU Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen. Munich and Tübingen.
- OC* *Orientalia Christiana*. Vol. 3-36. 1923-34.
- OCA Orientalia Christiana Analecta. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum.
- PG Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 161 vols. Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-66.
- PL Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 221 vols. Paris: Garnier, 1844-98.
- PLS Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina. Supplementum. Edited by A. Hamman. 5 vols. Paris: Garnier, 1958-74.
- PO Patrologia Orientalis. Paris: Firmin-Didot; Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.
- RAC* *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum: Sachwörterbuch zur Auseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der antiken Welt*. Edited by Theodor Klauser et al. Vol. 1– . Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950– .
- RAM* *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*. Vol. 1-47. 1920-71.
- RTAM* *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*. Vol. 1-63. 1929-96.
- SBO* Bernard of Clairvaux. *Sancti Bernardi opera*. Edited by J. Leclercq et al. 8 vols. Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957-77.
- SC Sources Chrétiennes. Paris: Cerf.