Introduction: towards a long-term history of scholarly vices

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Towards a Long-Term History of Scholarly Vices

Herman Paul

"The surest way to lose truth," said Harvard psychologist Gordon W. Allport in his 1954 Terry Lectures, "is to pretend that one already wholly possesses it." As uncontroversial as this statement may sound, it implied a critique of several schools of American psychology at the time. Apart from that Allport accused "Freudianism, phenomenology, Thomism, and other preferred schools of thought" of relying too exclusively on a small set of tools, he rejected the positivist axiom that only scientific methods can yield reliable insight into the nature of things. A lifelong critic of reductionist thinking in science, politics, and religion alike, Allport distrusted any claim to exclusivity, especially in matters methodological. The field of psychology, he maintained, is still young, and the study of the human personality, to which Allport himself devoted his research, is in its earliest infancy. At this stage, there can be no thought of methodological closure. "Narrow systems, dogmatically held," said Allport, make for "scientific anemia": they hamper the advance of knowledge and "trivialize the mentality of the investigator."[1]

In one respect at least, this was a message typical of American academia in the 1950s. Like many of his contemporaries, Allport cherished the virtue of open-mindedness, which he understood as a democratic alternative to totalitarian dogmatism. In stating that "it is easier to succumb to oversimplification and dogmatism" than to bear "the ambiguities inherent in a democratic society," he not only alluded to Else Frenkel-Brunswik's then-popular concept of "tolerance of ambiguity" but also invoked the Cold War specter of right- or left-wing demagogues favoring closure and certainty over freedom and open-ended debate.[2] At the same time, Allport's critique of dogmatism

1 Gordon W. Allport, *Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1955), 17, 18.

2 Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954), 515; Else Frenkel-Brunswik, "Intolerance of Ambiguity as an Emotional and Perceptual Personality Variable," Journal of Personality, 18, no. 1 (1949): 108–143. On the Cold War connotations of open-mindedness and its negative counterpart, closed-mindedness, see Jamie Cohen-Cole,

echoed older traditions, some of which reached back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Most notably, Allport repeated the time-honored argument that there is no greater obstacle to progress in learning than dogmatism. Despite all differences in time and place, Allport echoed William Whewell's message, back in 1837, that advances in science can only take place if scholars break with the habit of trusting intellectual authorities more than their own powers of observing and reasoning.[3] Moreover, when Allport contrasted "the road of dogmatic assertion" with "the path of experimental study" and suggested that the former belonged to the past more than to the present,[4] he drew on two old commonplaces in the history of dogmatism: the seventeenth-century idea, propagated in circles of the Royal Society, that experimental research was a fitting remedy to "the vanity of dogmatizing" as well as the eighteenth-century belief, articulated most forcefully by Immanuel Kant, that dogmatic thinking was no longer at home in modern society.[5] Apparently, the challenges of a new field of study in a world trying to come to terms with a newly emerging geopolitical order did not prevent Allport from using a vice term with deep historical roots.

Much the same applies to a second vice term that figured even more prominently in Allport's work: prejudice. In what has become his best-known book, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), Allport developed a definition of the term that included both attitudinal and belief aspects. While prejudices tend to be sustained by "faulty and inflexible" generalizations of the kind that "all Jews are pretty much alike," a prejudice *as such* amounts to what Allport called "an avertive or hostile attitude," a form of "antipathy," or a "negative attitude toward persons."[6] "Attitude" was a popular concept among American psychologists at the time, partly occupying the place formerly reserved for "character."[7]

The Open Mind: Cold War Politics and the Sciences of Human Nature (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

3 William Whewell, *History of the Inductive Sciences, from the Earliest to the Present Times*, vol. 1 (London: John W. Parker, 1837), 186, 235, 236, 312, 356.

4 Gordon W. Allport, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), 475; Allport, *The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science: Prepared for the Committee on Appraisal of Research* (New York: Social Science Research Council, [1942]), 4, 174.

5 Herman Paul and Alexander Stoeger, *Dogmatism: On the History of a Scholarly Vice* (London: Bloomsbury, 2024), 13–25. See also Stoeger's contribution to this volume.

6 Allport, *Nature of Prejudice*, 13, 7, 12.

7 Kurt Danziger, *Naming the Mind: How Psychology Found its Language* (London: SAGE, 1997), 134–157; Rebecca B. Miller, "Making Scientific Americans: Identifying and Educating Future Scientists and Nonscientists in the Early Twentieth Century" (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 2017), 121–149.

Dissatisfaction with Victorian notions of character and virtue, however, did not prevent Allport from drawing in both form and content on centuries-old repertoires.[8] He explicitly told his readers that prejudice was an age-old term, "derived from the Latin noun *praejudicium*," that its meanings had changed over the centuries, and that "rashness" or precipitousness – a judgment made in haste, without proper deliberation – had been one of the more important connotations of the term.[9] Historical scholarship has confirmed these observations: the word *praejudicium* comes from Roman law, it was turned into a vice term by early Enlightenment philosophers, and *praejudicium praecipitantiae* was one of the two standard forms of prejudice discussed in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century logic textbooks (*praejudicium auctoritatis* being the other one).[10] Even if, by the mid-twentieth century, the psychology of prejudice did not have much of a historical pedigree, Allport did not hesitate to use a term that had been around for centuries, denoting a vice common among scholars and non-scholars alike.

This volume asks: How is it possible that such centuries-old vice terms – dogmatism, prejudice, pedantry, and others – survived until well into the twentieth century?[11] What explains the persistence of these vice terms across the ages, notwithstanding major changes in how scholarly research was understood, practiced, and justified? If we follow some of these vice terms through the centuries, from monastic orders in twelfth-century Europe to Allport's psychology department in twentieth-century America, would we be able to understand why prejudice and dogmatism, not to mention curiosity and scholasticism, established themselves so firmly in scholars' moral vocabulary? Also, on a more programmatic note, what would it take to write such a long-term history of scholarly vice terms, and what insights would it yield?

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8 Ian A.M. Nicholson, *Inventing Personality: Gordon Allport and the Science of Selfhood* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2003), 6, 11, 220.

9 Allport, *Nature of Prejudice*, 6, 15 n. 3.

10 Werner Schneiders, *Aufklärung und Vorurteilskritik: Studien zur Geschichte der Vorurteilstheorie* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1983), 98–102, 335–336. See also Sorana Corneanu's chapter in this volume.

11 Evidence of virtue and vice terms persisting into the late twentieth century can be found in Kim M. Hajek, Herman Paul, and Sjang ten Hagen, "Objectivity, Honesty, and Integrity: How American Scientists Talked about Their Virtues, 1945–2000," *History of Science* 62, no. 3 (2014): 442–469; Paul and Stoeger, *Dogmatism*, 85–97; Herman Paul, *Historians' Virtues: From Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 43–52.

1 Scholarly Virtues and Vices

These questions derive their significance from a recent surge of interest in virtuous habits of mind that scholars expected, and sometimes still expect, each other to display. Among these virtues and their negative counterparts, "the vices of the learned," curiosity and objectivity were subjected to book-length analysis already in the late 1990s and early 2000s.[12] Since then, books on empathy, speculation, and dogmatism have been published, while edited volumes on the history of impartiality, sympathy, and humility have also seen the light of day.[13] Historians have examined what kind of vices were upheld as warning examples to university students in early modern Europe and what constellations of virtues – accuracy, love of truth, collegial loyalty, independent critical thinking – nineteenth-century scholars invoked in assessing each other's work.[14] New studies are now appearing year after year, often focusing on European examples but increasingly also addressing case studies from Latin America or China (a country with a long history of thinking about virtue), thereby expanding the geographical scope of what is still a largely European-focused body of literature.[15]

What makes scholarly virtues and vices such a rewarding topic of study? Judging by the lines of inquiry pursued, there are at least four reasons why historians are interested in them. First, and most obviously, scholarly virtues

12 Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998); Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Neil Kenny, *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

13 Susan Lanzioni, *Empathy: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018); Gayle Rogers, *Speculation: A Cultural History from Aristotle to AI* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021); Paul and Stoeger, *Dogmatism*; *The Emergence of Impartiality*, ed. Kathryn Murphy and Anita Traninger (Leiden: Brill, 2014); *Sympathy: A History*, ed. Eric Schliesser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); *Representations of Humility and the Humble*, ed. Silvia Negri (Florence: Sismel, 2021).

14 Sari Kivistö, *The Vices of Learning: Morality and Knowledge at Early Modern Universities* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Christiaan Engberts, *Scholarly Virtues in Nineteenth-Century Sciences and Humanities: Loyalty and Independence Entangled* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

15 João Rudolfo Munhoz Ohara, "Virtudes epistêmicas na prática do historiador: O caso da sensibilidade histórica na historiografia brasileira (1980–1990)," *História da Historiografia* 9, no. 22 (2016): 170–183; João Rudolfo Munhoz Ohara, "Virtues and Vices in Modern Brazilian Historiography: A Reading of *Historians of Brazil*, by Francisco Iglésias," *História da Historiografia* 12, no. 30 (2019): 44–70; Dawid Rogacz, "The Virtue of a Historian: A Dialogue between Herman Paul and Chinese Theorists of History," *History and Theory* 58, no. 2 (2019): 252–267.

and vices shed light on scholars' ethical aspirations or, more broadly, the kind of lives they wanted to live. In times when learning was regarded as a means of growing in intellectual, moral, and spiritual maturity, virtues recommended in student manuals or mentioned in prayers before study reflect what sort of vocation men of learning were supposed to pursue, be it contemplation of the works of the Almighty (Thomas Aquinas in the fourteenth century), a life lived for the glory of God and the benefit of the state (Heinrich Bullinger in the sixteenth century), or a life of "virtue and piety," free from "irreligion and vice" (Isaac Watts in the eighteenth century).[16] Specifically, historians of early modern learning have examined how mathematical study, for instance, was believed to be a "regimen of the mind," contributing to what Sorana Corneanu calls a "purification, rectification, and reordering" of a mind that was always susceptible to distemper, perturbation, or disease.[17]

Secondly, historians have analyzed scholarly virtues and vices with an eye to *scientific personae* or archetypical models of a savant, philosopher, scholar, or scientist. Introduced by Lorraine Daston and Otto Sibum, the persona concept has found its way into both the history of early modern learning and the history of the modern sciences and humanities.[18] Much of this scholarship shows a particular interest in how personae served as normative templates defining the boundaries between in- and outgroups. By presenting themselves as men of virtue, scholars in emerging academic fields tried to separate themselves from dilettantes or from previous generations of scholars whom

16 Rik van Nieuwenhove, *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Heinrich Bullinger, *Studiorum ratio*, ed. Peter Stotz, vol. 1 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1987), 15; I. Watts, *The Improvement of the Mind: or, a Supplement to the Art of Logick …* (London: James Brackstone, 1741), 160, 143.

17 Sorana Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind: Boyle, Locke, and the Early Modern Cultura Animi Tradition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 1; Matthew L. Jones, *The Good Life in the Scientific Revolution: Descartes, Pascal, Leibniz, and the Cultivation of Virtue* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006). See also Timothy Kircher, *Living Well in Renaissance Italy: The Virtues of Humanism and the Irony of Leon Battista Alberti* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012).

18 Lorraine Daston and H. Otto Sibum, "Introduction: Scientific Personae and Their Histories," *Science in Context* 16, nos. 1–2 (2003) 1–8; *The History of Philosophy and the Persona of the Philosopher*, ed. Conal Condren, Stephen Gaukroger, and Ian Hunter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Gadi Algazi, "Exemplum and Wundertier: Three Concepts of the Scholarly Persona," *Low Countries Historical Review* 131, no. 4 (2016): 8–32; *How to Be a Historian: Scholarly Personae in Historical Studies, 1800–2000*, ed. Herman Paul (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019); *Scholarly Personae in the History of Orientalism, 1870–1930*, ed. Christiaan Engberts and Herman Paul (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

they perceived as insufficiently critical, objective, or empirical.[19] Similarly, despite a chorus of late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century voices arguing that women are as capable of intellectual work as men,[20] masculine-gendered virtues of thoroughness and perseverance were utilized to keep the academic labor market closed to female students or, in later centuries, to nudge them to applied instead of fundamental types of research.[21] Historians have also used the persona concept in studying how female newcomers in male-dominated academic environments stylized themselves as scholars complying with existing standards or as women committed to challenging patriarchal structures in academia. How did women present themselves in speech, dress, or behavior at times when men set the rules of the game?[22]

Thirdly, scholarly habits of mind as discussed in learned correspondences and teaching practices offer historians a glimpse into a *personal dimension* of teaching and research that remains hidden from view as long as formal curricula, scientific methods, or research protocols occupy the center of attention.[23] Jo Tollebeek and Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, among others, have shown that many nineteenth-century *Geisteswissenschaftler* regarded a professor's private

19 Alexander Stöger, *Epistemische Tugenden im deutschen und britischen Galvanismusdiskurs um 1800* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2021); Nicolas Cambon, "La notion de *persona* et la question des affects en histoire des sciences et des savoirs: Le cas des savoirs européens sur l'anthropophagie (1770–1800)," *Les cahiers de Framespa* 37 (2021), art. 10984; Camille Creyghton, "Impartiality, Objectivity, and Political Engagement in Nineteenth-Century French Historiography: Monod and the Dreyfus Affair," *History of Humanities* 3, no. 2 (2018): 279–302; Sjang ten Hagen and Herman Paul, "The Icarus Flight of Speculation: Philosophers' Vices as Perceived by Nineteenth-Century Historians and Physicists," *Metaphilosophy* 54, nos. 2–3 (2023): 280–294.

20 Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Eileen O'Neill, "The Equality of Men and Women," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Desmond M. Clarke and Catherine Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 445–474.

21 Falko Schnicke, *Die männliche Disziplin: Zur Vergeschlechtlichung der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft 1780–1900* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015), 93–113; Alexandra Rutherford, "Maintaining Masculinity in Mid-Twentieth-Century: Edwin Boring, Scientific Eminence, and the 'Woman Problem,'" *Osiris* 30 (2015): 250–271.

22 *Gender, Embodiment, and the History of the Scholarly Persona: Incarnations and Contestations*, ed. Kirsti Niskanen and Michael J. Barany (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); Anna Cabanel, "'How Excellent … for a Woman'? The Fellowship Programme of the International Federation of University Women in the Interwar Period," *Persona Studies* 4, no. 1 (2018): 88–102; Mineke Bosch, "Persona and the Performance of Identity: Parallel Developments in the Biographical Historiography of Science and Gender, and the Related Uses of Self Narrative," *L'Homme* 24, no. 5 (2013): 11–22.

23 Herman Paul, "The Scientific Self: Reclaiming Its Place in the History of Research Ethics," *Science and Engineering Ethics* 24, no. 5 (2018): 1379–1392.

study as a space in which scholarly virtues could be fostered more effectively than in large lecture halls. Students' recollections of the quasi-private teaching they received in such "sanctuaries" typically stressed the personal example of the professor, thereby illustrating the importance attached to imitation and informal learning.[24] Studies of correspondence, likewise, reveal that professors and their students could maintain mentoring relationships long after the latter had become established scholars themselves, whereas research on academic anniversaries and scholarly obituaries shows how heavily students drew on notions of virtue in hailing the examples set by their teachers.[25] Importantly, this personal dimension of research and teaching was not specific to the nineteenth century. As Steven Shapin has argued, "people and their virtues" continued to matter even in the highly professionalized work environments of twentieth-century technoscience, with lab directors looking for relevant personality traits in job applicants and scientific entrepreneurs having no chance of securing funding without passion, commitment, and vision.[26]

Finally, the emergence of comparative research areas like the history of the human sciences and the history of the humanities has fueled an interest in what Rens Bod *et alia* call "the flow of cognitive goods" between disciplines or fields of study.[27] Virtues and vices are good examples of such traveling concepts, as scholars across the academic spectrum invoked notions of industry, dedication, accuracy, and objectivity in specifying the marks of a good scholar or in assessing the relative merits of each other's work.[28] Historians have traced

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24 Jo Tollebeek, *Fredericq & Zonen: een antropologie van de moderne geschiedwetenschap* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008), 81–109; Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, "Virtues of History: Exercises, Seminars, and the Emergence of the German Historical Discipline, 1830–1900," *History of Universities* 34, no. 1 (2021): 27–40. See also Chad Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment: Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 234–261 ("The Disciplinary Self and the Virtues of the Philologist").

25 Katharina Manteufel, "A Three-Story House: Adolf von Harnack and Practices of Academic Mentoring around 1900," *History of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2016): 355–370; Falko Schnicke, "Rituale der Verkörperung: Seminarfeste und Jubiläen der Geschichtswissenschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 63, no. 4 (2015):337–358; Herman Paul, "The Virtues of a Good Historian in Early Imperial Germany: Georg Waitz's Contested Example," *Modern Intellectual History* 15, no. 3 (2018): 681–709.

26 Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Life: A Moral History of a Late Modern Vocation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1, 185, 292.

27 Rens Bod et al., "The Flow of Cognitive Goods: A Historiographical Framework for the Study of Epistemic Transfer," *Isis* 110, no. 3 (2019): 483–496.

28 Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul, "Introduction: Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities," in *Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities*, ed. Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul (Cham: Springer, 2017), 1–10.

how the virtue of open-mindedness spread across the human sciences and examined in local detail how students across the *Geisteswissenschaften* were socialized into an ethos of exactitude.[29] For instance, in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, most classical philologists, historians, art historians, church historians, and Biblical scholars at the Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität in Strasbourg were committed to a philological ethos that privileged precision, meticulousness, and scrupulous accuracy over induction, generalization, and systematization.[30] Research on the circulation of such virtue and vice terms has the potential to unearth similarities, transfers, and points of contact between fields that until recently were usually studied in isolation from each other.

Despite these stimulating perspectives and foci, there are two questions that historians working on scholarly virtues and vices have so far ignored. The first is a question about patterns of continuity and discontinuity in the centuries before and after 1800. Due perhaps to an institutionalized divide between the history of early modern learning and the history of modern science, there is hardly a single study that explores the vicissitudes of scholarly virtues or vices across the early modern/modern divide.[31] Tellingly, we have an edited volume on impartiality in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and a book chapter on impartiality in the nineteenth-century *Geisteswissenschaften* without any cross-references between them.[32] The exception that proves the rule is Gayle Rogers' history of speculation, which covers examples from Aristotle to modern artificial intelligence, albeit without much specific attention to speculation as a scholarly vice (a cardinal vice, indeed, in empirically oriented

29 Cohen-Cole, *Open Mind*; Markus Krajewski, "Genauigkeit: Zur Ausbildung einer epistemischen Tugend im 'langen 19. Jahrhundert,'" *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 39, no. 3 (2016): 211–229. On exactitude, see also *Enzyklopädie der Genauigkeit*, ed. Markus Krajewski, Antonia von Schöning, and Mario Wimmer (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2021) and *The Values of Precision*, ed. M. Norton Wise (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

30 Herman Paul, "An Ethos of Criticism: Virtues and Vices in Nineteenth-Century Strasbourg," in *Writing the History of the Humanities: Questions, Themes, and Approaches*, ed. Herman Paul (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 193–216.

31 On the problematic nature of this divide, see Jack A. Goldstone, "The Problem of the 'Early Modern' World," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 41, no. 3 (1998): 249–284 and Thomas Dipiero and Devoney Looser, "What Is Early Modern?," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 13, no. 2 (2013): 69–71.

32 Murphy and Traninger, *Emergence of Impartiality*; Lorraine Daston, "Objectivity and Impartiality: Epistemic Virtues in the Humanities," in *The Making of the Humanities*, vol. 3, ed. Rens Bod, Jaap Maat, and Thijs Weststeijn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 27–41.

fields like physics and history).[33] Second, and perhaps relatedly, historians have paid hardly any attention to the issue of transmission over time. As long as virtues and vices are regarded as character traits, this omission is perhaps not strongly felt. Unless anyone wants to replicate Francis Galton's research on hereditary factors in intelligence and scientific creativity, a transmission history of scholarly character traits does not make much sense.[34] The question of transmission becomes a pressing one, however, as soon as attention is shifted from character traits denoted by virtue and vice terms to *these terms themselves*. Prejudice and dogmatism had centuries-long histories by the time Allport invoked them. Unlike other ancient vice terms, they had survived the 1800 divide and remained in use even until after World War II. One wonders: How did these scholarly vice terms persist over time – and why?

2 Explaining Continuity

It is possible to counter the "why" question with a skeptical "Why not?" The mere fact that words persist over time is perhaps not particularly remarkable. Etymological dictionaries demonstrate on every page that many words have centuries-old histories. Historical linguists sometimes measure the "shelf life" of words by thousands of years. Research shows that some of our most slowly evolving words – common expressions like "you," "we," "one," "two," and "three" – have been in continuous use for tens of thousands of years.[35] Although historians usually work with smaller time scales, Lorraine Daston suggests that terms like "cause," "experiment," "observation," "standard," and "average" are the scientific equivalents of ultra-conserved words. "Instead of the Alps," she writes, these long-accepted terms "resemble gently rolling hills: they have their ups and downs, but for the most part they are as steady as the horizon."[36] Linnaean plant names also belong to this category: "Once a name, however vulgar or obscure or downright misleading, has been attached by botanical

33 Rogers, *Speculation*. In Paul, *Historians' Virtues*, I also made an attempt at crossing the early modern/modern divide.

34 Francis Galton, *English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture* (London: Macmillan, 1874).

35 Mark Pagel, "Human Language as a Culturally Transmitted Replicator," *Nature Reviews Genetics* 10, no. 6 (2009): 405–415, at 410–411.

36 Lorraine Daston, "The Language of Science: How the Words We Use Have Evolved over the Past 175 Years," *Scientific American* 323, no. 3 (2020): 26–33, at 28. On "ultra-conserved" words, see Mark Pagel et al., "Ultraconserved Words Point to Deep Language Ancestry Across Eurasia," *PNAS* 110, no. 21 (2013): 8471–8476.

tradition, it can be changed only for the weightiest of reasons. Natural historical nomenclature is a convention that aspires to the permanence of nature itself."[37] If this is the case, why should the persistence of scholarly vice terms be a reason for surprise?

Arguably, prejudice and dogmatism belong to a different class than *lychnis sibirica* and *reseda lutea* (two Linnaean plant names that are still in use). This is because these terms do not refer to stable species but to habits of mind whose relevance to the pursuit of learning depends on such historically variable factors as scientific personae and, more fundamentally, the goals that scholarship is supposed to serve. If the pursuit of learning is one long exercise in humility before God, as seventeenth-century *érudits* like Jean Mabillon believed, or a means of acquiring *Glückseligkeit*, as German Enlightenment thinkers like Christian Thomasius and Christian Wolff maintained, the virtues required from scholars will be different from those deemed necessary in an age of Romantic nationalism or at a time when "pure research" was regarded as the norm.[38] For this reason, Daston goes on to point out that epistemic virtues are not like rolling hills: their histories are full of variation and sometimes sudden change.[39] "It is not always the same kind of ethos, or the same kind of self, that is involved: both have histories."[40]

Such changes over time, moreover, manifest themselves at multiple levels. While prejudice remained in continuous use, the distinction between *praejudicium praecipitantiae* and *praejudicium auctoritatis*, which eighteenth-century students still encountered in their textbooks, had disappeared from memory by the time that Allport wrote *The Nature of Prejudice*. Quite a few vices had vanished altogether: *philautia perversa* (improper self-love) and *logomachia* (futile quarreling), for instance, had featured prominently in early modern dissertations and disputations but fallen into oblivion.[41] Others, like abstruseness, were still known but not nearly as important anymore as

37 Lorraine Daston, "Type Specimens and Scientific Memory," *Critical Inquiry* 31, no. 1 (2004): 153–182, at 154.

38 Jean Mabillon, *Traité des études monastiques, divisé en trois parties …* (Paris: Charles Robustel, 1691); Stefanie Arend, *Glückseligkeit: Geschichte einer Faszination der Aufklärung: Von Aristoteles bis Lessing* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2019), 177–247; Niklas Lenhard-Schramm, *Konstrukteure der Nation: Geschichtsprofessoren als politische Akteure in Vormärz und Revolution 1848/49* (Munster: Waxmann, 2014); Paul Lucier, "The Origins of Pure and Applied Science in Gilded Age America," *Isis* 103, no. 3 (2012): 527–536.

39 Daston, "Language of Science," 28.

40 Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 40.

41 Kivistö, *Vices of Learning*, 32–40, 147–201.

when the man of science was still expected to contribute to the public good.[42] Notably, some vices had transformed into virtues, as was the case for ambition as well as curiosity (a term with both positive and negative connotations, the former of which had gradually come to outweigh the latter).[43] On top of that, scholarly vices were conceptualized in a rich variety of idioms and frameworks. Although authors could be eclectic in their choice of metaphors – combining, for instance, medical terminology with nautical images of a ship sailing through waters of prejudice, navigating between cliffs of ignorance and error – it makes a difference whether vices were classified as sins, diseases, or character faults.[44] As Ian James Kidd points out, hamartiological, pathological, and characterological discourses offered different diagnoses of epistemic deficiency while, consequently, also providing different remedies.[45] In short, in a *longue durée* study of scholarly vice terms, persistence is not the first thing that catches the eye: diversity and discontinuity are at least as paramount.

For this reason, it is continuity rather than discontinuity that calls for explanation – not only at the level of vice terms *stricto sensu* but also at that of related pejorative concepts like scholasticism, metaphorical representations like Francis Bacon's *idola mentis*, and proverbial aphorisms such as "ye cannot serve God and mammon" (with Mammon representing the vice of avarice or greed). Why did scholasticism remain a powerful dismissive term longer after the medieval schoolmen who had been the target of humanists' criticism had disappeared from the scene? Why did nineteenth- and twentieth-century commentators warn their readers on many occasions against "idols of the mind," using this Baconian formula even when drawing up their own lists of dangers or temptations? And why did the Biblical figure of Mammon remain a trope that scientists employed against patents, competitive funding schemes, and the scientific publishing industry, even at a time when most of them had ceased attending church?

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42 Steven Shapin, "The Image of the Man of Science," in *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 4, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 159–183, at 173.

43 On ambition, see William Casey King, *Ambition, a History: From Vice to Virtue* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013). On curiosity, see the titles mentioned in note 12 as well as Paul J. Griffith, *The Vice of Curiosity: An Essay on Intellectual Appetite* (Winnipeg, MB: Canadian Mennonite University Press, 2006) and Richard Newhauser's contribution to this volume.

44 Schneiders, *Aufklärung und Vorurteilskritik*, 8–9, 118–119. The nautical image under discussion is the frontispiece of Samuel Grosser's *Pharus intellectus sive logica electiva* (1697).

45 Ian James Kidd, "Deep Epistemic Vices," *Journal of Philosophical Research* 43 (2018): 43–67.

To answer these questions, this volume seeks to follow scholarly vice terms (and related terms) over the course of multiple centuries, thereby adopting what one might call a *longue durée* perspective. In line with recent uses of this phrase in the history of science, "long term" means two things.[46] First, it conveys a commitment to widening temporal horizons by adopting larger timescales than customary in the relevant literature. Rather than examining what curiosity meant in the fifteenth century or charlatanry in the seventeenth century, this volume seeks to trace the uses of these vice terms over the course of centuries. "Long term," then, does not refer to a timescale of millennia, as it did in mid-twentieth-century *Annales* historiography,[47] but to the study of continuities and discontinuities over the course of centuries (from the High Middle Ages to the twenty-first century, with different chapters covering different segments of this scale, depending on the topic under discussion). Secondly, as Mathias Grote forcefully argues, a *longue durée* study, committed to unraveling continuities and discontinuities over time, seeks to understand how continuities were *created*. Precisely because it is continuity rather than discontinuity that calls for explanation, the historian's task is to unravel how continuity was produced amidst change, or how patterns of repetition were established in spite of changing circumstances. Historians cannot assume that the image of Mammon was sitting on a shelf, waiting to be used by authors worried about monetary temptations. Historians must rather examine how continuity was created by scholars who in different settings all harked back to the image of Mammon as found in the gospel of Matthew, in sermons on the mortification of sins, or in twentieth-century dictionaries of proverbs.[48] Continuity, in other words, is a matter of "repetition," "reappearance," and "retrieval" – an effect of people actively using old concepts in new contexts.[49] This volume seeks to find out: How and why did such practices of retrieval contribute to curiosity, charlatanry, and other vice terms persisting over time?

46 Mathias Grote, *What Could the "longue durée" Mean for the History of Modern Sciences?* (Paris: Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2015); Heiko Stoff, "Der aktuelle Gebrauch der 'longue durée' in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte," *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 32, no. 2 (2009): 144–158; Frederick L. Holmes, "The Longue Durée in the History of Science," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 25, no. 4 (2003): 463–470.

47 Fernand Braudel, "Histoire et sciences sociales: La longue durée," *Annales* 13 (1958): 725–753.

48 See Chapter 10 in this volume.

49 Grote, *Longue duree*, 8–9.

3 The Why Question

As for the "why" – I will turn to the "how" in a moment – it seems safe to hypothesize that scholarly vice terms stayed in circulation only when historical actors continued to have reasons for invoking them.[50] Take the vice of hypercriticism, which the French historians Charles-Victor Langlois and Charles Seignobos in their *Introduction aux études historiques* (1898) singled out as one of the most dangerous temptations to which historians could fall prey.[51] Although hypercriticism – a word that can be traced back to the sixteenth century – was a technical philological term for excessive skepticism towards historical texts, mainly in matters of authorship and authenticity, it became a widely used phrase near the end of the nineteenth century, especially among Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish authors who regarded Biblical criticism as practiced at German universities as a threat to their faith. The reason for this popularity is apparent from the rhetorical strategies employed by theologians like Otto Zöckler. Rather than lamenting that Biblical criticism ignored or denied divine revelation, they appealed to the very standards of philological *Wissenschaft* that Biblical critics claimed to adhere to. By accusing those scholars of treating the Bible hypercritically, Zöckler *cum suis* fought the enemies with their own weapons: they denied them the scientific status that they claimed for themselves. Hypercriticism, in other words, was a useful polemical term to the extent that it was imbued with the authority of science. As a rhetorical tool, it derived its power from being a recognized term, codified in manuals like Langlois and Seignobos'.[52]

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50 Mario Biagioli arrives at a similar conclusion in his reflections on the "undead" concept of the Scientific Revolution – "undead" because it has often been declared dead (e.g., by Steven Shapin: "There was no such thing as the Scientific Revolution") yet somehow refuses to go away. According to Biagioli, this is not because of the inertia of tradition but because historians of science still have reasons for invoking the concept, even if only negatively. Mario Biagioli, "The Scientific Revolution Is Undead," *Configurations* 6, no. 2 (1998): 141–148; Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1. On the emergence and vicissitudes of the concept, see H.F. Cohen, *The Scientific Revolution: A Historiographical Inquiry* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

51 Charles-Victor Langlois and Charles Seignobos, *Introduction aux études historiques* (Paris: Hachette, 1898), 106.

52 Herman Paul, "Hypercriticism: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Vice," *Modern Intellectual History* 21, no. 3 (2024): 585–609.

Similarly, the popularity of the "seven deadly sins" metaphor in texts devoted to the ills of modern academia suggests that this ancient Christian figure has rhetorical power even at a time when sin is no longer a culturally dominant category of analysis. Chris Chambers' much-discussed book on the replication crisis in psychology, *The Seven Deadly Sins of Psychology* (2017), is only one of many studies featuring the phrase in their titles.[53] A simple search in Google Scholar returns dozens of articles on "the seven deadly sins of" DNA barcoding, statistical analysis, Arabic studies, world university ranking, communication research, contemporary quantitative political analysis, cloud computing research, legal scholarship, and (not to mention more) environmental epidemiology. One journal article even seeks to identify "the seven deadly sins of measuring brain structural connectivity using diffusion MRI streamlines fibre-tracking" – a title whose happy indulgence in stretching metaphors is reminiscent of Melinda Coughlan and Kumar Sharma's attack on "the dogma of mitochondrial reactive oxygen species overproduction in diabetic kidney disease."[54] Notwithstanding the conceptual inflation to which these examples seem to testify, the point is that there is rhetorical power in invoking the *septem principalia vitia*, even in an age when few readers are likely to know them by heart.[55] Arguably, this power rests on what classical scholar Ineke Sluiter calls "anchoring," that is, the invocation of ancient authorities as sources of legitimacy, morally or otherwise.[56] Just as nineteenth-century theologians invoked the "anchor" of a well-established scholarly vice to add credence to their rejection of iconoclastic Biblical scholarship, Chambers and other critics of the modern science system use the seven deadly sins to suggest that the faults they are diagnosing do not just exist in the eye of the beholder: these ills have long been recognized as deviations from the path of virtue.

This, then, is the first question for the chapters that follow: Why did scholarly vice terms persist? What value did authors attribute to time-honored

53 Chris Chambers, *The Seven Deadly Sins of Psychology: A Manifesto for Reforming the Culture of Scientific Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

54 Fernando Calamante, "The Seven Deadly Sins of Measuring Brain Structural Connectivity Using Diffusion MRI Streamlines Fibre-Tracking," *Diagnostics* 9, no. 3 (2019): art. 115; Melinda T. Coughlan and Kumar Sharma, "Challenging the Dogma of Mitochondrial Reactive Oxygen Species Overproduction in Diabetic Kidney Disease," *Kidney International* 90, no. 2 (2016): 272–279.

55 On the seven deadly sins in medieval and early modern Christianity, see *Sin in Medieval and Early Modern Culture: The Tradition of the Seven Deadly Sins*, ed. Richard G. Newhauser and Susan J. Ridyard (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2012).

56 Ineke Sluiter, "Anchoring Innovation: A Classical Research Agenda," *European Review* 25, no. 1 (2017): 20–38.

concepts of vice? What made these terms rhetorically useful, even after centuries? To what extent does Sluiter's notion of anchoring help explain why pedantry, scholasticism, Mammon, and Bacon's idols of the mind survived the passage of time? Or what other reasons did commentators have for keeping old repertoires of vice alive?[57]

4 The How Question

If the "why" question is the first one animating this volume, the second is a "how" question: How did repertoires of vice remain available over time? As said, it cannot be taken for granted that people have access to ideas, idioms, or expressions originating in a remote past. These things have to be transmitted over time in order to remain accessible. Most likely, Chris Chambers did not consult Evagrius of Pontus or Gregory the Great in drawing up his list of deadly sins in psychology. It is improbable, likewise, that John McDowell Leavitt, a New York Episcopal clergyman who in 1900 devoted a whole book to the dangers of hypercriticism, had a copy of Langlois and Seignobos' *Introduction aux études historiques* sitting at his desk.[58] Apart from examining what made old vice terms relevant in new contexts, we need to understand *how* such terms traveled through time – in what forms and along which ways.

Historians working on older periods, when the *vitia sive errores eruditorum* amounted to little more than variations on sins that every Christian was supposed to fight, have drawn attention to a broad variety of genres in which such vices could be transmitted. As Richard Newhauser writes, the relevant sources vary "from sermons to Dante's cosmological allegory, from clerical drama to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, from works of monastic guidance to Bosch's meditative painting for the laity."[59] Even Roman love poetry could play a role in codifying scholarly vices, as Bridget Balint has shown for the case of envy (*invidia*) – a vice that gained significance among clerics in eleventh-century

57 Following Ann Swidler, I understand repertoires as cultural toolkits that enable people to say or do things in particular ways. See Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (1986): 273–286 and Ann Swidler, *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

58 John McDowell Leavitt, *Reasons for Faith in Christianity with Answers to Hypercriticism* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1900).

59 Richard Newhauser, "Introduction: Cultural Constructions and Vices," in *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals*, ed. Richard Newhauser (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1–17, at 5.

France due to a rediscovery of Ovid's *Remedia amoris*.[60] Similarly, when Sari Kivistö in her study of early modern scholarly vices emphasizes the prominence of "rhetorical and literary conventions, images and a largely fixed stock of examples and anecdotes," she points out that such *topoi* circulated not only in academic dissertations and disputations but also in sermons, satirical pieces, and morality plays.[61] Judging by the popularity of the pedant as an object of ridicule in Italian and French Renaissance drama, theater even seemed to have played a special role in keeping images of pedantry alive.[62]

One might argue that the modern period shows a very different picture, if only because the institutionalization of science and the specialization of research made demands on scholars that were more domain-specific than those that teachers at Europe's late medieval or early modern universities had to meet. Objectivity was a domain-specific virtue, valued as a means for attaining scholarly knowledge, in a sense that honesty was not. As a corollary of this, it seems plausible that its media of transmission were more exclusive, too. While paeans to honesty can be found in many homilies and children's books, objectivity was more likely to feature in academic methodology books.[63] Similarly, the idea that dogmatism and scholasticism were errors of the past, which as such had no place in modern science, was expounded more explicitly in histories of science – in books like William Whewell's *History of the Inductive Sciences* (1837) but also, no less importantly, in festive speeches and commemorative addresses celebrating the advances of science in an age of progress – than in novels or newspapers.[64] Also, in light of recent scholarship on laboratories and seminar rooms as sites of academic socialization,[65]

60 Bridget K. Balint, "Envy in the Intellectual Discourse of the High Middle Ages," in Newhauser, *Seven Deadly Sins*, 41–55.

61 Kivistö, *Vices of Learning*, 7.

62 Antonio Stäuble, *"Parlar per lettera": Il pedante nella commedia del cinquecento e altri saggi sul teatro rinascimentale* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1991); Jocelyn Royé, *La figure du pédant de Montaigne à Molière* (Geneva: Droz, 2008). I owe these references to Arnoud Visser.

63 Rolf Torstendahl, "Fact, Truth, and Text: The Quest for a Firm Basis for Historical Knowledge around 1900," *History and Theory* 42, no. 3 (2003); 305–331.

64 Caroline Schep and Herman Paul, "Denial of Coevalness: Charges of Dogmatism in the Nineteenth-Century Humanities," *History of European Ideas* 48, no. 6 (2022): 778–794.

65 E.g., Kathryn M. Olesko, *Physics as a Calling: Discipline and Practice in the Königsberg Seminar for Physics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, "Leopold von Ranke, la passion de la critique et le séminaire d'histoire," in *Lieux de savoir*, vol. 1, ed. Christian Jacob (Paris: Albin Michel, 2007), 462–482; Sjang L. ten Hagen, "History and Physics Entangled: Disciplinary intersections in the Long Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2021), 115–197; Kristine Palmieri, "The Forgotten Seminar: Friedrich Creuzer and Classical Philology at the University of Heidelberg, 1800–1830," *History of Humanities* 8, no. 1 (2023): 69–97.

there is reason to suspect that teaching practices played a role in transmitting domain-specific vices such as bias, inaccuracy, and superficiality. Even if Wilhelm Studemund's students in late nineteenth-century Strasbourg encountered sculptural representations of virtues defeating the vices every time they passed the medieval cathedral at the *Münsterplatz*, it was only in the academic setting of their teacher's Greek philology seminar that they learned about philological virtues like carefulness and precision.[66]

What these arguments ignore, however, is the extent to which older traditions stayed alive, also in the modern age. As Alexander Košenina has pointed out, the genre of learned satire showed no signs of disappearing in an age when new rituals, such as annual conventions of academic organizations, cried out for satiric treatment.[67] When the theater ceased to be its primary habitat, the genre found a new home in academic novels, which provided readers with a near-endless cast of bookish, wayward, eccentric college teachers.[68] As John Lyons observed in his study of the college novel in early twentieth-century America, the professor tended to appear in this genre either as "a pedant whose studies have ill-equipped him to deal with life" or as a roguish man using his knowledge "to control others."[69] Not a few of these characters – think of J. Tanksley Parkhurst, the "name-dropping, plagiarizing pedant" in Stanley Johnson's *Professor* (1925) – kept old scholarly vices alive, partly by exemplifying them, partly also, in Parkhurst's case at least, by talking recurrently about the ills of prejudice.[70] From the 1920s onwards, stereotypical images of absent-minded, lazy, and philandering college teachers also regularly appeared in American films.[71] As Pauline Reynolds has argued, the genre contributed its share to the persistence of classic stereotypes by depicting

66 Paul, "Ethos of Criticism," 199.

67 Alexander Košenina, *Der gelehrte Narr: Gelehrtensatire seit der Aufklärung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004).

68 Think also of George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch* (1871–1872), which was influential enough to turn the name of Edward Casaubon into "a byword for erudite futility." Colin Kidd, *The World of Mr Casaubon: Britain's Wars of Mythography, 1700–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 3.

69 John O. Lyons, *The College Novel in America* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962), 106.

70 Christian K. Anderson and Katherine E. Chaddock, "Humor in Academic Fiction: From Subtle Satire to LMAO," in *Anti-Intellectual Representations of American Colleges and Universities: Fictional Higher Education*, ed. Barbara F. Tobolowsky and Pauline J. Reynolds (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 15–32, at 20; Stanley Johnson, *Professor* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1925), 54, 211.

71 John C. Fitch, III, "Making a College Professor Film: A Case Study," *Journal of Creative Communications* 15, no. 1 (2020): 90–105, at 91.

professors almost without exception as otherworldly men, whose talk and manners made them unfit for normal social life. Films like *The Bishop Murder Case* (1930) and *Bowery at Midnight* (1942), moreover, offered modern illustrations of old vices by showing that things do not end well for professors who desire money or fame – a message echoing that of early modern treatises against the Mammon and the sin of *cenodoxia* (vainglory).[72] In other words, there is no reason to think that "official" scientific genres had a monopoly on the transmission of scholarly vice terms: in the modern period, just as in the early modern era, a broad variety of genres comes into consideration.

5 Media of Transmission

To spell out the research agenda behind this volume in somewhat greater detail, I would like to elaborate on this last point with some further examples of genres that historians of the modern sciences and humanities may want to examine as potential media of transmission. The first of these is scholarly aphorisms. While *florilegia* and commonplace books have been studied intensely for earlier periods,[73] their nineteenth- and twentieth-century equivalents have so far received much less attention. An example is the collection of aphorisms by James Willasey, a charismatic school teacher from Lancaster, that Edward Frankland, the nineteenth-century chemist, kept among his papers. The collection included maxims such as "It is not what we earn, but what we save that makes us rich" and "It is not what we profess, but what we practice, that makes us righteous." The importance that the Frankland family attached to these aphorisms is illustrated by an 1896 letter in which Frankland's daughter Sophie asked her father for a copy of "Mr. Willasey's excellent saying." As Léjon Saarloos has argued, Frankland's lifelong aversion to "God Mammon," as he called it in his diary, may at least partly be attributed to Willasey's influence (as well as to Thomas Day's *The History of Sandford and Merton*, a children's book about the evil of greed of which Frankland owned no less than three leather-bound copies).[74]

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72 Pauline J. Reynolds, "The 'Reel' Professoriate: The Portrayal of Professors in American Film, 1930–1950" (Ph.D. thesis, Indiana University, 2007), 152–163, 140–141. On cenodoxy, see Kivistö, *Vices of Learning*, 84–86.

73 As documented by Victoria E. Burke, "Recent Studies in Commonplace Books," *English Literary Renaissance* 43, no. 1 (2013): 153–177.

74 Léjon Saarloos, "The Scholarly Self under Threat: Language of Vice in British Scholarship (1870–1910)" (Ph.D. thesis, Leiden University, 2021), 110, 112, 109, 95. The history of avarice is relatively well-studied: Jared Poley, *The Devil's Riches: A Modern History of Greed*

If Frankland's collection of aphorisms ("Mr. Willasey on Conduct") had a scope beyond the academic realm, there was a market, too, for collections of professorial aphorisms and *Gelehrten-Anekdoten*.[75] German publishers in the 1870s and 1880s made a business out of publishing anthologies of famous words by famous scholars like Leopold von Ranke, maxims on virtue and vice included ("individual sincerity is not the same as objective love of truth").[76] Scholarly virtues and vices featured even more prominently in a 1905 volume with *Counsels and Ideals from the Writings of William Osler*. With telling chapter titles like "Honesty, Truth, Accuracy, and Thoroughness in Medicine," the book contained warnings against "the all-prevailing vice of intellectual idleness," while offering typologies of temptations reminiscent of seventeenth-century logic textbooks: "The physician, like the Christian, has three great foes – *ignorance*, which is sin; *apathy*, which is the world; and *vice*, which is the devil."[77] Much of the material gathered in this volume also found its way into *Sir William Osler Aphorisms* (1950) and, more recently, *The Quotable Osler* (2003).[78] Although such light-hearted titles may seem trivial compared to history of science books or methodology manuals, they deserve attention as potential media of transmission, not despite, but because of the clichéd expressions and commonplaces they contain.

One might go even further and explore the transmission of scholarly vice terms in what Stevin Shapin calls the proverbial economy of modern science – that is, the pieces of collective wisdom that scholars pass on in the form of

(New York: Berghahn, 2017); Jonathan Patterson, *Representing Avarice in Late Renaissance France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Richard Newhauser, *The Early History of Greed: The Sin of Avarice in Early Medieval Thought and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

75 The German mathematician Wilhelm Ahrens, for example, compiled a volume titled *Scherz und Ernst in der Mathematik: Geflügelte und ungeflügelte Worte* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1904), followed by collections of *Gelehrten-Anekdoten* (Berlin: Hermann Sack, 1911) and *Mathematiker-Anekdoten* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1916).

76 Leopold von Ranke, *Lichtstrahlen aus seinen Werken*, ed. Arthur Winckler (Berlin: R.L. Prager, 1885), 170.

77 *Counsels and Ideals from the Writings of William Osler*, ed. C.N.B. Camac (Oxford: Henry Frowde, 1905), 77, 201, 203.

78 *Sir William Osler Aphorisms: From His Bedside Teachings and Writings*, ed. William Bennett Bean (New York: H. Schuman, 1950); *The Quotable Osler*, ed. Mark E. Silverman, T. Jock Murray, and Charles S. Bryan (Philadelphia, PA: American College of Physicians, 2003). See also John McHugh, *If … for Doctors: Kipling's If Meets Osler's Aequanimitas: Nineteenth Century Virtues for the Modern Day Physician* ([Gainesville, GA]: Jennie Cooper Press, 2016).

slogans and one-liners.[79] The sentence with which this introduction started – "The surest way to lose truth is to pretend that one already wholly possesses it" – has become such a piece of proverbial wisdom, codified in dictionaries of proverbs, used as a motto for books and book chapters, and quoted endlessly on websites like quote.org and allgreatquotes.com. Even material objects may come into view here. If one were to make a study of *aequanimitas* – Osler's favorite virtue of imperturbability – and its media of transmission, one might well find out that its fame was kept alive not primarily by modern reprints of Osler's 1889 address with that title but by the "Osler" ties and scarves that alumni from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine around the world traditionally wear each Friday, with *aequanimitas* in capital letters printed on them. (Such a study would also have to look closely at some of the wall plaques with uplifting Osler aphorisms that are offered for sale on the internet.)[80]

At first sight, sermons may seem less relevant for the transmission of scholarly vice terms, notwithstanding their cultural significance as a genre that until well into the twentieth century reached more people than any other form of public oratory.[81] The case of Allport, however, prompts reconsideration. As common at the time, the Harvard psychologist regularly attended Daily Prayers in Appleton Chapel, where faculty members from across the university did what had once been the prerogative of ordained ministers: climbing the pulpit to share a few thoughts on a Scriptural passage. Nowhere did Allport reflect as extensively on scholarly virtues and vices as in the chapel mediations that he delivered in the years from 1938 to 1966. "Many passages in the Old Testament," said Allport on one such occasion, "show a peculiarly bitter scorn for intellectual vanity. They seek to correct the arrogance of those who gain a few ounces of knowledge, and then set themselves up as masters of understanding." Such masters were, of course, not unknown to the Harvard community. We are all familiar, Allport continued, with academics " who, in the quaint language of the psalm, 'set their horn on high and speak with a stiff neck.'" As in his Terry Lectures, Allport explained that such "arrogant and immature self-satisfaction" did not befit a conscientious scholar. The *applicatio*

79 Steven Shapin, "Proverbial Economies: How an Understanding of Some Linguistic and Social Features of Common Sense Can Throw Light on More Prestigious Bodies of Knowledge, Science for Example," *Social Studies of Science* 31, no. 5 (2001): 731–769.

80 William Osler, *Aequanimitas: With Other Addresses to Medical Students, Nurses and Practitioners of Medicine* (London: H.K. Lewis, 1904); "Vignette," *Johns Hopkins Magazine* 54, no. 1 (2002), online at https://pages.jh.edu/jhumag/0202web/wholly2.html (last accessed February 20, 2025).

81 O.C. Edwards, *A History of Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2004); *A New History of the Sermon*, ed. Robert H. Ellison and Keith A. Francis, 6 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2002–2018).

of his little sermon, therefore, was a plea for intellectual humility, followed by a prayer: "Take from us, o God, all pride and vanity, boasting and forwardness; and give us the true courage that shows itself by gentleness; the true wisdom that shows itself by simplicity; and the true power that shows itself by modesty. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."[82]

In the absence of relevant scholarship, it is hard to say how representative this case study is. There are examples of nineteenth-century professors who in their first classes after the summer offered their students a mixture of moral exhortation and study advice, thereby continuing an eighteenth-century genre of guidance known (in German-speaking Europe) as *Hodegetik*.[83] In the 1850s, Abraham Kuenen, an Old Testament scholar at Leiden University, always ended such opening classes with prayers like Allport's: supplications to God to fill the freshly arrived students with a spirit of truthfulness and love of wisdom strong enough for them to resist the temptations of arrogance and pride.[84] Admittedly, such academic religious practices were marginal already in Kuenen's days and even more so in Allport's. It would be worth examining, however, to what extent genres like commencement addresses and farewell speeches took over some of the moral instruction previously offered by chapel meditations, including their language of virtue and vice. Likewise, expanding on James Turner's hypotheses about the secularization of American higher education, historians might want to examine to what extent courses in moral philosophy or high-minded reflections on a democratic ethos supposedly fostered by scientific training or immersion in the humanities kept repertoires of vice terms available to students who no longer went to church or chapel.[85]

In short, there is a rich variety of largely unexplored source material waiting to be examined by historians of scholarly virtues and vices. If there is anything

82 Gordon W. Allport, *Waiting for the Lord: 33 Meditations on God and Man*, ed. Peter A. Bertocci (New York: Macmillan, 1978), 3, 4, 5.

83 On which see Anne Por's chapter in this volume.

84 Herman Paul, *De deugden van een wetenschapper: karakter en toewijding in de geesteswetenschappen, 1850–1940* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 141–160.

85 Jon H. Roberts and James Turner, *The Sacred and the Secular University* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 107–122. On the moral didacticism of moral philosophy classes in nineteenth-century American colleges, see Bruce Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America: 1720–2000* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 58–74. The moral benefits of scientific training were a key element of Dewey-inspired ideals of "scientific democracy" as described by Andrew Jewett, *Science, Democracy, and the American University: From the Civil War to the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). On the prominence of similar tropes in modern defenses of the humanities as a training ground for democratic citizenship, see Helen Small, *The Value of the Humanities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 125–150.

that the examples listed here suggest, it is that historians pursuing the second question central to this volume – How were scholarly vice terms transmitted through time? – may not want to restrict their research to formal academic genres. It is worth examining to what degree moral advice literature, sermons, aphorisms, proverbs, and stereotypes also played a part in keeping repertoires of scholarly vice terms alive.[86]

6 Note on Terminology

Before concluding this introduction with a comment on the structure of this volume, a brief remark on terminology might be in order. Although the preceding pages have referred continuously to "scholarly vice terms," this somewhat uncommon phrase has not yet been properly defined. This has a reason: the definitional contours I want to draw make sense only in light of the examples discussed above. Most notably, only after recognizing that scholarly vices could be conceptualized in different idioms – in hamartiological, pathological, or characterological terms, among others – we can conclude that vices cannot possibly be an actors' category. Apart from that the term was never dominant – "errors," "sins," and "temptations" were as common as "vices" – it had largely fallen out of use by the early twentieth century. "Scholarly vices" is, consequently, best understood as an analytical category, encompassing all sorts of *vitia sive errores*, *morbi intellectus*, or *vitia et imbecilitates* that were historically attributed to men of learning, scholars, or scientists.[87]

The adjective "scholarly" also requires some explanation, given that historians and philosophers of science more commonly refer to "epistemic" virtues and vices. A modern-day equivalent of Aristotle's category of intellectual virtues, epistemic virtues are all those habits of mind that are believed to be conducive to the pursuit of knowledge. Epistemic vices, accordingly, are defined as bad cognitive dispositions that "get in the way of knowledge." They "obstruct," as Quassim Cassam likes to put it, our attempts at understanding the world.[88] For our purposes, this definition of vices is simultaneously too broad and too

86 In Herman Paul, "German Thoroughness in Baltimore: Epistemic Virtues and National Stereotypes," *History of Humanities* 3, no. 2 (2018): 327–350, I argued that scholarly virtues and vices were even paired to national stereotypes, resulting in phrases like "French lucidity," "German thoroughness," and "American enterprise."

87 Kivistö, *Vices of Learning*, 1; Schneiders, *Aufklärung und Vorurteilskritik*, 87, 125.

88 Quassim Cassam, *Vices of the Mind: From the Intellectual to the Political* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 5.

narrow. It is too broad in that it applies not just to scholars but to everyone who in their capacities as citizens, employers, or parents try to make sense of the world. At the same time, Cassam's focus on the acquisition of knowledge is a little too narrow for this volume, given that the pursuit of knowledge was historically only one of many tasks that scholars were expected to fulfill, and not necessarily the most important one. Especially before the rise of what Steven Turner calls the "research imperative," scholars were also expected to live an exemplary Christian life, pass on ancient traditions, educate the youth, advise the ruling elite, or support political causes.[89] Given that all these expectations translated into standards of virtue, each with their corresponding vices, we need a category broad enough to encompass all the vices to which scholars in their capacities as scholars could fall prey. "Scholarly vices" may meet this demand, as long as we understand the adjective as broadly as the noun, as covering all men of learning, *savants*, *Wissenschaftler*, and scientists past and present.[90]

Finally, this volume speaks about "vice terms" to highlight that it does not deal with vicious practices or habits of mind. Instead, the chapters that follow examine the idioms that authors used to denote such historically variable practices or habits – that is, the vocabularies that people employed in discussing habits that scholars *qua* scholars should avoid. Compared to "vice concepts" (a phrase sometimes used by philosophers),[91] "vice terms" has the additional advantage of drawing attention to the discursivity of the phenomenon under investigation. While concepts refer to more or less well-defined ideas, terms are elastic enough to carry different meanings or, indeed, different concepts. The distinction matters, as this volume does not trace the history of Bacon's concept of *idola mentis*. It rather explores how and why this particular expression, "idols of the mind," was picked up by later generations for purposes well beyond those envisioned by Bacon. Likewise, the volume does not offer a history of the concept of dogmatism as defined by Jürgen Habermas (according to whom that history includes episodes in which dogmatism went by the name of

89 R. Steven Turner, "The Prussian Professoriate and the Research Imperative, 1790–1840," in *Epistemological and Social Problems of the Sciences in the Early Nineteenth Century*, ed. Hans Niels Jahnke and Michael Otto (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1981), 109–121.

90 Christiaan Engberts and Herman Paul, "Scholarly Vices: Boundary Work in Nineteenth-Century Orientalism," in *Epistemic Virtues in the Sciences and the Humanities*, ed. Jeroen van Dongen and Herman Paul (Cham: Springer, 2017), 79–90.

91 E.g., *Vice Epistemology*, ed. Ian James Kidd, Heather Battaly, and Quassim Cassam (London: Routledge, 2021).

prejudice).[92] Instead, it examines why the word dogmatism, unlike prejudice, had such a strong appeal to German natural philosophers or, half a century later, to Darwin's critics and defenders in Victorian England.

"Scholarly vice terms," in other words, is an umbrella category encompassing all terms, expressions, and phrases used to denote personal qualities, habits, or inclinations that were seen as detrimental to scholarly work – in different ways, by different people, in different periods, and on different grounds. This volume asks: How and why did some of these scholarly vice terms, unlike others, survive the passage of time, sometimes persisting even into the present?

7 Structure of the Book

The four chapters that make up the volume's first part explore a number of individual vice terms. Richard Newhauser traces how "curiosity" in late medieval and early modern Europe was defined and employed against various sorts of perceived threats, especially in debates about educational reform. Over an even larger timescale, Sorana Corneanu examines the vicissitudes of "prejudice" as a concept and a polemical tag. Alexander Stoeger shows that "dogmatism" resembled curiosity and prejudice in being sufficiently flexible to be adapted to changing circumstances, thanks to multiple layers of meaning that could be highlighted or downplayed as the situation required. Similarly, in his *longue durée* analysis of "scholasticism," Sjang ten Hagen identifies patterns of change and continuity on the level of meaning, with new connotations replacing older ones against a background of associations that was sometimes surprisingly stable. It is rewarding to read these four chapters in part 1 together, as this allows the reader to see the vice terms interfering with each other (with scholasticism and dogmatism sometimes serving as synonyms, and dogmatism being depicted as a special form of prejudice).

The second part of the volume, also consisting of four chapters, focuses on figurations of vice or symbolic representations of vicious behavior. Focusing on the pedant (Arnoud Visser), the charlatan (Marian Füssel), the "idols of the mind" (Edurne De Wilde), and the originally Biblical image of the Mammon (Pieter Huistra and Herman Paul), this second set of chapters make even clearer than the first one that vices never existed in isolation from one another.

92 Jürgen Habermas, "Dogmatismus, Vernunft und Entscheidung: Zu Theorie und Praxis in der verwissenschaftliche Zivilisation," in Habermas, *Theorie und Praxis: Sozialphilosophische Studien* (Neuwied am Rhein: Luchterhand, 1963), 231–257, at 234.

Apart from that the pedant and the charlatan could overlap, just as Bacon's idols in some cases resembled the Mammon metaphor in denoting monetary temptations, figurations typically embodied more than one vice, thereby strengthening ties within the web of vice terms. All chapters, moreover, highlight the rhetorical uses that authors made of these figurations of vice, just as they did of the vice terms discussed in part 1.

The third and final part of the volume examines three genres or media through which vice terms and figurations of vice were transmitted over time. Drawing on eighteenth-century medical dissertations, Sari Kivistö points to the importance of proverbial expressions like *mentiris ut medicus* ("you lie like a medical doctor"). Sjang ten Hagen examines historical narratives in history of science books as vehicles of transmission, while Anne Por argues that the genre of student advice literature from the eighteenth century to the present was, and is, premised on the idea that studying without a plan is intellectually and socially vicious. While many more media of transmission could be added, the chapters in part 3 make clear that we cannot study the meanings and uses of vice terms or figurations of vice without examining how these concepts remained available for usage – that is, how they remained part of repertoires on which authors could draw.

Arguably, this does not apply only to the history of scholarly vice terms: it is a lesson that other historians, working on other themes, might also take to heart. For this reason, the volume ends with a conclusion that not only summarizes the main findings but also identifies three methodological insights that historians engaged in other types of *longue durée* history writing might find helpful.

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