

In the Garden of Evil

THE VICES AND CULTURE
IN THE MIDDLE AGES



Edited by RICHARD NEWHAUSER

PIMS

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

Catalogues of Demons as Catalogues of Vices in Medieval German Literature

Des Teufels Netz and the Alexander Romance
by Ulrich von Etzenbach

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I

A young postdoc who had just received his doctorate in law, Johann Wolfgang Goethe had not yet been in Weimar for four months when, on February 23, 1776, he took part in a theatrical event put on by the court society there which was called a *redoute* in the language of the time. This term meant a form of masked ball or masquerade which took place in closed rooms.¹ Later, Goethe would often devise masques for these masked balls and would one day bring these masquerades onto the stages of the world's theaters in the first act of *Faust II* in the long scene entitled "Spacious Hall with Adjoining Chambers." In that scene, the "herald" announces the game of the allegorical representation of society with the words: "Do not think that you are within German borders / with dances of demons, of fools, and dances of death; / a merry celebration awaits you" (vv. 5065-67).²

Goethe's first masque in Weimar was also to become a "merry celebration," although it was a "devil's dance," which, in contrast to the "wild [Roman] carnival" (cf. *Faust II*, v. 5060), was a supposedly "German" (v. 5065) peculiarity, a peculiarity which Goethe research tends to characterize as "medieval."³ Karl Wilhelm Friedrich von Lyncker remembered

1. See Claudia Schnitzer, *Höfische Maskeraden: Funktion und Ausstattung von Verkleidungsdivertissements an deutschen Höfen der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen, 1999); for Weimar, cf. Gabriele Busch-Salmen, Walter Salmen, and Christoph Michel, *Der Weimarer Musenhof* (Stuttgart and Weimar, 1998), 133-35 ("Bälle und Redouten-Maskenzüge").

2. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke, Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*, vol. 1/7, *Faust*, ed. Albrecht Schöne (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), 1:217.

3. Wilhelm Emrich, *Die Symbolik von Faust II: Sinn und Vorformen*, 5th ed. (Königstein, 1981), 140: "Die Bedeutung der Mummenschanz beleuchtet Goethe

the occasion in 1776: "In the following winter, a *redoute* was given in which a parade of demons appeared. Each vice was represented by one of the demons: for example, miserliness, voracity, gluttony, and various others. This masquerade was considered very offensive, and Goethe, who had organized it, was vehemently criticized for it."⁴ Immediately thereafter (in a letter dated March 1, 1776), Goethe's servant and secretary of many years, Philipp Seidel, expressed thoroughly positive sentiments about this devil's performance, in which his "Doctor" played the "demon of pride": "It was worth seeing. It represented the temptations of Antony the Great, who sat in a cave in front of a book and a skull; then one demon after the other came and frightened him and attempted to torment him and drive him mad; each demon represented a vice, for which he was the demonic representation; my Doctor was the demon of pride, and he came in, puffed-up, on stilts, with wings made out of peacocks' tail feathers.... Everything was natural and horrific, not frivolous."⁵

The term "frivolous" is an exact characterization of the reproach with which Goethe was met following this "masquerade." It must have seemed highly "offensive," and especially to a Protestant society, for someone to make light of the concept of demons of vice, a concept which included special (sub)demons who were in a particular way responsible for separate sins (cf. Seidel's phrase about the "vice, of which he was the demonic representation"). This concept, after all, was a constituent of the early modern Protestant literary genre of the so-called "devil books," which train their satirical sights on "drinking demons," "cursing demons," "gambling demons," and, of course, the "demon of pride" as well.⁶ Catholics were no less likely to have been incensed than Protestants, for in the temptation of Antony the Great, the masque of this *redoute* parodied one of the earliest scenes in the hagiographic literature of Christianity, in which this, the most famous of all ascetics, is tempted by the devil in the form of various animals. The

bereits in der Eröffnungsrede des Herolds ... durch die ausdrückliche Abhebung der Mummenschanz als *römischen* Karneval gegen die mittelalterlich-deutschen Teufels-, Narren- und Totentänze."

4. Goethe: *Begegnungen und Gespräche*, ed. Ernst Grumach and Renate Grumach (Berlin, 1965), 1:406. Cf. Robert Steiger, *Goethes Leben von Tag zu Tag: Eine dokumentarische Chronik* (Zurich and Munich, 1983), 2:23.

5. Goethe, ed. Grumach and Grumach, 1:406.

6. See Hans-Jürgen Bachorski, "Teufelbücher," in *Literaturlexikon*, ed. Walther Killy (Gütersloh, 1993), 14:420-22. Cf. Joachim Westphal, *Hoffartsteufel*, in *Teufelbücher in Auswahl*, ed. Ria Stambaugh, vol. 3 (Berlin and New York, 1973).

biography of Antony by Athanasius, which, like the rest of the literature on the desert fathers, was as highly esteemed by the Middle Ages as it was by early modern Catholicism (and, with some qualification, also by Luther),⁷ does not specifically assign the various appearances taken on by the Evil One to separate vices. This is, however, the case in the ascetic writings of the desert theologian Evagrius Ponticus with his teachings on the sinful “thoughts,” which influenced the western teachings on the deadly sins via the Latin writings of John Cassian. A differentiated “hierarchy of devils” with a system of subdemons based on the division of labor, as a (parodistic) analogy to the “celestial hierarchy” of angels, did not develop until relatively late.⁸ If it says in the biography of Antony (Chapter 9), “But changes of the form of evil are easy for the devil,” then this touches on the motif of the devil’s diverse arts of transformation,⁹ which gave rise to his being described as *mille-artifex*.¹⁰ From the very beginning, this concept of the devil’s “arts” introduced an aspect of theatricality into demonology, which is manifested in Goethe’s procession of demons at Weimar only in a carnivalesque final form. Deceiving and betraying behind many masks, the devil was always regarded as the most evil of all actors.¹¹ There are grounds for the supposition, given the pluralization of demons who are in a particular way responsible for specific sins or who are identical with these specific sins, that such roles—perhaps under the influence of the monastic conception of the demons of vice—had become independent and had virtually ontologized themselves.

7. Cf. Klaus Klein, “Frühchristliche Eremiten im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit. Zu Überlieferung und Rezeption der deutschen *Vitaspatrum*-Prosa,” in *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit*, ed. Ludger Grenzmann and Karl Stackmann (Stuttgart, 1984), 686-95.

8. Cf. Isabel Grübel, *Die Hierarchie der Teufel: Studien zum christlichen Teufelsbild und zur Allegorisierung des Bösen in Theologie, Literatur und Kunst zwischen Frühmittelalter und Gegenreformation* (Munich, 1991).

9. Cf. the Latin version in PL 73:132A: “Dixit, et ad hortantis vocem audientium turba consentit, quia innumeras diabolus habet artes nocendi.”

10. See Meinolf Schumacher, “Der Teufel als *Tausendkünstler*. Ein wortgeschichtlicher Beitrag,” *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 27 (1992): 65-76.

11. See Helmar Schramm, *Karneval des Denkens: Theatralität im Spiegel philosophischer Texte des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1996), 86-95 (“Theater der Teufel”); Brigitte Spreitzer, “Wie bist du vom Himmel gefallen...”: *Einschlagstellen des Diabolischen in der Literatur des späteren Mittelalters* (Vienna, 1995), 21-93 (“Der große Simulator”).

II

It is within this context that the question becomes interesting whether or not catalogues of demons existed in the Middle Ages which were formulated concurrently with catalogues of vices. To answer such a question, this paper will take as its evidence works of literature which were written during the period between the monastic theology of late antiquity and the early modern devil literature, whereby I, as a scholar of works central to German culture, will place Middle High German literary texts in the forefront of my investigation. The writers of these texts probably did not have any official theological doctrine at their disposal, if one leaves out of consideration some statements by Thomas Aquinas (in *De ordinatione malorum angelorum*), who specifically denies the possibility of a hierarchy of demons, and yet clearly accords them a certain "division of labor."¹² Nonetheless, there was apparently a need among vernacular authors to refer to recognized authorities; Pope Gregory the Great came to serve in this role in the *Renner* by Hugo von Trimberg:

Saint Gregory writes the following about that / in one of his books: / "Know that every transgression / has its own demon / who spurs a person on to it and who nurses it / when he has overcome that person" (vv. 24105-10).¹³

The Stricker formulates the same thought in a religious *Bîspelrede*, although without any such—doubtlessly fictional—reference to sources. In this poem, a legal aspect is added; it is the same demon who provokes a sin, notes it down, and brings the accusation against it (*rüeget*): "To each grave sin belongs / its (own) demon, / who governs it and provokes it / and who also writes it down and prosecutes it" (vv. 2577-80).¹⁴

This motif of writing down the sins suggests that there is a connection here between the specialization with regard to particular types of sins and a type of "individual care" given to each person by the demon's

12. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia, quaest. 109, art. 2, resp., in *Opera omnia iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P.M. edita* (Rome, 1889), 5:507: "Respondeo dicendum quod, cum actio sequatur naturam rei, quorumcumque naturae sunt ordinatae, oportet quod etiam actiones sub invicem ordinentur."

13. Hugo von Trimberg, *Der Renner*, ed. Gustav Ehrismann (Berlin, 1970), 3: 93-94. Cf. Lutz Rosenplenter, *Zitat und Autoritätenberufung im Renner Hugos von Trimberg: Ein Beitrag zur Bildung des Laien im Spätmittelalter* (Frankfurt am Main and Bern, 1982), 253-55.

14. Der Stricker, *Die bisher unveröffentlichten geistlichen Bîspelreden*, ed. Ute Schwab (Göttingen, 1959), 80-81.

negative counterpart of a guardian angel. The sins in question are not itemized in the work of Hugo von Trimberg nor in the work of the Stricker; however, the terminology of a "misdeed" or a "grave sin" clearly points to serious transgressions, as they were collected in easily remembered catalogues of "capital sins" or "deadly sins," but which do not, by any means, always have to appear in the widespread numerical grouping of seven. The Minorite preacher Berthold of Regensburg, for instance, rails against *luxuria* by declaring that the demons who are responsible for this sin are the most hideous of all:

Some demons are, over and above that, uglier than others. For some demons tempt one to be proud, others tempt one to murder, still others to greed; some tempt one to one sin, others to another. Now, just think about how beautiful the bright sun is in comparison to the filthiest toad that you have ever seen: this toad is nonetheless still beautiful in comparison to the impure devil. However impure all demons might be, the demons who tempt one to unchasteness are indeed ten times more impure than the other demons. They are much more impure than those who tempt one to murder or to pride or to any other sin.¹⁵

Further instances taken from sermon literature, which would prove especially promising in this respect—such as vision texts as well as the broad field of religious drama—cannot be treated here; I will concentrate on two longer works of literature: one didactic text and one epic.

III

The anonymous didactic poem *Des Teufels Netz*¹⁶ from the early fifteenth century seems, from the very imagery in the title, to be appropriate to our topic. In it, a pious hermit actually forces the devil to provide him with information about his arts of persuasion, his very "ropes and nets." This compels the devil to warn the hermit—and all the listeners and readers—about himself. Most of all, he is annoyed because

15. Berthold of Regensburg, *Vollständige Ausgabe seiner Predigten*, ed. Franz Pfeiffer and Joseph Strobl (Vienna, 1862; reprint, Berlin, 1965), 1:413.

16. *Des Teufels Netz: Satirisch-didaktisches Gedicht aus der ersten Hälfte des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts*, ed. K.A. Barack (Stuttgart, 1863). Cf. Franz-Josef Schweitzer, *Tugend und Laster in illustrierten didaktischen Dichtungen des späten Mittelalters: Studien zu Hans Vintlers "Blumen der Tugend" und zu "Des Teufels Netz,"* (Hildesheim, 1993); Hildegard Elisabeth Keller, "Die 'minnende Seele' in des Teufels Netz: Geschlechterpolemik kontrafaziert," in *Text im Kontext: Anleitung zur Lektüre deutscher Texte der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Alexander Schwarz and Laure Abplanalp (Bern, 1997), 109-25.

he must expose his "minions": *Sol ich verraten all min knecht, / Das dunkt mich hüt noch iemer rebt* (vv. 412-13). With the help of these minions, the devil pulls his great net through the world:

I make a net / in which I catch the whole world. / This is very important to me. / This net is pulled by seven minions / who allow no one to escape from me. / Even now there is no one / (who can escape them). (vv. 238-44; p. 9)

These seven minions of the devil include the six capital vices, *Hoffart* (pride), *Nid und Hasz* (envy and hatred), *Gitikait* (avarice), *Fraszheit* (gluttony), *Zorn* (anger), *Unkünschait* (lust); as *din sibender man* (v. 939), *Manslacht* (manslaughter) is named. These minions are followed by a trio of sins, *Beslüz das herzl*, *Beslüz den mundl*, and *Beslüz den sekell*, which are a hindrance to confession and penance, as well as the last of the traditional "deadly sins," *Trækeit* (sloth). These vices, eleven altogether, are the "minions" of the devil, his *man* (men) and his *gesellen* (journeymen or associates). These are personifications of vices that have a close connection to the devil. But does this make them devils themselves? It seems reasonable to perceive them as a plurality of demons, especially when the devil, speaking to the hermit, ends his lengthy review of the stations of society with words that are reminiscent of the conclusion of a sermon:

I can hesitate no longer; / I suppose I must leave you now. / There are many others I have my eye on. / Since it is now the case / that I have to tell and report everything to you, / how I and my associates / bring about the downfall of the world, / and how we roam the land / with nets and snares, / then reap the benefits of it and be wary! / With that, I leave you. Amen. (vv. 13144-54; p. 419)

With the exception of a heading in manuscript C relating to the trio of sins just mentioned—*Von den dreyen bosen gaisten oder tüfeln* (occurring before v. 1044)—the personified sins are never unequivocally "demonized" in this work. It is possible that the *gesellen* who torment the damned in hell (v. 315) are identical with the "sins that are personified in the devilish associates,"¹⁷ yet this is not stated explicitly. One must, therefore, draw the conclusion that the catalogue of vices in *The Devil's Net* is not a catalogue of demons, as well.

This assertion is true at the textual level (as the text is presented to us in Barack's edition). *Des Teufels Netz* is, however, one of the illustrated

17. Anke Ehlers, *Des Teufels Netz: Untersuchungen zum Gattungsproblem* (Stuttgart, 1973), 26.

didactic poems of the late Middle Ages. Since the Strasbourg manuscript D, which is illustrated with 62 colored pen-and-ink drawings, does not include the section dealing with the vices, none of the deadly sins are illustrated in it. The Donaueschingen manuscript A, on the other hand, begins with a cover picture (fol. 1v):

Seven grotesque animal forms are depicted. These probably represent the first seven minions of the devil, the personified capital vices. Four of them are pulling on a net in which twelve people representing various stations in society can be seen. Three other minions—two sitting on a bench, the third standing next to them—are playing on horns or on percussion instruments.¹⁸

For our topic, the crucial factor is that the seven figures who are hauling in the large fishing net and playing their instruments, who doubtlessly represent the “deadly sins,” are depicted with the traditional attributes of demons. The caption of the picture on this page confirms this identification with the statement that the devil draws all stations in society to himself with this net, “which the devils pull”: *Ain sege wie d'tüfel all stät an sich züht die ziehend die tüfel*. The captions of the pictures in this manuscript are of interest even in the many cases in which the drawings were never completed. In these cases, they could be read as instructions for the artist regarding what he would have had to depict. The following, for example, is found written there: *Der tritt tüfel gitikait* (fol. 7r), or *Der ander tüfel ist zorn* (fol. 11r); there is even a suggestion of the devil compounds which would become so popular in the early modern period: *Du manslacht tüfel* (the murder-devils [fol. 14r and 14v]).¹⁹ The person who was responsible for the conception of the illustrations in this manuscript clearly understood the vices to be demons. Thus, a phenomenon which is characteristic of the relationship between word and image in general can be remarked here: illuminations in manuscripts often “illustrate” not merely the text by seamlessly translating its statements into another medium, but they also go beyond the text by commenting on it and supplementing it. In this way, the catalogue of vices in *The Devil's Net* becomes, by means of the illuminations—both the single illumination that was completed and the many that were only planned—a catalogue of demons.

18. *Ibid.*, 32.

19. *Ibid.*, 35-37: “Die Bildlücken und ihre Stellung zum Text.”

IV

One might find it strange to choose a romance about Alexander the Great as an example of Middle High German epic poetry. The extensive Alexander romance by Ulrich von Etzenbach,²⁰ probably composed between 1270 and 1287 at the Bohemian royal court and in some cases illuminated,²¹ is considered to be evidence of the “knightly” or “courtly” stylization of the (pseudo-) classical tradition of its subject matter, which is why catalogues of demons or of vices are not, from the outset, to be expected here. The many prayers of the poet at the beginning of the work as well as in the introductions to and conclusions of each of the books, especially those prayers that orient themselves along the lines of Wolfram’s *Willehalm*, lend the romance a strong religious character, yet they are not of much use for the topic of our investigation. One does not come across anything regarding demons until the tenth (and last) book, which was long criticized as muddled and epigonic for its motley assortment of the most disparate subjects taken from the material concerning Alexander, but which has nevertheless in recent years been more positively received by the scholarly community for the very reason of its supposed dismantling of a unified plot or narrative development. It does, however, indeed suggest that the conception of the book was worked out in detail when we see that, after Alexander’s famous voyage to the bottom of the sea in the diving bell and his trip to heaven flying on a griffin,²² a scouting expedition into the world under the earth is on the agenda as well, and not only out of curiosity.

20. Ulrich von Etzenbach (Eschenbach), *Alexander*, ed. Wendelin Toischer (Stuttgart, 1888; reprint, Hildesheim, 1974). Cf. Claudia Medert, *Der “Alexander” Ulrichs von Etzenbach: Studien zur Erzählstruktur und Gattungsproblematik* (Göttingen, 1989); Hans-Joachim Behr, *Literatur als Machtlegitimation: Studien zur Funktion der deutschsprachigen Dichtung am böhmischen Königshof im 13. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1989), 143-75; Benedikt Konrad Vollmann, “Ulrich von Etzenbach, *Alexander*,” in *Positionen des Romans im späten Mittelalter*, ed. Walter Haug and Burghart Wachinger (Tübingen, 1991), 54-66.

21. See Norbert H. Ott, “Ulrichs von Etzenbach *Alexander* illustriert: Zum Alexanderstoff in den Weltchroniken und zur Entwicklung einer deutschen Alexander-Ikonographie im 14. Jahrhundert,” in *Zur deutschen Literatur und Sprache des 14. Jahrhunderts: Dubliner Colloquium 1981*, ed. Walter Haug, Timothy R. Jackson, and Johannes Janota (Heidelberg, 1983), 155-72.

22. See Hartmut Kugler, “Alexanders Greifenflug: Eine Episode des Alexanderromans im deutschen Mittelalter,” *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der Literatur* 12 (1987): 1-25.

Brave Alexander / asked the wise scholars / how he could reach further,
/ for he had heard / that there was a world under them / that had up until
then refused him service, / and this was not acceptable to him. (vv. 24833-
39; p. 660)

With regard to the underworld, this quotation demonstrates that the sweeping claims made about the “paradigm shift in the pattern of behavior from conquest to discovery,”²³ which has been posited for the tenth book, cannot be confirmed. It is, rather, unbearable for the conqueror of the world, who has made his way to the ends of the earth, that yet another world should exist “which refuses him service.” His scholars enlighten him on the subject of this “land” in a medieval-theological sense:

The scholars said: “We have read / that beneath us are to be found / only
the children of hell; / because of their great pride / they were expelled
from heaven / because they wanted to deem themselves / equal to their
powerful Creator. / Only by dying / can one reach that place. / Their
country is hell.” (vv. 24840-49; pp. 660-61)

Despite the clear statement that, “one can only enter hell by dying,” Alexander is determined to reach that place alive, and for this reason, he informs himself more about hell. The *wirt* (lord) of hell (v. 24861) is accordingly called “Lêviathân,” and he is equally as wicked as his *gesellschaft* (associates, v. 24864), the diabolical doormen (*portenære*, v. 24866), who belong both to hell and to the world (*sust werbent sie hie und phlegen dort*, v. 24869):

The gate is well locked. / In front of it / stands evil Greed, / the cause of
all disgrace, / with a gaping mouth / that is always open / as if she were
saying, “I will never become full; / I could devour the whole world.” /
Next to her sit Unchasteness / and impure Desire. / Unchasteness gives
rise to a wicked reputation; / Desire leaves beautiful Joy, / who was
honorable, / and lays herself down instead in contemptible filth. (vv.
24871-84; p. 662)

The image from the world of nature used to represent this last vice has traditionally been the pig, which leaves the beautiful meadow (of marriage) in order to wallow in the mud (of prostitution or concubinage)

23. Hartmut Kugler, “Alexander und die Macht des Entdeckens: Das 10. Buch im Alexanderroman Ulrichs von Etzenbach,” in *The Problematics of Power: Eastern and Western Representations of Alexander the Great*, ed. Margaret Bridges and J. Christoph Bürgel (Bern, 1996), 33.

(vv. 24855-88).²⁴ After *avaritia* (avarice) and the two sexual transgressions—probably *luxuria* (voluptuousness) and *adulterium* (adultery) (or *libido* [lust])—follow *Unzucht* (probably *superbia* [pride] here) and *Unge-
nuht* as *gula* (gluttony) (and probably also *ebrietas* [drunkenness]) in the description of this well-locked gate of hell: “One always notices *Superbia* / as she rages and quarrels. / *Gula* is only interested / in excessive eating and drinking” (vv. 24891-94; p. 662). *Odium* (hatred), *Ira* (anger), *Invidia* (envy), and *Discordia* (discord) follow: “Hatred, Rage, and Envy / are standing at the door / as well as Discord; / they do harm to each other frequently there / and hit and fight / each other often” (vv. 24899-904; p. 662). Despite the admonition of the scholars to keep far away from this place (*lieber herre, waz wolt ir dar?*, v. 24923), Alexander truly wants to find the demons, in order to drag them up to the earth and defeat them in combat: “I want to free the world / from them in combat / and destroy their power” (vv. 24935-37; p. 663).

The further course of Ulrich’s Alexander romance is basically the story of the failure of this intention. The prince of hell, Leviathan, who gets wind of the plan, turns to God for help with the argument that, if hell is now to be conquered, heaven would soon no longer be safe either from Alexander’s thirst for conquest (*ist daz er betwinget mich, / er beginnet vil libte suoehen dich*, vv. 24959-60). Ulrich reports nothing about an answer from God to the devil. The reader does, however, learn—by means of a reference to *Galthêrus* (v. 24979)—that Leviathan then complained about the excessive behavior of Alexander to a personified “Nature” (*daz der küninc unmâze gert*, v. 24991); he succeeds with this subordinate authority—as *vicaria Dei*—to whom God apparently referred the devil:

Natura replied, / “Since he [Alexander] is breaking my laws, / he is also acting against God. / Since he is destroying the bounds which I have set, / I will kill him, as I am now informing you, / and put an end to his arrogance.” The demons were pleased about this, / and they all shouted: “Ho, ho, ho!” (vv. 24998-506; pp. 664-65)

The decision is carried out: at the instigation of Leviathan, Antipater perpetrates the murder by poisoning Alexander. Alexander’s death is thus the consequence of his disregard for the natural boundaries which human beings are subject to.

24. See Meinolf Schumacher, *Sündenschmutz und Herzensreinheit: Studien zur Metaphorik der Sünde in lateinischer und deutscher Literatur des Mittelalters* (Munich, 1996), 366-74.

Ulrich's reference to *Galthêrus* raises the question of how this source, which is clearly identified in this passage as Walter (Gautier) of Châtillon's hexameter poem *Alexandreis*, is being used here. A description of the underworld with a catalogue of personified vices can already be found there in the tenth book (10.31-54).²⁵ In spite of the similar, if not identical catalogue of vices—after acquisitive greed as the “mother of the others,” follow, in this text, *superbia*, *libido*, *ebrietas* and *gula*, *ira*, *proditio*, *dolus*, *detractio*, *livor*, *hypocrisis*, and *adulatio*—the differences between Walter and Ulrich quickly become apparent. Walter “imitates the classical style” by harking back to particular phrases found in Ovid, Virgil, and Lucan; he takes great pains to fashion a “classical” underworld, into which, however, he incorporates medieval Christian personifications of vices. In doing so, he was able to take up the famous *concilium* of the powers of hell in the work of Claudian (*In Rufinum*, 1.25-40).²⁶ Although Ulrich von Etzenbach is clearly within this tradition, he does away with many of the classical aspects of his model. This trimming extends even into the development of the plot. In Walter's text,

25. Walter of Châtillon, *Alexandreis*, ed. Marvin L. Colker (Padua, 1978), 254-55: “Ante fores Herebi Stigiae sub menibus urbis / Liuentes habitant terrarum monstra sorores, / Inter quas antris aliarum mater opacis / Abscondit oculos et coctum mille caminis / Faucibus infusum siccis ingutturat aurum, / Explerique nequit sitis insatiabilis ardor. / Subsannans alias cunctis supereminet una / Dedita nata parem flagrante Superbia uultu. / Mersa iacens ardente luto torquetur et ardet / Pube tenus totis exhausta Libido medullis. / Nauseat Ebrietas, Gula deliciosa ligurrit / Et mendica suos consumit morsibus artus. / Immemor Ira sui est et quo rapit impetus illuc / Ebria discurrit et se sociasque flagellat. / Prodicioque, Doli comes, et Detractio, macri / Filia Liuoris, que cum bene facta negare / Non possit, quocumque modo peruertere temptat / Et minuit laudes quas non abscondere fas est. / Has colit Ypocrisis marcenti liuida uultu / Sedes et summus hodie processus in aula / Pestis adulandi, bibulis studiosa potentum / Auribus instillans animae letale uenenum. / Huic aulae uicio tanta est concessa potestas / Vt rerum dominis humanas subtrahat aures.”

26. Claudianus, *Carmina*, ed. John Barrie Hall (Leipzig, 1985), 14: “inuidiae quondam stimulis incanduit atrox / Allecto, placidas late cum cerneret urbes. / protinus infernas ad limina taetra sorores, / concilium deforme, uocat. glomerantur in unum / innumerae pestes Erebi, quascumque sinistro / Nox genuit fetu: nutrix Discordia belli, / imperiosa Fames, leto uicina Senectus / inpatiensque sui Morbus Liuorque secundis / anxius et scisso maerens uelamine Luctus / et Timor et caeco praecipuus Audacia uultu / et Luxus populator opum, quem semper adhaerens / infelix humili gressu comitatur Egestas, / foedaque Auaritiae complexae pectora matris / insomnes longo ueniunt examine Curae. / conplentur uario ferata sedilia coetu / toruaque conlectis stipatur curia monstris.”

it is the personification of Nature who lodges the complaint about Alexander's conduct with Leviathan's underworld council; in Ulrich's work, as we have seen, the initiative is taken by Leviathan, who appears completely in the role in which medieval society would have imagined the prince of hell, Lucifer. The characterization of his "society" as *tiuvel* and the representation of them as a howling mob (*hō hō hō!*) make it clear, as well, that the Styx of the *Alexandreis* has been turned into the medieval Christian hell in the German romance.

This means, on the one hand, that Alexander consciously takes on the devil in Ulrich von Etzenbach's text. If any type of paradigm shift is recognizable here, then it is less a question of a shift from conquest to discovery than a question of a shift from conquest to the improvement of the world. Alexander is determined to liberate the world from evil—and it is precisely here that he transgresses the boundaries set for him by nature. This history of Alexander allows us to comprehend a central portion of narrative anthropology which practically anticipates one of the subjects of modern utopian criticism: on the one hand, people are supposed to combat evil, yet at the same time, it is the highest degree of hubris to imagine that evil can be defeated. In Leviathan's erroneous fear that Alexander could be the promised Messiah who will destroy hell (vv. 24964-76; cf. Walter, *Alex.*, 10.82-104), there is a suggestion, couched in biblical language, of the idea that only God has the right to annihilate the evil in the world.

Second, the transformation of the underworld into hell brings about a change in the function of the allegories which have been borrowed from various literary models. Whereas *Natura* goes from being a central character in Walter's text to being a somewhat pale authority over norms of conduct set by God, the integration of the personifications of vices into the depiction of hell is effected by means of the statement made by Alexander's scholars, which was cited above, that the inhabitants of hell were all "hellish children," *die durch irn übermuot grôzen / von dem himel sint gestôzen* (vv. 24843-44). The vices as Claudian's and Walter's "dreadful sisters," who mark the entrance to hell in Ulrich's text (cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6.273-81), are accordingly demons seen as fallen angels. They all have the attributes of demons, for they belong both to the world and to hell, and they tempt one "here" to sins which they punish "there": *sus werben sie hie und phlegen dort* (v. 24869). Thus, a highly literary allegory in the Latin version becomes in the vernacular version a concept of faith that is comprehensible in terms of medieval religion. Yet it is precisely the idea of the demon associated with a particular vice which renders the poetic catalogue of vices a concept which fits realistically into the medieval view of the world: such vices

can indeed be found in hell under the earth, but they are in fact devils, and in that case, this is not at all astonishing. In this respect, the conception of devils as vices in the work of Ulrich von Etzenbach also has the function of diminishing the difference between fiction and the concept of faith.

V

For the poets of the Middle Ages, the catalogues of vices and also those of virtues were already predetermined by the ethical as well as by the theological and catechetical traditions. In this connection—perhaps already for mnemonic reasons—the numerical organization of the vices into groups of eight, seven, or other numbers, along with a tendency toward allegorization, becomes apparent early on: the deadly sins as metaphorical animals or diseases are to be found among these numerical organizations of the vices, as are the personifications of the vices as living things similar to human beings which, for the most part, are to be found in metaphoric contexts such as the context of kinship (as mothers and daughters), the context of power (as queens and maids), or in the context of combat (as in the case of the *Psychomachia*), whereby the metaphorical models are often suggested by the allegorical interpretation of biblical passages. To what extent such personifications were “believed” to have existed in any way can at best only be determined in each individual case; comparisons could be drawn in this regard to the personified divinities in antiquity such as *Fortuna* and also to *Hamartia* in the work of the apostle Paul.²⁷

The plurality of the personified vices was accommodated by the fact that evil spirits always appear in large numbers. Even though the unclean spirits of the New Testament are not (sub)devils, they were indeed soon declared such by the fathers of the church; their fate was therefore the same as that of the pagan divinities (both good and evil), which were, of course, in part personified divinities. In scholarly literature, the pagan gods and the other personifications admittedly lived on, yet it would have been extremely difficult to include them in the religious conception of the world: as a literary personification, *Natura* as the *vicaria Dei* poses no problem; but where should one situate her between God and the devil in a religious system? In the Middle Ages, there was apparently a need to understand such personifications “realistically” outside the realm of poetic license. Just as the conception of a large

27. See Günter Röhser, *Metaphorik und Personifikation der Sünde: Antike Sündenvorstellungen und paulinische Hamartia* (Tübingen, 1987), 131-77.

number of devils allowed the unclean spirits of the New Testament and the pagan gods to be integrated into the religious conception of the world, so too could the allegorical literary figures be integrated in the same manner. This did not, admittedly, lead to the ecclesiastical acceptance of these concepts as dogma, even though the passages in the works of the Stricker and of Hugo von Trimberg (which attest to an endeavor for a theologically less ambiguous statement by recognized authorities) could lead one to believe so. And on top of that, many writers take the liberty of allowing figures to appear who are not to be found in any catechism; this is the case with *Natura* in the work of Alan of Lille, as well as with *Natura* and the vices in the work of Walter, and with the metaphorical minions in the work of the author of *The Devil's Net*. It is precisely this last didactic work of literature that demonstrates that the vernacular is not a decisive factor regarding the tendency to make such literary forms "fall into agreement with theology." For each of the longer Middle High German works which we have looked at as examples, we have obtained different results: whereas the demonization of the vices does not occur in *The Devil's Net* until the (actual and planned) illumination of the text, this demonization of the vices is already present in Ulrich's Alexander romance on the level of the text itself—it took place at the intertextual level during Ulrich's adaptation of Walter's work, which served as his literary model.

The Virgil passage which mentioned the *mille nocendi artes* (*Aen.*, 7.338) and the phrase *Tausendkünstler* (jack-of-all-trades) which is based on it do not, incidentally, appear in this context. In any case, neither of these Middle High German works confirms the conjecture which was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, at least not in a philologically explicit manner, the conjecture being that the catalogues of demons connected with particular vices were associated directly with the deceitful arts of transformation of the one Devil with his many roles and masks. This, however, does not preclude the possibility that catalogues of demons were later applied as catalogues of vices to such scenes as the temptation of Saint Antony, scenes which were formerly about the harmful performances of the diabolical *milleartifex*. Goethe's procession of demons in Weimar in 1776 is a late example of this application.

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