AMBIGUOUS ANTIDOTES: VIRTUE AS VACCINE FOR VICE IN EARLY MODERN SPAIN

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Ambiguous Antidotes: Virtue as Vaccine for Vice in Early Modern Spain

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS
Toronto Buffalo London

Toronto Buffalo London
www.utorontopress.com
Printed in the U.S.A.

ISBN 978-1-4875-0213-3

♾ Printed on acid-free, 100% post-consumer recycled paper with vegetable-based inks.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Kallendorf, Hilaire, author
Ambiguous antidotes : virtue as vaccine for vice in early modern Spain / Hilaire Kallendorf.

(Toronto Iberic ; 30)
Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
ISBN 978-1-4875-0213-3 (cloth)

1. Spanish drama – Classical period, 1500–1700 – History and criticism. 2. Virtues in literature. I. Title. II. Series: Toronto Iberic ; 30

PQ6105.K35 2017 862′.309 C2017-904286-6

University of Toronto Press acknowledges the financial assistance to its publishing program of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council, an agency of the Government of Ontario.

Canada Council for the Arts | Conseil des Arts du Canada

ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
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an Ontario government agency
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Funded by the Government of Canada | Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

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For my grandmother,
who tried to teach me
the way of Virtue

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Virtue? A fig!

– William Shakespeare

Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
And vice sometime by action dignified.

– William Shakespeare

All virtues are historical . . .
Morality is first artifice, then artifact.

– André Comte-Sponville

Nec cessat naufraga virtus.

[Nor does virtue cease, though shipwrecked.]

– Lucan

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Prologue: Virtuous Genealogies

This book began when I was a child. I used to sit in my grandmother's kitchen and reflect upon a framed picture she had hanging there on the wall. It was titled *Spectrum of Love*. Beneath this heading were listed out Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Humility, Courtesy, Unselfishness, Good Temper, Guilelessness, and Sincerity, complete with a hand-drawn dove and flowers, along with descriptions for each. A table of Virtues, of sorts. At a very young age I was so attracted to this list that (with her permission) I grabbed the picture off the wall, took a pen and scrawled in large, childish letters: "This is mine – Hilaire," indicating my request to inherit that object. Not wanting to make me wait for her death, she gave it to me when I was old enough to have a house of my own. It still hangs in my home office, where I am sitting as I write these words. She was the single greatest source for spiritual instruction in my life. No doubt, my grandmother wanted to encourage me in the way of Virtue.

Fast forward a decade or more. The next snapshot in this collage is dated 1993, when I was a university student and William J. Bennett published *The Book of Virtues*. It was given to me by my boyfriend's mother as a Christmas gift (subtle hint). Imagine my chagrin when, a decade later, controversy erupted over the news that Bennett himself was an inveterate gambler who had lost millions at the casinos in Las Vegas. The scandal was that this alleged hypocrisy undercut his public message of self-discipline. Perhaps the Virtues were not so straightforward after all.

Fast forward to the present day. The year of sabbatical leave in which I have written the bulk of this manuscript has coincidentally also been my first year to undergo allergy immunotherapy, a painful process in

which raging allergens are injected into both hips every week, making it hurt even to sit down. The angry, red, itchy reaction I experience each time serves as a vivid reminder of the troubling similarity between disease and vaccine. Sometimes a small amount of the disease must be injected to make the body grow stronger – i.e., literally more virtuous.

These are some of the personal reasons I am attracted to this subject matter. The professional ones are more obvious. This book in some ways participates in recent trends such as the growth industry in Virtue Ethics, as well as what one scholar has called the "ethical turn" in literary scholarship.[1] It bears traces of my participation in the First Global Conference on Sins, Vices, and Virtues in Prague, Czech Republic, in March 2012, as well as my membership in the University of Chicago's Arete Initiative / Wisdom Research Network, sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation. Its foremost intellectual debt is owed to Richard Newhauser, who taught me in a National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminar at Cambridge University on the Seven Deadly Sins. Our main take-away from those weeks of intense discussion was that the Vices (as well as the Virtues) are consummately ambiguous. Finally, in 2013 the University of Toronto published my *Sins of the Fathers: Moral Economies in Early Modern Spain*, to which the present volume in some sense forms a companion. That book in turn was a sequel to my *Conscience on Stage* (University of Toronto Press, 2007), in which I first established my methodology of mining 800 digitalized Renaissance stage plays from Spain that together form a corpus of moral knowledge from the early modern period. In a review essay titled "Hispanic Casuistry Studies: Room to Grow" and appearing in *Hispanic Review*, William Childers declared that this book – along with my friend Elena del Río Parra's *Cartografías de conciencia* – had inaugurated a new field: the study of early modern Hispanic casuistry, or case morality.[2] If he is right, then the present book may be seen as the next installment in that body of work.

The Spanish word for Virtue, *Virtud*, stems directly from its Latin ancestor *Virtus*. This word was the Romans' translation of a concept known as *arete* which they had inherited from the ancient Greeks.[3] Bearing agonistic resonance due to its association with stadium athletes,[4] this word eventually came to mean excellence in the moral realm. Owing in part to the paucity of the Latin language, which lacked a more appropriate word to convey the full weight of the Greek original, what was once a rich ethical complex of ideas was reduced to the blatantly martial-sounding *Virtus*.[5] As scholars have noted, this is a fascinating

case where linguistic change reflects a shift in cultural ideals.[6] We shall explore the ramifications of Virtue – a word unmistakeably tied to *vir*, the Latin word for man – for gender studies in our sixth chapter.

From these overtly pagan origins, Virtue took a bizarre journey as convoluted as that of Odysseus. Appropriated by figures within the early Christian church, most notably the fifth-century Latin poet Prudentius (who was born in Spain),[7] any unified notion of Virtue splintered off into competing lists of specific Virtues organized into neat Scholastic schemes. The Cardinal Virtues, so named because together they formed the "hinge" upon which moral life turned, were a list developed first by the pagan philosopher Plato.[8] Only later did they become Christianized, after further modification by Cicero, Saint Augustine, and Saint Thomas Aquinas.[9] (The Cardinal Virtues are Justice, Fortitude, Prudence, and Temperance.)[10] The Theological Virtues, by contrast, were more biblical; however, they were fewer in number (three instead of four) and derived from the thirteenth verse of the thirteenth chapter of Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "And now there remain faith, hope and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity" (1 Corinthians 13:13). These three Virtues were joined to the Cardinal four to add up to the number symbolizing heavenly perfection, i.e., seven.

These various taxonomies and organizational schemes were well known to Renaissance Spain. For example, the Jesuit Francisco Suárez wrote a treatise on the three Theological Virtues, while the Cardinal Virtues enjoyed a place of prominence in Juan de Mena's medieval masterpiece *Laberinto de Fortuna*.[11] These borrowings, continuities, and discontinuities with tradition we might have expected. What is somewhat surprising is that we encounter a veritable obsession with Virtue and its nature in Spain's early modern popular drama. Lope de Vega highlights Virtue and virtuous action as particularly attractive to audiences in his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo* (1609):

> Los casos de la honra son mejores
> porque mueven con fuerza a toda gente,
> con ellas las acciones virtuosas,
> que la virtud es dondequiera amada.[12]

Even a cursory glance shows that titles of plays from this period reflect this concern. From Lope's own *La mayor virtud de un rey* and *Virtud, pobreza y mujer*; to Tirso de Molina's *La elección por la virtud*; to Luis Vélez de Guevara's *Virtudes vencen señales*; to the anonymous burlesque

comedy *El premio de la virtud y castigo en la mentira*, these playwrights (and their audiences) never seem to tire of mulling over or re-hashing questions such as, "which is the greatest Virtue?" or "what are Virtue's rewards?" Contemporaneous novelists, too, devoted short stories to Virtue, such as María de Zayas's *El desengaño amado y premio de la virtud* or Diego de Ágreda y Vargas's *El premio de la virtud y castigo del vicio*. If we include the eighteenth century – which is too late for the scope of this study – theatrical examples only multiply, giving rise to titles such as the anonymous *La virtud consiste en medio, el pródigo y rico avariento*; Tomás de Añorbe y Corregel's *La virtud vence al destino*; Álvaro Cubillo de Aragón's *De el engaño hacer virtud*; and Luis Moncín's *La virtud premiada*. Interest in these questions seems to speed up as time goes by, not slow down. Not to mention that for the period which is covered by this study (roughly 1550 to 1700), plays devoted to specific Virtues also abound, such as Guillén de Castro's *La humildad soberbia*, *La justicia en la piedad*, and *La piedad en la justicia*; Lope de Vega's *El triunfo de la humildad, y soberbia abatida*, complemented by his *Loa en alabanza de la humildad*; Tirso de Molina's *La prudencia en la mujer*; Francisco de Quevedo's *Dios hace justicia a todos*; and Calderón's *Las tres justicias en una*, to name only some of many.

A fairly detailed knowledge of Virtue's taxonomies is also revealed in these plays; in a typical example, Calderón makes reference to "las cuatro Virtudes, prometiéndose anteverla la Fortaleza, y Templanza, la Justicia, y la Prudencia."[13] Iconographical symbols for the Virtues are also included; for instance, in another of Calderón's sacramental dramas a sword is described, the different parts of which represent the Cardinal Virtues through their symbols:

> Se significan en ella
> las cuatro Virtudes juntas:
> la Hoja es la Justicia; el Pomo,
> la Fortaleza, y si se aúnan
> en ser la Templanza el Puño,
> y la Vaina la Cordura.[14]

All of this simply goes to show that it is not in any way a "stretch" to propose to study Virtues as they were conceived in early modern Spain through its theatre, nor is there a lack of source materials. (On the contrary, we are faced with an embarrassment of riches.) A word about method: I have modernized all spelling to facilitate online searches

of the digital version of this book, and all citations to plays are taken from their digital versions collected together in the Teatro Español del Siglo de Oro database, distributed by ProQuest. Hard-copy scholarly editions of plays have often been consulted when these were available (for many plays cited in these pages, no modern edition exists yet). For any readers who might be curious about the kind of digital humanities scholarship to be found within these pages, I refer them to the prologue of my last book, which contains some reflections on the interplay between archive and repertoire.[15] Methodologically, this study puts into practice a modified version of the model developed theoretically by Franco Moretti in *Distant Reading* – modified in the sense that it combines old-style philology or "close reading" and historical contextualization with large-scale quantitative analysis. In response to the question "why these Virtues and not others?" I would respond that I started out by collecting data on many more Virtues than these. No university or trade press in the world would publish all the material available on this topic. I narrowed down my own list of Virtues to be covered in individual chapters by following where the evidence led me and seeing which Virtues seemed to stand out by looming largest on this particular cultural landscape. To borrow a phrase from *Sins of the Fathers*, these are the Virtues which generated the largest nodes of cultural anxiety regarding their definition, breach, and execution.[16] I would encourage future researchers to continue this work by looking more in depth at some of the many other Virtues not treated here in detail. This "new field" of early modern casuistry studies is wide open.

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Acknowledgments

This project was funded by the Academy for the Visual and Performing Arts, the Program to Enhance Scholarly and Creative Activities, a Cornerstone Faculty Fellowship from the College of Liberal Arts, and a Faculty Development Leave, all at Texas A&M University, as well as Publication Support Grants from both the Department of Hispanic Studies and the Melbern G. Glasscock Center for Humanities Research. Part of chapter 3 was published previously as "Abject Antidotes: Charity as Greed in Early Modern Spanish Drama," in *Hispania felix: Revista rumano-española de cultura y civilización de los Siglos de Oro* (2017): 173–92. I wish to thank my research assistant, Brittany Henry, who performed diligent word searches on the Virtues and their variants, and to my husband Craig Kallendorf for being my first and best critic. Thanks also to Suzanne Rancourt, Barb Porter, and Miriam Skey at the University of Toronto Press for many years of nurturing me as a writer. My greatest intellectual debt for this book and its subject matter is to Richard Newhauser, a.k.a. "King of Vice."

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AMBIGUOUS ANTIDOTES

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Introduction

And with some sweet oblivious antidote
cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
which weighs upon the heart?

– William Shakespeare[1]

Every virtue is a summit between two vices, a crest between two chasms.
– André Comte-Sponville[2]

Traditionally, the classic relationship of Virtues to Vices followed an agonistic model based upon Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, or *Conflict of the Soul*, a medieval Latin allegorical poem in which female personifications of the Virtues battle against and defeat the (likewise female) corresponding Vices (Figure 1). Prudentius himself was born in 348 AD in northern Spain, and his legacy was carried on into the early modern period by such Golden Age authors as Pedro Pablo de Acevedo, a Jesuit schoolmaster and author of the student drama *Bellum virtutum et vitiorum*. The *psychomachia* model, likewise, does appear in more mainstream Spanish stage plays, particularly the *autos sacramentales*,[3] as in the lines "portentos de batalla, en que andan Vicios, y Virtudes compitiendo."[4] In Calderón de la Barca's sacramental drama *Amar y ser amado, y divina Philotea*, there is a battle scene onstage where Virtue leads the charge, backed by an entire army, against an opposing army of the Vices. Her battle cry is "A ellos, mueran todos." An editorializing comment appears from one of the Vices later in the play: "segunda vez de vencida, roto el Ejército nuestro: no hay virtud, que victoriosa no blasone de su opuesto."[5] Thus we see that the agonistic model was not absent from Golden Age theatre, and that the Virtues, predictably, emerged victorious from these onstage battles.

Figure 1. "Chastity impales Lust with a sword" ("Pudicitia Libidinem gladio") from Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, 10th century, Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, Ms. 10066–77, fol. 116v.

The traditional model, however, was not the only one available for playwrights looking to describe the relationship between Virtue and Vice. Other models coexisted with the martial, agonistic kind, and it is to one of these in particular that we shall turn our attention here. The model in question is of the medical variety, in which Virtue was seen to serve as a vaccine or antidote for Vice. This paradigm ultimately derives from Plato and Aristotle, whose father was a medical doctor, and who self-consciously modelled the method for his philosophy after the art of medicine.[6] There is ample precedent for this connection to be found in the literature – and even the architecture – typical of early modern Spanish cultural production. We shall begin by looking at Virtue during this time period in Spain when it appears as a medical metaphor.

I Virtue as a Medical Metaphor

The sixteenth-century Hospital Tavera in Toledo bears the following Latin inscription above the entrance to its pharmacy:

Prudentiae et Temperantiae eximius.
Aegrae valetudinis oppugnacula medicamina
eorumque materies hic asservantor.

[The best Prudence and Temperance.
Medicines are the attacks on a sick body
and their substances are preserved here.]

Similarly, at the seventeenth-century Hospital de la Misericordia in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, the Sala Nobre has painted on the ceiling depictions of the following Virtues: *Concordia* (Harmony), *Charitas* (Charity), *Fidelitas* (Loyalty), *Liberalitas* (Generosity), *Honor* (Honour), and *Ratio* (Reason). Many more examples could be adduced. In early modern Iberia, as well as its colonies, the care of the sick was a charitable enterprise,[7] and as such relied upon the virtuous behaviour of health practitioners. But as we shall see, there is more to this relationship of Virtue to medicine than immediately meets the eye.

Virtue appears in connection with health also in Spain's popular stage plays.[8] Many theatres in Madrid were operated by hospitals or their confraternities for the specific purpose of raising money to provide medical care for the poor.[9] This "hidden origin" or context of medicine linked to Virtue for Spain's national dramatic tradition is reflected in the plays themselves.[10] We find lines linking these two concepts explicitly with humorous wordplay, as in "Esto tengo de virtud, de que estimo mi salud"[11] (hey – it even rhymes!). Indeed, Virtue *is* health in this world view, albeit divinely granted: "Espera en Dios, y con rara fe confiesa su virtud, que es de la vida salud."[12] Virtue brings health to the sick, as when a person "tiene virtud de dar la vida y salud."[13] A virtuous person wields power to impart health to another, as when Antón Martín says of a sick woman being cared for by Saint John of God: "mas yo sé, que en su virtud, tendrá muy presto salud, aunque más sin ella esté."[14] In some cases spiritual Virtues are said to effect a physical cure; in this same play, the same woman says in the next act regarding the reputation of this holy saint: "Bien pudiera en mi casa curarme, hermano mío, pero la relación de sus virtudes me dio esperanza de salud."[15] She has come seeking help from holy men in what is clearly a metaphorical comparison of spiritual with physical health.

But the word *Virtud* appears in the *comedias* also in the non-moral context of purely medical remedy. One character, referring to a proposed medicine, asks "¿Y de qué enfermedad cura?" The answer comes

that this particular remedy will whet the appetite: "Sus virtudes son muy sanas, abre de comer las ganas."[16] This medicine presumably functions as an *aperitif*. Other remedies were formulated to act against a specific disease, such as the plague, which so threatened Madrid from 1647 to 1649 that guards were stationed at entrances to the city to prevent infected travellers from entering. We see this trend in the line from Tirso de Molina's *El amor médico*, "olla, boñigas, y clavos ... deben de tener virtud (sin duda) contra la peste."[17] Given that *boñigas* refers to animal excrement, this does not sound like a very savoury mixture.

As we might have anticipated for a comic genre, it is not uncommon to find jokes in these plays about pairs of lovers "playing doctor" and using their "Virtue" to cure one another. Thus we find "La virtud de Pedro, en ser de Belisa medicina" in Lope de Vega's *Los melindres de Belisa*.[18] In like fashion, another of Lope's plays incorporates the truism that "la dama, a los males de quien ama, es milagrosa virtud: aquí está el Doctor."[19] These scenes are similar in some ways to the lovers' ruse we find in comic literature written about demonic possession, in which the woman pretends to be "possessed" by a demon (really, she has just fallen in love with a boy), with her suitor posing as the exorcist who knows the secret to curing her affliction.[20] Such episodes bear the additional resonance of Virtue as sexual potency or virility, a linkage we shall explore later in our conclusion to this study.

Virtue is not only connected with medicine in these stage plays, but metaphorically with medical botany – a relationship made explicit, for example, in an early modern English treatise titled *Vertues off Herbes*.[21] In the *comedias* we find lines such as "en las plantas piensa hallar virtudes con que curar"[22] as well as allusions to "aceites y ungüentos y hierbas de gran virtud."[23] One character lists out names of specific herbs and their powers: "el polipodio, el frago, la mandrágora, y otras de mil virtudes esquisitas."[24] Two of the herbs mentioned here are calaguala and mandrake. The word *Virtud* is further associated with homeopathic remedies and *curanderas*: "Es mujer de escapulario con más botes de virtudes, aguas, hierbas, y saludes."[25] Specifically, plants are referred to as remedies ("¿o qué planta diera al enfermo salud, si negara la virtud con que a esas otras se adelanta?")[26] which produce foreseeable effects such as chills, hiccups, and sweating: "algunas hierbas, cuya virtud natural, causa frío, hipo, y sudor."[27] These lines are from Antonio Zamora's *El hechizado por fuerza*, about a false bewitchment brought on by the clever use of herbs to provoke these symptoms. Here Virtue is the juice squeezed out of a plant: "hermoso Racimo ... exprimiéndole

avariento, su licor bebe sediento: ¿Qué Virtud habrá escondida en esta Planta florida?"[28]

Recipes for these remedies appeared in *antidotarios*, or remedy books:

> CONDE DON PEDRO: ¿En las hierbas no hay virtud?
> MARCELO [CRIADO, PAJE DEL CONDE]: De remedios está lleno su libro.[29]

A familiar example of one of these recipes employed to maximum dramatic effect is the potion given to Segismundo in Calderón de la Barca's *La vida es sueño* in order to cast him into a deep sleep for the purpose of transporting him from the tower to the palace, so he will believe later that his time there was only a dream. This concoction is described by Clotaldo to Basilio as "bebida que de confecciones llena hacer mandaste, mezclando la virtud de algunas hierbas, cuyo tirano poder, y cuya secreta fuerza, así el humano discurso priva, roba, y enajena."[30] This is an example of "virtuous" or powerful herbs being used theatrically to not-so-virtuous ends.

By the time of the Golden Age, this metaphorical and linguistic connection between medicinal herbs and human Virtue had become so solidified in the minds of playwrights and their audiences that specific herbs such as rosemary were being referenced as symbols of the Virtues: "Entre las plantas, que produce el prado, / Es de virtudes símbolo el Romero."[31] Here we see that rosemary specifically came to be seen as emblematic of all the Virtues (Figure 2). In "Medieval Plantsmanship in England: The Culture of Rosemary," John H. Harvey explains that this plant is Mediterranean in origin, which places it in Spain, and that from earliest times its medicinal properties were recognized, including by the very first medical school at Salerno.[32] Harvey has examined several manuscripts of a text called the *Little Book of the Virtues of Rosemary* (ca. 1440), translated by a Dominican friar named Henry Daniel, who considered it to be a sort of holy herb.[33] George R. Keiser confirms that this plant, used in rituals at both weddings and funerals, bore sacred or "virtuous" connotations. He cites a broadside (ca. 1615) titled *The admirable vertue, property and operation of the quintessence of Rosemary flowers, and the meanes to use it for the sicknesses and diseases herein mentioned*.[34] These properties of rosemary were known in Spain, as is demonstrated by a manuscript held at the University of Salamanca, titled simply *Propiedades del romero*, which has been analysed by Marcela López.[35]

It may come as a surprise to some readers to find technical medical language concerning medicine and its application employed in an

Figure 2. *Rosmarinus coronarium* (rosemary) woodcut engraving from Andrés de Laguna, *Pedacio Diascórides Anazarbeo* (1555), fol. 320, in a hand-coloured exemplar prepared specially for King Philip II (R/8514, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid).

explicitly moral context. Witness this exchange from Calderón de la Barca's *La exaltación de la Cruz*:

> ZACARIAS: Siendo la ley verdadera,
> ¿quien puede dudar que es Dios
> Divina Jurisprudencia?
> ANASTASIO: ¿Hay Medicina?
> ZACARIAS: No solo
> como Autor della, la engendra;
> pero aplica los remedios
> de vida, y salud eterna.[36]

Here God appears as divine Doctor as well as divine Judge. This characterization becomes more understandable when we realize that according to the statutes passed by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), sin could be responsible for producing literal physical disease:

> Infirmity of the body sometimes derives from sin, as Our Lord said to the sick man he had healed, "Go and sin no more, that worse not happen to you" [John 5:14]. Thus with the present decree we establish and severely command the physicians of the body that, when they are called by the sick, they should first of all admonish and induce them to call the physicians of the soul, so that, after the spiritual health [*salus*] of the sick has been attended to, recourse can be had to the remedies of corporeal medicine with greater efficacy; for, in fact, when the cause is taken away, the effect ceases as well [*cum causa cessante cesset effectus*].[37]

According to Anthony Cascardi, this supernatural causation for natural illness extends in multiple discourses of Golden Age Spain beyond the physical body of the individual believer to the health of the body politic:

> The question of the health of the republic draws as well on a range of contemporary thinkers who deploy medical language in order to establish parallels between the health of the individual and the health of the state. Concerns over the spiritual health of readers were prominent in the writings of Alfonso de Madrigal (especially in *De optima politia* [*The Ideal Government*]), Miguel Sabuco, Juan Huarte de San Juan, Gallego de la Serna, and Antonio de Guevara.[38]

I have examined a similar phenomenon, adjusted slightly to accommodate an additional layer of discourse from treatises on demonic possession, in "Exorcizing the Body Politic."[39]

Within this broader context connecting Virtue metaphorically to medicine – and, by extension, medicine to politics – specific correspondences were established by means of which a select Virtue became the designated antidote for a certain Vice. We shall now turn to this specific subcategory of moral (as it was conflated with medical) discourse.

II Correspondences of Virtue to Vice

As portrayed in early modern Spanish stage plays, even "secular" ones, the job of the Virtues is to repress Vice – for example, Greed – as in the line where an erstwhile grifter confesses, "yo fuera ladrón, pero he reprimido el vicio con la virtud."[40] Virtues reprimand and punish the Vices' unrestrained freedom ("Políticas, y Morales Virtudes, que reprehenden, y castigan la desahogada libertad de los vicios"),[41] ultimately wiping out sin with heavenly power: "Así muerte al vicio doy con la virtud celestial."[42] In some *comedias* each Vice has a corresponding Virtue, for example: "a la ira la templanza, y a la crueldad la prudencia."[43] Likewise, in Calderón de la Barca's *La primer flor del Carmelo*, the young David, future king of Israel, cries, "venza mi humildad de Saúl la ira."[44] At first glance, these pairings appear to be mathematically precise: "hay contra siete Vicios, siete Virtudes."[45] This neat, orderly scheme echoes iconographical programs such as an illuminated manuscript of *Speculum Virginum* in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore which shows a matching pair of a tree of Vices and a tree of Virtues on facing pages (Figure 3 a and b).

The very titles of some early modern Spanish stage plays illustrate these pairings of a Virtue with its corresponding Vice. This occurs, for example, with Pride and Humility in Lope de Vega's *El triunfo de la humildad, y soberbia abatida*. The same is true for Tirso de Molina's *La lealtad contra la envidia*, the third and final part of Tirso's Pizarro trilogy based on the Pizarro brothers' conquest of Peru. The "Envy" of the title arises in the first act when Gonzalo Vivero and Fernando Pizarro are enamoured of the same woman, Isabel Mercado. Gonzalo challenges Fernando to a duel but is won over by his chivalry, courtesy, and Prudence and decides to accompany him to Peru instead. He renounces their dispute, and the two become fast friends. This play, which thematizes Loyalty as antidote for Envy, ends on a note of wishful thinking:

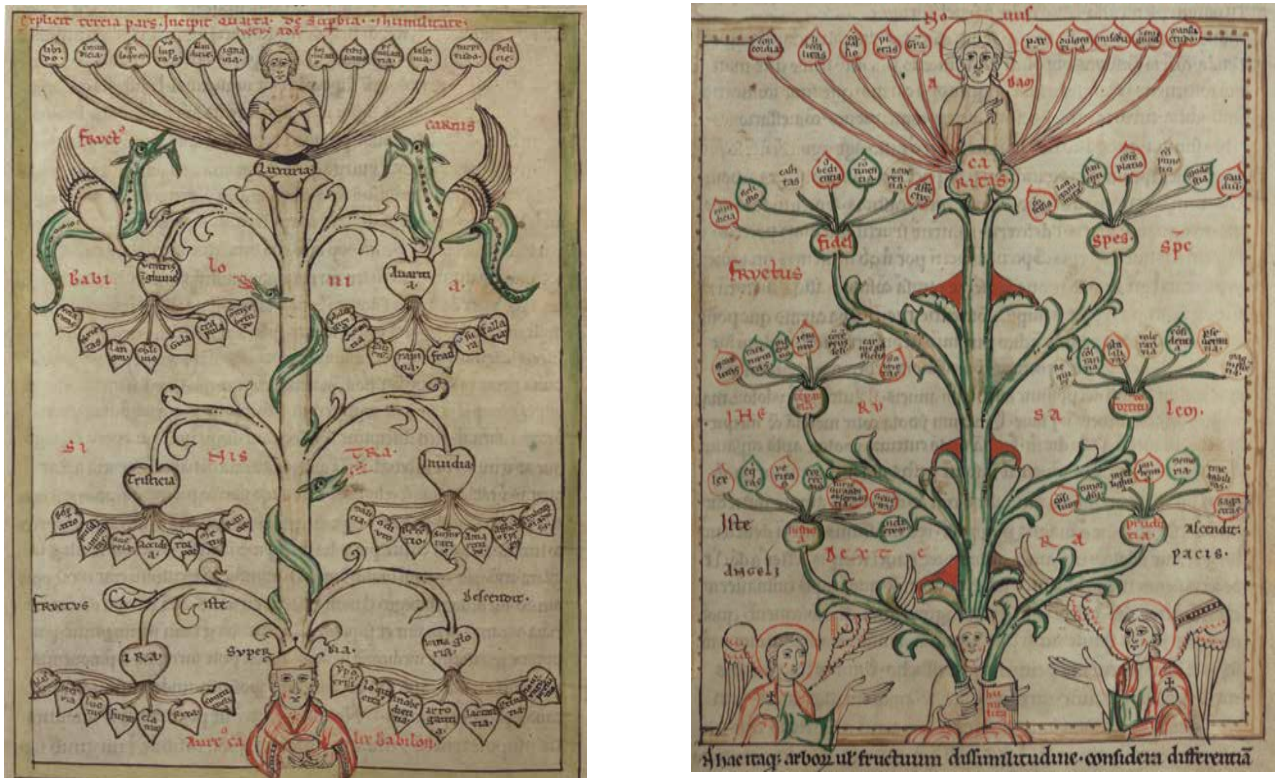


Figure 3. (a and b) A matching pair of a tree of Vices and a tree of Virtues, from a manuscript of *Speculum Virginum* (Walters Art Museum ms. W. 72, fols 25v–26r, ca. 1200).

"pues vence la lealtad siempre a la embidia."[46] Would that things were really that simple.

In point of fact, there seems to be no agreement regarding which Virtue might serve as a suitable antidote for a given Vice. The "necessary" or accepted medieval correspondence between specific Virtues and Vices must be called into question for the early modern period. Is Patience really the only available antidote for Anger? Would not Temperance work as well? Is one Virtue sometimes needed to balance out another one, as with the scales of Justice and Mercy which appear as a symbol carved in stone outside the United States Supreme Court? This literary ambiguity finds a parallel in early modern medicine, as it was debated among doctors whether a remedy prescribed for one patient would ever mirror exactly the solution stipulated for another. In the words of medical doctor and Augustinian priest Agustín Farfán, author of *Tratado breve de Medicina* (1579): "Y como las complexiones de los hombres son diversas, así con diversos remedios se han de curar."[47]

At this point it will be helpful to look at actual early modern remedies, or antidotes, and their prescriptions to see both how they were formulated and by whom. Just how precise were these recipes? In the process we can hope to learn something about early modern mindsets regarding problem-solving in the medical as well as moral arenas.

III Antidotes

Existing records of actual antidotes from the early modern period in Spain range from stand-alone works, such as Álvaro de Castro's *Antidotarium*, written ca. 1500–20 by a Jewish *converso* medical doctor from Toledo and grounded in Arabic tradition, to chapters on antidotes that formed a part of more general treatises on medicine. For example, Bernardino de Laredo's *Modus faciendi cum ordine medicandi* (1527) contains an ample *antidotario*, while Luis Lobera's "Antidotario muy singular" in his *Remedio de cuerpos humanos* (1542) contains some 300 recipes with exact ingredients and dosage information. Eventually these isolated chapters led to genuine works of pharmacology published under the label of *concordias*.[48]

Illustrative of this trend is the *Concordia apothecariorum Barchinonensium* (1511), an early recipe book for apothecaries which could be considered the first Spanish pharmacopia (Figure 4).[49] Further instalments in this genre included Pedro Benet Mateu's *Liber in examen apothecariorum* (1521), Nicolás Monardes's *Diálogo llamado pharmacodilosis* (1536),

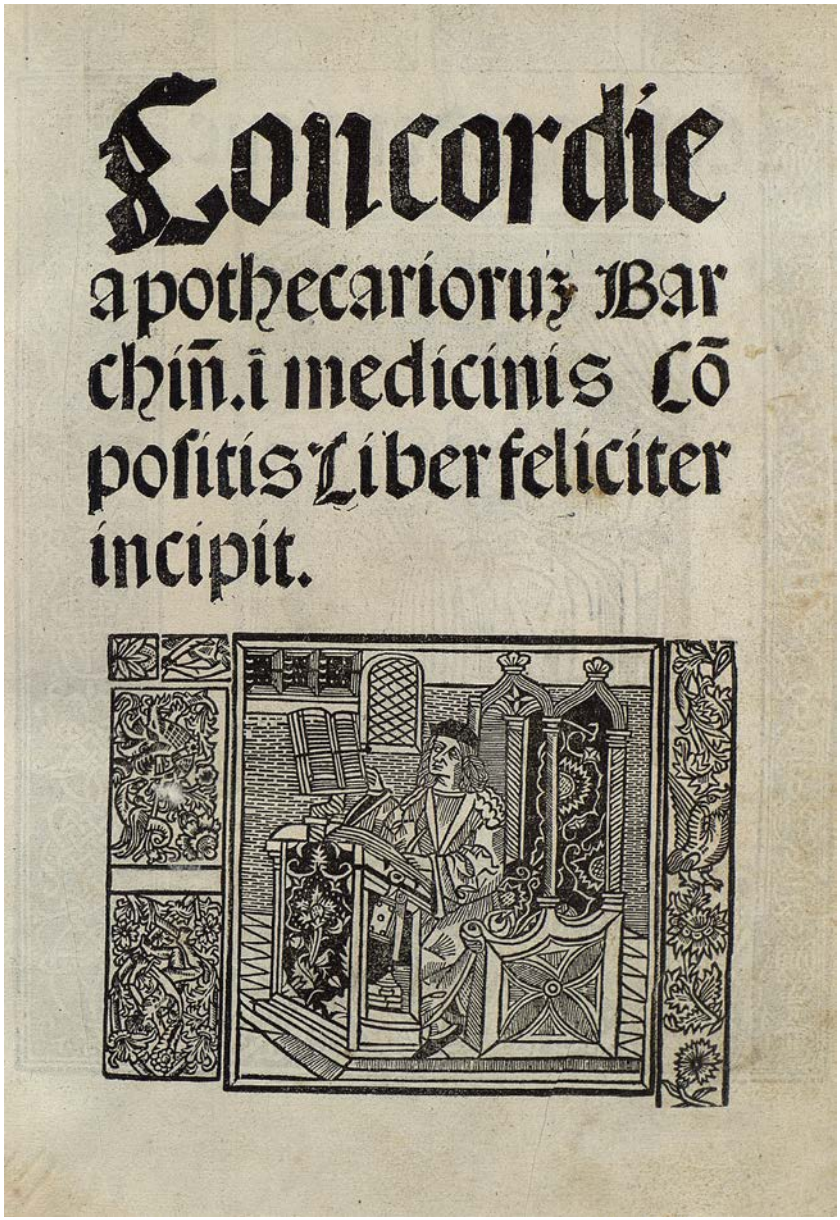


Figure 4. Title page, *Concordia apothecariorum Barchinonensium* (1511) (photo courtesy of Museu de la Farmàcia Catalana, Universitat de Barcelona).

Luis de Oviedo's *Méthodo de la colección y reposición de las medicinas simples, y de su corrección y preparación* (1581), Simón de Tovar's *De compositorum medicamentorum examine novum methodum* (1586), and Antonio Castell's *Theórica y práctica de boticarios* (1592). Interestingly for our purposes here, the word *Virtue* appears in these medical and pharmaceutical treatises to refer to the potency or effectiveness of a medicine, as in the phrases *virtudes curativas* or *virtudes medicinales*. For example, see the title page of Nicolás Monardes's *Primera y Segunda y Tercera Partes de la Historia Medicinal* (Seville: Alonso Escribano, 1574) (Figure 5).

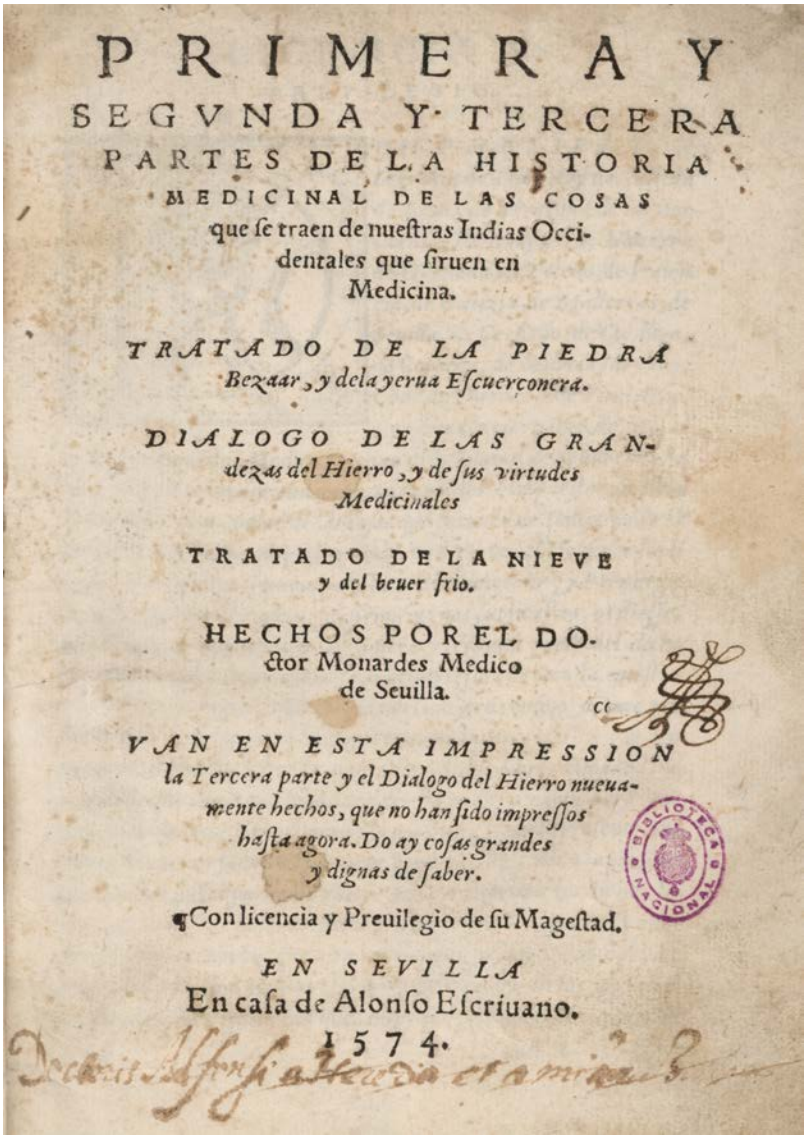
Ángel Martínez describes how these books came into being right at the point where pharmacology was organizing itself as a profession:

> Constituídos en la segunda mitad del siglo XIII en distintas regiones españolas los Gremios de Boticarios y Especieros, que no fueron suficientes para ordenar la labor profesional, ciertamente anárquica en aquellos tiempos, se transformaron a mediados del siglo XV en Colegios (Collegium Apothecariorum), que alcanzaron especialmente en el entonces Reino de Cataluña y Aragón elevado nivel científicoprofesional, al que no llegaron, salvo rara excepción, los escasos coetáneos extranjeros.[50]

He infers how primitive pharmacists, working before the age of print, had relied on manuscript *antidotarios* or *recetarios*, of which he mentions several.[51] Martínez describes the freedom with which the authors and users of these treatises tweaked existing recipes, much the way we might do with Grandma's cookbook:

> Al componer sus fórmulas el farmacéutico gozaba de cierta libertad, haciéndolo según su particular apego a uno u otro afamado autor, y llegando incluso a modificarlas según criterio propio, como puede observarse por las abundantes notas marginales y correcciones que se encuentran en recetarios antiguos.[52]

Part of the problem was that at least until the late sixteenth century, there was no uniform system of weights and measures in use in Spain even for quantities of substances where precision was needed, such as medicines.[53] Martínez describes the reaction of distrust this haphazard improvisation on the part of pharmacists provoked in patients: "lo que traía aparejada una desconfianza del enfermo y del médico contra el boticario y sus pócimas, debido a la frecuencia de los desiguales efectos de éstas."[54] This chaotic situation was what led the recently constituted



PRIMERA Y
SEGVNDA Y TERCERA
PARTES DE LA HISTORIA
MEDICINAL DE LAS COSAS
que ſe traen de nueſtras Indias Occi-
dentales que ſiruen en
Medicina.

TRATADO DE LA PIEDRA
Bezaar, y dela yerua Eſcuerçonera.

DIALOGO DE LAS GRAN-
dezas del Hierro, y de ſus virtudes
Medicinales

TRATADO DE LA NIEVE
y del beuer frio.

HECHOS POR EL DO-
ctor Monardes Medico
de Seuilla.

VAN EN ESTA IMPRESSION
la Tercera parte y el Dialogo del Hierro nueua-
mente hechos, que no han ſido impreſſos
haſta agora. Do ay coſas grandes
y dignas de ſaber.

¶Con licencia y Preuilegio de ſu Mageſtad.

EN SEVILLA
En caſa de Alonſo Eſcriuano.
1574.

Figure 5. Title page, Nicolás Monardes *Primera y Segunda y Tercera Partes de la Historia Medicinal* (Seville: Alonso Escribano, 1574) (R.Micro/6026, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid).

Colleges of Apothecaries to commission these manuscripts – later often printed in multiple editions – in the first place:

> Este desorden determinó a los Cónsules o directivos de los recién constituidos "Collegium Apothecariorum," allá por fines del siglo XV y principios del XVI, a encargar a uno o varios de sus miembros la confección de un libro con el conjunto de fórmulas de más aprecio y uso en la época, así como reconocimiento de materiales y sus falsificaciones.[55]

The recognized potential for falsification here is disturbing, given the possible consequences for patients' health. The scarcity or prohibitive cost[56] of ingredients offers only limited excuse; in all likelihood, charlatan practitioners would have been guilty of deliberately altering the ingredients of a recipe for a given drug,[57] either with or without the intention to harm its intended recipient.[58]

The perusal of these medico-cultural artefacts is fascinating, but who used these books in actual practice? Records from the archive of the Gran Hospital Real de Santiago de Compostela, for example, contain verifications of blood purity (*limpieza de sangre*) for individuals occupying the post of pharmacist (*boticario*) at that institution during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[59] For instance, a certain Pedro Fernández y Romero is recorded as having practised the art of pharmacy there by assisting the main pharmacist Alonso Rodríguez in "dispensar y conseguir los medicamentos necesarios para la dicha Botica."[60] Such individuals were known personally to some Golden Age playwrights, as we see from the fact that the father of Joseph de Villaizán (d. 1633), a minor poet of Calderón de la Barca's generation who perhaps studied with him in school, was a pharmacist or *boticario* by profession.[61]

One interesting and possibly unanticipated conflation we find in these documents of moral with medical roles played in society is the practice of pharmacy by monks and /or priests. For example, in the eighteenth century Juan García Cuervo was a *boticario* in the monastery of Cornellana along with Fray Mauro Fernández, chief pharmacist for that institution.[62] This trend is confirmed in surviving objects from material culture such as pharmacy jars marked with the symbol or coat of arms for specific religious orders like the Jesuits (Figure 6). Yet another unanticipated twist is the conflation of at least the rudiments of humanistic education in grammar, rhetoric, etc. with practical training for the future dispensers of drugs. As an illustration, a certain Antonio Ramos Solís was apprenticed by his parents to Fray Thomas González, *monje profesor* and pharmacist at the Real Monasterio de