

# Introduction<sup>1</sup>

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In his *Iconologia*, Cesare Ripa described “Error” as a blindfolded wayfarer who tries to find his way with the help of a stick. “Blind error”—such as we see it portrayed in an allegorical drawing by Antoine Coypel (1661-1722)—is always accompanied by ignorance. Error means losing one’s way, straying from the straight line; it is a condition that affects, in Ripa’s words, both our intellect and our body during our pilgrimage to happiness. Ripa plays on the ambiguity of the word “error,” which signifies both making a (moral) mistake and losing one’s way, or wandering without a direction, just as the characters of chivalric novels—the errant knights—who in their wandering often stray from the path of virtue. The epistemic and moral dimensions of error are, in Ripa’s words, clearly interdependent, as evident in his explanation of being blindfolded in symbolic terms: “when the light of intellect is darkened by the veil of worldly interest, one easily falls into error.”<sup>2</sup> For Ripa, the stick represents the senses, a lower form of

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<sup>2</sup> “Quando è oscurato il lume dell’intelletto con il velo de gl’interessi mondani, facilmente s’incorre negli errori.” Ripa 2012, 165.

knowledge than that of the intellect (symbolized by the eyes). Those who rely on the senses miss “the true causes of all things,” hence the author’s explicit connection between error and ignorance.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Ripa’s depiction of “Ignorance” in the *Iconologia* depicts her as a blind woman walking barefoot through brambles, alongside the trodden path. Bypassing the many details of Ripa’s rich allegory of ignorance, it suffices here to remember that the author is not just describing the lack of knowledge, but also “the vice of ignorance,” which “is born out of contempt for knowledge.”<sup>4</sup> A further, less explicit, but no less intriguing connection, can be made between error and doubt. In fact, “Doubt” is personified in the *Iconologia* as a young man walking in the dark carrying a stick and a lantern, objects that symbolize experience and reason respectively. These tools help the young and inexperienced man make his way through the darkness and overcome doubt, an “ambiguity of the mind concerning knowledge and, as a consequence, of the body concerning works.”<sup>5</sup> While there are certainly multiple connections linking doubt, ignorance, and error, it is the lack of clear vision—an allusion to a want of clear intellect—that seems to be the common thread among these conditions.

If the connection between error and ignorance is so straightforward that it seems almost platitudinous to articulate, the interrelation between error and doubt is perhaps less self-evident, but no less crucial. Doubt, or the inability to decide between two equivalent options due to the lack of recognizing the right choice, easily leads to error. Such a connection is made explicit in the title page of the Italian translation of one of the staples of the early modern European genre of “popular errors:” Thomas Browne’s *Pseudodoxia epidemica* (first published in 1646, lastly in 1672: see Paolo Cherchi’s essay in this volume). The full title reads *Pseudodoxia epidemica, or enquiries into very many received tenents and commonly presumed truths*.<sup>6</sup> The Italian translation by Selvaggio Canturani (the Venetian Carmelite Arcangelo Agostini, 1660-1746), published in Venice in 1737, reads instead: *Saggio sopra gli errori popolareschi ovvero esame di molte opinioni ricevute come vere, che sono false o dubbiose*. Here error extends its realm from falsehood to doubt: everything that does not fall within the field of clear truth, in other words, appears to be potentially tainted by error. Yet it is also true that doubt and ignorance can correct an excess of dogmatic certainty, so that, as Montaigne writes in his essay *On the Lame* (*Essays*, 3, 11)—itself a veritable genealogy of error—“there is a sort of ignorance, strong and generous, that yields nothing in honour and courage to knowledge; an ignorance which to conceive requires no less knowledge than to conceive knowledge itself.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> “Chi procede per la via del senso facilmente può ad ogni passo errare.” Ripa 2012, 165.

<sup>4</sup> “Per la presente figura non si rappresenta il semplice non sapere, ma il vizio dell’ignoranza, che nasce dal dispreggio della scienza di quelle cose che l’uomo è tenuto d’imparare.” Ripa 2012, 271.

<sup>5</sup> “Dubbio è un’ambiguità dell’animo intorno al sapere, e per conseguenza ancora del corpo intorno all’operare.” Ripa 2012, 146.

<sup>6</sup> For an overview on the work see Phillips 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted from the 1686 translation by Charles Cotton, available at <https://hyperessays.net/essays/on-the-lame/> (accessed on June 7, 2022).

François Rigolot has spoken of the “Renaissance fascination with error,” noting how “most Renaissance humanists enjoyed themselves immensely in tracking down the incredible diversity of human and textual errors, before the seventeenth-century rationalist discourse clearly established the philosophical status of truth and falsehood.” In Rigolot’s view, “during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation theologians, philosophers, physicians, artists, and poets spent much of their time collecting, evaluating, denouncing, and celebrating various forms of misguided behaviour” (Rigolot 2004, 1221). Certainly the Middle Ages also recognized the ubiquitous presence of error in the various fields of learning and human behavior (Speer-Mauriège 2018). Undeniably, however, from the fifteenth century onwards one sees an explosion of philological *castigationes*, as well as lists of errors: religious, antiquarian, historiographical, and scientific. Examples include Giovanni Andrea Gilio’s published dialogue (1564) on the errors and “abuses” of painters (although the conversation recorded in the text allegedly took place in 1561), and two years later, a text devoted to “military deeds, inventions, and errors” by Bernardino Rocca (1515-1587).<sup>8</sup>

The impact of the printing press on the perception of error can be hardly overestimated. There is virtually no early modern book that does not invoke the reader’s cooperation in the correction of the many mistakes produced during the printing process, which served to heighten the perception of the diffusion of error. On the other hand, the press was a formidable instrument for the correction of mistakes. Such editorial power led Benedetto Altavilla to write in his *Breve discorso intorno gli errori de calculi astronomici* (A Brief Discourse on Errors in Astronomical Calculations, 1580) that the divine Majesty should be praised for granting authors countless privileges. Among them,

Most great was the one he gave to Giovanni Lutemberg [*sic*] from Mainz in the year 1470, [that is] the art of the printing press, thanks to which all the deeds and ideas of men can be easily seen and understood by everyone [...]. And now, thanks to this instrument, the inventors of the arts and the professors of sciences can share [their knowledge] with everyone. And those who read others’ works can, with equal ease, discover the errors they contain so that, contrasting them with their virtue and resorting to reason one gets to know the truth.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> On Gilio’s *Dialogo de gli errori et abusi de’ pittori* published in his *Due dialogi* (Camerino: Antonio Gioioso, 1564) see Maffei 2017; on Bernardino Rocca’s *Imprese, stratagemmi, et errori militari* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito’ de Ferrari, 1566, 1567, 1568) see Cherchi 2017; Favaro 2021, 50–2.

<sup>9</sup> “Non è chi possa degnamente ringratiare e lodare la maestà divina de i beneficij e gratie che di continuo a gli huomini concede, fra i quali grandissimo fu quello che diede a Giovanni Lutemberg di Magonza l’anno 1470, dell’arte della stampa con cui i fatti e i concetti de gli huomini possono esser facilmente da tutti veduti e intesi [...]. Et hora con questo mezzo ponno gl’inventori delle arti e professori delle scienze farne partecipi tutti. Et quelli che le altrui opere leggono ponno con la medesima facilità scuoprire gl’errori che in esse ritruovano. Onde poi col virtuoso contrasto e concorso delle ragioni si viene in conoscenza della verità” Altavilla 1580, 4.

Along with the printing press, global exploration also contributed to shape the early modern perception of “error,” as Ian Smith suggests in observing how error intersected with discourses on race, eloquence, and grammar. “Barbarous” or “savage” people, in their barbaric utterances—thus situating themselves outside the male-centered world of grammar and eloquence—reveal their inherent proclivity to moral error and vice (see Smith 2009). From the perspective of religion, moreover, it is hard to overestimate the consequences of the European encounter with new beliefs and religions utterly at odds with Christian teachings. Such beliefs were considered “abuses” and “errors,” and correcting them became imperative. From this vantage point, the letters or “avvisi” sent by Jesuit missionaries from the Americas or Asia that catalogued the “errors” of non-European people represent an invaluable source of these foreign practices, beliefs, and doctrines. We would be wrong, however, to think of this process as merely a missionary effort and ethnocentric projection of European values onto different cultures. Error becomes instead a propulsive force that prompts new knowledge; the correction of “errors” goes beyond the realm of faith and extends to philosophy, habits, and forms of civilization. Consider, for example, the case of the Benedictine Clemente Tosi and his *L’India orientale. Descrittione geografica, & historica* (Eastern India. A Geographical and Historical Description, 1676). In the printer’s address to the reader, we read that providing geographical descriptions was not the author’s main purpose in writing the book; it was, rather, a means to achieve a “most noble purpose,” that is, the “conversion of people.” This, argues the printer, speaking on behalf of the author (who had deceased before the time of publication),

Cannot be achieved without first knowing their errors; nor would have we been able to spy on them hadn’t we gone among those people discovering their ways of life; and therefore it was necessary, first of all, to research their countries, habits, religion, and other features to be able to discover their errors.<sup>10</sup>

Since the “errors” of non-European people are seen to fall under different categories, they require a treatment that accounts for this division within the larger work. Tosi’s book is thus articulated in three main sections: scholastic theology (concerning “metaphysical” errors); moral theology (concerning practical behaviour), and finally, natural philosophy. Interestingly, the printer remarks that “these errors are not the same of those of the ancient Heathens.”<sup>11</sup> We see here, in other words, a clear awareness of the historical and geographical nature of

<sup>10</sup> “Le descrittioni geografiche portate sul principio del volume non sono state lo scopo principale del nostro autore ma solamente un mezzo per giungere ad un fine nobilissimo, che è la conversione delle genti; che non si può fare senza prima conoscere i loro errori; né questi si potevano spiare se non si andava fra quei popoli rintracciando il loro modo di vivere: che perciò è stato necessario di ricercare avanti ogn’altra cosa i loro paesi, costumi, religione, e altre qualità per poter venire al conoscimento de’ loro errori,” Tosi 1676, p.n.n.

<sup>11</sup> “Sappi però, o lettore, che questi errori non sono i medesimi della gentilità antica,” Tosi 1676, p.n.n.

error: Tosi's is not a work of antiquarianism, but is rather the result of careful ethnographic inquiry into the customs of Asian populations. As such, despite its ethnocentric gaze, it accumulates and makes available to Western Europeans a wealth of knowledge about its subjects.

Errors and abuses, however, were not specific to non-European people. In a confessional age marked by lacerating religious division, errors multiplied, with each confession accusing its competing "sects" (as different religious strands frequently labelled each other) of innumerable mistakes. "Errors" came to designate the beliefs of either the Catholic or the Reformed churches, and the books and treatises that named them were often printed (see Neveu 1993). This provides the subject for Giorgio Caravale's essay *Error of the Heretic, Error of the Controversialist. Error and Deception in Sixteenth-Century Religious Polemics*, devoted to Ambrogio Catarino Politi, the author of a *Compendio d'errori luterani*. As Caravale aptly summarizes, Politi's

entire existence revolved around the concept of error: errors of which he accused Luther and his Italian followers in some of the most effective pamphlets of the time; errors of which he himself was repeatedly accused by his Dominican adversaries before and during the Council of Trent; but also errors of which Politi accused himself in some revealing and at times merciless autobiographical reconstructions.

Caravale points to the 1520 *Apologia pro veritate catholicae et apostolicae fides* (An Apology for the Truth of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith) against Luther, in which Politi equates the idea of error with that of deception. He then moves to Politi's *Speculum hereticorum* (The Mirror of Heretics) of 1540, wherein the author attacked Italian *spirituali* and their ideas concerning salvation through faith. Politi also found himself, at times, in conflict with members of his own order, such as Bartolomeo Spina; their debate encompassed among other crucial themes the Immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. At the same time, Politi turned the category of error against himself, analyzing his youthful fascination with Savonarolan ideas. Through Politi's work we can see the semantic richness of error, whose meaning ranged "from presumption to credulity, from delusion to deception."

Philology was often instrumental in dismantling theological errors, as they often stemmed from inaccurate interpretations of the Scripture, a topic that has generated significant scholarly attention in recent times (see the essays in Cao-Grafton-Kraye 2019). In his contribution *Errors of Interpretation: Vincenzo Maggi and Sperone Speroni, Readers of Francesco Robortello*, Marco Sgarbi offers an insightful interpretation of how philological discussions of errors (whether true or perceived) had a crucial bearing on the development of fundamental categories of Western thought. Sgarbi focuses on Vincenzo Maggi's and Sperone Speroni's criticism of Francesco Robortello's interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics*. In these discussions we do not find the desire for an improvement of society through the correction of errors; instead, we witness the keen desire to understand a crucial text of Western thought. Robortello published his *In Aristotelis*

*poeticam explicationes* in 1548, the first “critical edition” to include commentary on Aristotle’s text. Although it provided a significant moment in the reception history of the *Poetics*, Robortello’s edition was nonetheless flawed by errors in both the translation and the interpretation of the text. The way in which Maggi and Speroni scrutinize Robortello’s translation of Aristotle’s text, however, varies: while Maggi is more focused “on the philological restitution” of the text, Speroni appraises Robortello’s translation and commentary with the eye of a playwright (Speroni was the author of a famous and controversial tragedy, *Canace*). For Speroni, at stake is the defining components of poetics, such as catharsis—the goal of tragedy—and the relationship between invention and truth. Not surprisingly, as Sgarbi point out, Robortello’s commentary raised the interest of Torquato Tasso, who also reflected at length on similar issues, namely the fundamental connection between poetry and truth. Sgarbi considers the extent to which Robortello’s “errors” stem from Maggi’s and Speroni’s loose interpretations of the *Poetics*, which reflect their own understanding of the text. In his conclusion Sgarbi suggests that “working on errors of interpretation rather than similarities, especially in textual criticism, can be extremely useful for reconstructing the reception of a text,” for “errors are often very precise and circumscribed, and they allow for genealogical reconstructions, whereas similarities and loans, which are for the most part very vague, do not.” As in Lachmannian philology, errors can thus put us in touch with the authentic meaning of a work.

Sgarbi’s essay explores the world of high culture, providing a sample of the refined discussions that took place within the Italian academies (on this topic see Everson-Reidy-Sampson 2016 and, for a later period, Muir 2007). Such discussions were hardly accessible to most of the populace, who shared a different knowledge base often rooted in traditional beliefs, sometimes blended with badly digested or consciously manipulated morsels of knowledge imported from “high” culture—an ideal breeding ground for error, at least in the eyes of many haughty “learned” authors. A number of these beliefs, practices, and commonly held ideas sat at the crossroads between religion and medicine. These beliefs, which mixed elements of traditional or folkloric culture with notions derived from formal medical discourse, were increasingly discussed, debunked, and rebuked in print all over Europe starting in the second half of the sixteenth century. Paolo Cherchi, in his essay on “*Errori popolari: How a Medical Notion Became an Aesthetic One*,” explores the European diffusion of literature on “popular errors” from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. Although this micro-genre covered topics in medicine, religion, history, and physics (among other diverse subjects), its roots lay in attempts to eradicate false beliefs in the field of medicine. The rise of the Paracelsian tradition, in opposition to Galenic and classical medicine—based on notions such as “sympathy,” “antipathy,” and on quasi-alchemical and magical practices—gave rise to numerous reactions against “popular errors.” As Cherchi suggests, however, the main issue was not that of making distinctions between “high” and “low” culture, since learned authors could also commit “popular errors.” Instead, methodological and empirical questions were at stake. Commenting on Laurent Joubert’s *Erreurs pop-*

*ulaires*, Cherchi suggests that “the notion of ‘popular’ defines not the beliefs of the lowest classes but a type of culture which is in sharp contrast with the ‘university’ learning which is based on the authority of the ancient scholars.” Popular errors have to do with mentalities and can be spread over space and time, as well as across social classes. From medicine they can easily travel to religion, since the boundaries between magical or folkloric healing, medicine, and religion are porous and permeable throughout the early modern era. Cherchi traces the European circulation of these works, highlighting some key moments, such as Bacon’s attempt at approaching popular errors from a new methodological viewpoint based on induction (the aforementioned Thomas Browne took full advantage of Bacon’s perspective in his *Pseudodoxia epidemica*.) In the eighteenth century, authors increasingly traced the origins of popular errors to Antiquity, which lost much of its prestige as a result. We see this attitude at work in Giacomo Leopardi’s *Saggio sopra gli errori popolari degli antichi* (An Essay on the Popular Errors of the Ancients, 1815, but posthumously published in 1846). In the *Saggio*, however, the relationship between the errors of the Ancients and those of his contemporary lower classes is complex. We see something new emerging from the pages of young Leopardi: an alliance between error and imagination that gives life to “beautiful fables.” As Cherchi remarks, “in that atmosphere [i.e. of Romanticism], the popular errors lost much of the stigma placed on them by centuries of rationalism and scientific experimentation,” thus reimagining them to comprise a positive aesthetic category.

Vera Keller (*Lost in the Woods: Francis Bacon’s Errant Pathways in Knowledge*) further expands on Bacon’s view of error, engaging current scholarship and showing how error and erring are, for Bacon, “valorized epistemic tool[s].” In fact error allows Bacon to liberate scientific investigation from the “imperatives to produce useful, timely, and certain results.” Error is instrumental in building a form of science that consists of something beyond mere mechanical experimentation and the exploitation of nature. Instead, error allows for an immersive experience in the labyrinthine and metamorphic aspects of nature and natural creation. Error and erring in the labyrinths of nature, the delayed exit from its maze of possibilities—the outcomes of which the investigator can merely anticipate—enable “a greater degree of knowledge to be accessed.” In linking the myth of Proteus to a particular state of nature—that of “erring nature”—Bacon offers meaningful insight into the processes by which we acquire knowledge: “counterintuitively, nature in error served greater epistemic ends; such error could either occur naturally, through matter running into the violence and ‘impediments’ on its own, or through the human vexing of nature;” the latter of which could engender metamorphoses and transformations that “reveal otherwise hidden ‘passages and variations’.” Thus, contrary to what many have argued, Bacon cherishes the productive nature of error. Bacon’s error pushes knowledge toward the boundaries of possibility, argues Keller, resisting “the pressure to exit the labyrinth and to produce useful knowledge.” The result consists less in “certain tabulations of knowledge” than in “provisional, fragmentary, and moveable forms of inscription.” Error is thus perceived as a positive

force behind our acquisition of knowledge, and one that allows for a less violent relationship between man and nature.

Cherchi's and Keller's essays, while written from very different points of view, ultimately concur in providing a more nuanced view of error: one in which error does not deviate from or lacks true knowledge, and neither is it a force to be tamed. Error is instead an alternative approach to nature, an epistemic alternative to the constraints of reason, truth, and utility. In other words, error may be seen as a useful category that offers an escape from the excesses of mechanicism, experimental science, and the objectification of nature.

If the aforementioned Benedetto Altavilla is almost forgotten today, despite his best effort at correcting astronomical ephemerides, Galileo Galilei, by contrast, is a celebrated and well-known universal figure. While much of his fame can be attributed to the errors he corrected, Galileo, as presented in Viktor Blåsjö's essay on *Galileo's Mathematical Errors*, was no less prone to error than many of his fellow scientists, especially when it came to mathematical and geometrical demonstrations. Blåsjö reviews the many phenomena, including cycloids, planetary spheres, centrifugal force, projectile motion, and comets, in which Galileo's hypotheses and "demonstrations" proved erroneous. Moreover, as Blåsjö argues, several of Galileo's contemporaries, including some of his own followers and associates, were successful in correcting him while demonstrating their superiority over Galileo as mathematicians. Thus we are faced, according to Blåsjö, with the fact that "Galileo's celebrated use of experiments in science is not a brilliant methodological innovation but a reluctant recourse necessitated by his shortcomings in mathematical ability." Yet Galileo's reputation has somehow concealed such shortcomings, perhaps due in part to the famous astronomer's own rhetorical language, which has contributed to the shaping of his "mythology." In Blåsjö's words, "his accounts of his correct discoveries may sound very convincing and emphatic, but knowing that he was equally sure of a long list of errors gives us reason to suspect that some of the things he got right are to some extent guesswork propped up with overconfident rhetoric in the hope that readers will mistakenly think his case is stronger than it is."

The example of Galileo introduces us to the intricate overlapping of the freedom of conscience, intellectual freedom, and error (i.e. theological error). As already suggested, error was a crucial category that shaped European spirituality well beyond the realm of religious disputes between supporters of "orthodoxy"—whether Catholic or Protestant—and "heretics" or "Papists." The notion of "erroneous conscience" played a fundamental role in spiritual dialectics as early as Thomas Aquinas. Authors of confessors' manuals revived this notion, which found its place alongside other similar but competing categories, such as "doubtful" or "scrupulous" conscience. Each of these definitions referred to a particular condition of individual conscience, and each of them implied a number of consequences for one's moral choices. Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, in his chapter on *The Notion of Erroneous Conscience in Pierre Bayle*, shows how reflection on erroneous conscience was instrumental in overcoming confessional struggles and even shaping religious toleration. Cavaillé points to Bayle's assertion that error is nearly inev-



itable; even orthodoxy may retain beliefs that are—or have been at some point in history—“heretical” or erroneous. This is illustrated by the impossibility of imagining the true nature of Jesus Christ, which is often reduced to Christ’s mere humanity even by the most pious and orthodox devotees of the Christian faith. Bayle concludes, therefore, that in matters of religious belief there are seemingly no criteria for distinguishing between truth and error. What is troubling for Bayle is not the committing of religious error (and the potential to correct such beliefs), but rather the practical consequences of orthodoxy, which had the power to coerce people to commit morally wrong actions in the name of “truth.” The notion of erroneous conscience finds its importance precisely within this theoretical frame. According to Thomistic thought, one should always follow what their conscience dictates, since acting against one’s conscience is the gravest of sins. “Heretics,” whose consciences tell them that what they believe is true, do not commit a sin, thereby advocating for the toleration and dispelling of doubt and scepticism about “heretical” belief. In a paradoxical twist, the traditional Catholic category of sin is thus used to undermine not only “orthodoxy,” but also the very idea of religion. Bayle carries this line of thought to its logical end, arguing that since we lack an objective criterion to distinguish between competing truths, all opinions and beliefs should be accepted for the sake of civic harmony.

As mentioned, the printing press had a significant impact on the perception of error, and, accordingly, almost all the contributions in this volume deal with the printed word. The rise of the print market did not erase, however, oral and manuscript communication (see, for example, Richardson 2009). As Martin Mulsow’s essay *Positive and Negative Error. A Debate in the Illuminati Order* demonstrates, error also served as a subject for discussion that circulated in manuscript form within academic circles well into the eighteenth century. Mulsow explores the cultural production of the Illuminati, a German secret society founded in 1776 by Adam Weishaupt, thus bringing us back to the world of academies, institutions so instrumental in shaping early modern European learning. Within the lodges and chapters of the society, members read and discussed essays on different topics, giving rise to discourses “shaped by personal acquaintance and benevolence,” which allowed for “the creation of protected discussion spaces.” Among these discussions was one that took place in 1785 on the nature of error, prompted by Prince August of Saxe-Gotha. Mulsow carefully reconstructs the thesis expounded by the Prince as well as the objections raised by other Illuminati members. Pivoting from Fontenelle’s view of “myth-making as a compensation for ignorance,” August attempts to define error according to an amalgamation of two conceptually unrelated frameworks. One is Voltaire’s distinction between active and passive imagination, while the other comes from contemporary theories of electricity and the distinction between positive and negative charges. Negative (or repellent) errors are produced by a lack of knowledge, while positive (or attractive) errors result from attempts to fill gaps of knowledge with irrational explanations and other “epistemic vices.” Other Illuminati built on August’s thesis; but it was Rudolph Zacharias Becker who realized that all errors are, in fact, negative. He therefore reformulated August’s thesis by suggesting

that “some errors keep the mind in its imperfect, undeveloped state: but others push it in developing and working on its store of materials, deeper back into the state of obscure and confused concepts.” Despite the competing views on error within the Illuminati, their attempt to build a taxonomy of error cannot be underestimated, nor can their underlying purpose for engaging with error, which was to eradicate “prejudice, ignorance, and credulity.”

This volume dialogues with the rich corpus of scholarship on early modern error, offering a selection of essays that reflect on the intermingling of religion, science, and learning in early modern Europe. Spanning geographically from Italy to France, England, and Germany, the essays gathered here encompass a timeframe between the mid-sixteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries. While the aim of this volume is not to offer a systematic overview of error, it provides, nonetheless, a stimulating glimpse into one of the most fascinating, multifaceted, and controversial aspects of early modern culture.

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