



Dice, Cards, Wheels: A Different History of French Culture

By Thomas M. Kavanagh

University of Pennsylvania Press. Hardcover. Book Condition:

New. Hardcover. 264 pages. Dimensions: 9.1in. x 6.0in. x

1.2in. Gambling has been a practice central to many cultures throughout history. In *Dice, Cards, Wheels*, Thomas M. Kavanagh scrutinizes the changing face of the gambler in France over a period of eight centuries, using gambling and its representations in literature as a lens through which to observe French culture. Kavanagh argues that the way people gamble tells us something otherwise unrecognized about the values, conflicts, and cultures that define a period or class. To gamble is to enter a world traced out by the rules and protocols of the game the gambler plays. That world may be an alternative to the established order, but the shape and structure of the game reveal indirectly hidden tensions, fears, and prohibitions. Drawing on literature from the Middle Ages to the present, Kavanagh reconstructs the figure of the gambler and his evolving personae. He examines, among other examples, Bodels dicing in a twelfth-century tavern for the conversion of the Muslim world; Pascals post-Reformation redefinition of salvation as the gamblers prize; the aristocratic libertines celebration of the bluff; and Balzacs, Barbey d'Aurevillys, and Bourgets nineteenth-century revisions of the gambler....



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