

PROPAGANDA OF PROGRESS:
FRANCIS BACON'S *ESSAYS* AS POPULAR ENLIGHTENMENT

By

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ABSTRACT

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Francis Bacon (1561-1626 CE) is acknowledged as a founder of modernity and an architect of the liberal west. Bacon's most profound contribution to our political and intellectual history is his idea of progress and its relationship to science: he believed that mankind could conquer nature and command the human condition. In order to relieve man's estate, Bacon recommends a complete reconstruction of all human knowledge—including knowledge about nature, human nature, religion, and politics. His synoptic project, the Great Instauration, involves a radical shift in regnant opinion that re-educates and prepares individuals to live in a world of rapid and potentially limitless progress.

This dissertation is a close, exegetical analysis of a selection of essays from the 1625 CE English edition of Bacon's *Essays*. As this dissertation shows, Bacon's *Essays* is a primer: Bacon has designed the text to help us better understand human nature, religion, and politics and thereby prepare us for the age of progress. Throughout this analysis, a chiasmic reading of the text is applied in order to examine three primary themes: human nature, religion, and politics.

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INTRODUCTION

We are children of progress: weaned on modern science, reared to require and desire technological innovation, and educated to believe that we have the authority and foresight to improve our environment and ourselves. The idea of progress—premised on modern science, dependent on technological innovations, and executed by human designs—defines the liberal west.¹ Doubts about progress have led critics of modernity to question both the tangible effects of technological progress and the underlying assumptions that have made progress possible. If we are to make sense of the critiques, we must first understand the fundamental worldview embedded in modernity and technology. This dissertation investigates the origins of that worldview by returning to its originator's seminal work of soul-craft: Francis Bacon's *Essays*.

THE INSTAURATION AND THE IDOLS OF THE MIND

Francis Bacon (1561-1626 CE), the seventeenth-century CE English judge, legal theorist, Member of Parliament, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Lord Chancellor of England, father of science, and philosopher, is the first and most influential theoretician and propagandist of the idea of progress. He lived during a time of tumult, punctuated by religious upheavals. The

¹ There is a substantial and interdisciplinary literature on the relationships amongst science, technology, and society. Braun argues, "The quest for Progress is the most characteristic feature of our time; indeed, progress is at the pinnacle of our collective desires." Jaroszynski discusses the controversial nature of progress from a distinctly religious perspective. Other scholars claim that the most pressing concern in liberal democratic politics is technology. Feenberg, Melzer, and Studer discuss the importance of the question of technology. See Ernest Braun, *Futile Progress: Technology's Empty Promise* (London, UK: Earthscan Publications Limited, 1995), 1; Andrew Feenberg, *Questioning Technology* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), viii; Piotr Jaroszynski, *Science in Culture*, trans. Hugh McDonald (New York, NY: Rudopi, 2007), 220-32; Arthur M. Melzer, "The Problem with the 'Problem of Technology'," in *Technology in the Western Political Tradition*, ed. Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 287-321; Heidi Doris Studer, "'Grapes Ill-Trodden...': Francis Bacon and the *Wisdom of the Ancients*" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1992), 1; and Heidi D. Studer, "Francis Bacon on the Political Dangers of Scientific Progress," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 31.2 (June 1998): 219-20.

Reformation caused schisms in European Christendom, including in Britain: the Church of England separated from the Catholic Church twenty years prior to Bacon's birth; after such a precedent, each successive English monarch attempted to reconstitute religion in England to suit his or her own preferences and beliefs. Subject to the whims of the ruling monarch, the politics of Bacon's day was mired in intrigue and danger. Bacon's political career is marked by shining successes and tragic disgrace: in 1616 CE, he is appointed to the Privy Council; in 1617 CE, he is appointed Lord Keeper of the Great Seal; in 1618 CE, he is appointed Lord Chancellor of England, one of the most powerful political positions in England; in 1621 CE, however, Bacon is accused of accepting bribes and impeached by Parliament, fined, and banned from Court.²

Bacon called his synoptic project—his life's work—the Great Instauration. In his scientific writings—which include *Advancement of Learning*, *New Organon*, and *Great Instauration*—Bacon argues that the new science of nature and technological project represents a new type of knowledge: knowledge about nature coupled with the power to alter nature. The goal of the Instauration is to conquer nature for the relief of man's estate.³ The plan requires “a total reconstruction of sciences, arts, and all human knowledge raised upon the proper foundation,”⁴ in the name “of human utility and human power.”⁵ Therefore, in Bacon's estimation, modern science—unlike the useless, passive contemplation of nature for personal

² There are a number of excellent biographies on Francis Bacon's life. Examples include Joel J. Epstein, *Francis Bacon: a political biography* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1977); Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune: The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon* (London, UK: Victor Gollancz, 1998); and Nieves Mathews, *Francis Bacon: The History of a Character Assassination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).

³ Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. G. W. Kitchen and intro. Jerry Weinberger (Philadelphia, PA: Paul Dry Books, 2001), I.v.11.

⁴ Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis and The Great Instauration*, ed. and intro. Jerry Weinberger (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson Inc., 1989), 21.

⁵ Bacon, *Instauration*, 16.

interest encouraged by premodern or ancient science—is the useful, active manipulation of nature for public benefit.

Misemployment of the human intellect, misassessment of human power, and misunderstanding of our greatest good, Bacon argues, are the greatest impediments to the mastery of nature. The defects of the human intellect that prevent our rational capacities are divided, by Bacon, into four illusions—Idols of the Tribe, Idols of the Cave, Idols of the Marketplace, and Idols of the Theatre. In *Great Instauration*, Bacon separates these Idols into two types. The Idols of the Tribe and the Idols of the Cave are innate; that is, they “Exis[t] in a person (or organism) from birth” and are “inborn, native, natural.”⁶ As such, “they cannot be eradicated at all.”⁷ The Idols of the Marketplace and the Idols of the Theatre are “adventitious”; that is, they “Com[e] from outside or from an external source...rather than by design or inherent nature”.⁸ these Idols enter the mind “either from the doctrine or sects of philosophers, or from perverse rules of demonstration.”⁹ As such, they “are hard to eradicate.”¹⁰ Our intellectual failures, as Bacon understands them, are the result of both our biology and our experience.

Since the Idols of the Tribe and of the Cave cannot be excised, “All that can be done is to point them out, so that...the mind can be marked and reprov[er]d.”¹¹ As Bacon explains, “The

⁶ “innate, adj.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. May 13, 2013, <http://www.oed.com>: “State or condition in general, whether material or moral, bodily, or mental.” A passage from another of Bacon’s texts is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷ Bacon, *Instauration*, 25.

⁸ “adventitious, adj.” *OED*, May 12, 2013. Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁹ Bacon, *Instauration*, 25.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

idols of the tribe are founded in human nature itself and in the very tribe or race of mankind.”¹²

All individuals are afflicted by this Idol, which manifests itself in various ways:¹³ for example, in our desire to see regularity where it may not exist; in our recalcitrant adherence to our opinions once they have been established; in our susceptibility to immediate information, experiences, or emotions; in our restless desire to seek information when doing so is no longer necessary; in the influence of our emotions at the expense of our reason; in the limited power of our senses; and in our predisposition towards abstraction.

Although the Idols of the Cave are also innate, the manner in which they manifest themselves is unique to “the individual nature of each man’s mind and body; and also in his education, way of life and chance events.”¹⁴ People have a predisposition to believe the things that they already believe to be true:

Men fall in love with particular pieces of knowledge and thoughts: either because they believe themselves to be their authors or inventors; or because they have put a great deal of labour into them, and have got very used to them.¹⁵

We are attached to those ideas that we think we already know; Bacon believes that we are very much the product of our natures, educations, and experiences. Different men experience this Idol in different ways: some individuals notice similarities, while others notice differences;¹⁶ some individuals love new things, while others love old things;¹⁷ and some individuals focus on

¹² Francis Bacon, *New Organon*, ed. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), I.41.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I.45-51.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I.53.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I.54.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I.55.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I.56.

details, while others concentrate on generalities. Similarly to the Idols of the Tribe, the Idols of the Cave afflict all individuals; however, the manner in which each individual experiences the Idols of the Cave is unique.

While the Idols of the Marketplace are not innate and can therefore be excised, Bacon believes that they “are the biggest nuisance of all, because they have stolen into the understanding from the covenant on words and names.”¹⁸ What we say and how we say it has meaning and affects our understanding. This Idol is present in two different ways: first, as “either names of things that do not exist...or...the names of things which exist but are confused and badly defined”;¹⁹ second, “poor and unskilled abstraction” causes imprecise use of words.²⁰ In both cases, incorrect or unrefined use of words impedes our knowledge and understanding.

In his explanation of the final Idol, Bacon states, “*Idols of the theatre* are not innate or stealthily slipped into the understanding; they are openly introduced and accepted.”²¹ They are the Idols of “the various dogmas of different philosophies, and even from mistaken rules of demonstration.”²² These Idols pervade theology, philosophy, and science. Bacon’s account of the four Idols serves as the foundation for his account of human intellection. The Idols explain the reasons that our knowledge about ourselves and nature is not as advanced as Bacon believes it can and should be and that our technical and mechanical knowledge to manipulate and control nature is rudimentary. We overestimate our power and underestimate our ability. Bacon predicts our mastery of nature, given the proper helps.

¹⁸ Ibid., I.59.

¹⁹ Ibid., I.60.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., I.61.

²² Ibid., I.44.

Bacon's lasting contribution to the western intellectual tradition and modernity is not his concrete natural science, but his more general understanding of the scientific project as a whole and the worldview embedded in it.²³ As Bacon envisions, modern science and technology will become central to everyday life, and mankind will become the master, not the plaything, of nature. The Great Instauration thus inaugurates a synoptic revolution in human understanding. Simply put, the scientific project as a whole involves a radical break with two then powerful understandings of the world—the ancient philosophic account and the biblical account—and an assault on those whose interests were founded on them—the divines, politiques, and men of learning.²⁴

THE REFORM OF REGNANT OPINION

Why were the traditional accounts of the world incompatible with modern science and progress? The ancients, Bacon argues, suffered from two impediments to a useful scientific understanding of the world. First, Bacon avers, they were afflicted with an “unhealthy mingling of divine and human.”²⁵ Since the “daily habits of life had let the mind be hooked by hearsay and debased doctrine, and occupied thoroughly by empty *illusions*,” ancient paganism infected

²³ For this contribution, Jean-Jacques Rousseau called Bacon “perhaps the greatest of the philosophers” who, along with “Descartes and Newton, was a “tuto[r] of the human race”; John Locke recognized the “great Lord Verulum’s authority” in having first justified that “learning...could be...advanced”; and Thomas Jefferson proclaimed Bacon, along with Locke and Newton, one of “the three greatest men who have lived, without exception.” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*, trans. Judith R. Bush, Roger D. Masters, and Christopher Kelly (Dartmouth, NH: Dartmouth University Press, 1974), 63; John Locke, *Conduct of Understanding* (New York, NY: General Books, LLC, 2009), 1; Thomas Jefferson, “Letter to Richard Price Paris, January 8, 1789,” *American History: From Revolution to Reconstruction and Beyond*, <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/presidents/thomas-jefferson/letters-of-thomas-jefferson/jefl74.php> (accessed May 13, 2013).

²⁴ Bacon, *Advancement*, I.i.1.

²⁵ Bacon, *Organon*, I.45.

ancient philosophy.²⁶ Under the illusion that all of nature was divine, natural events were given teleological explanations.²⁷ Since the study of nature (philosophy) was conflated with the study of the divine (theology), those philosophers who questioned ruling prejudices “were...found guilty of impiety.”²⁸ Second, Bacon maintains, ancient knowledge about nature was demonstrated through personal contemplation. Therefore, ancient science generated only speculative controversy, rather than public benefits.

The true faith, Christianity, did much to remedy ancient ignorance and facilitate modern science, Bacon claims. According to Christian theology, God created nature; He is not, as the pagans believed of their gods, part of nature. In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon argues that traditional biblical religion considers science, or philosophy, suspect for three primary reasons:²⁹ first, “the aspiring to overmuch knowledge was the original temptation and sin whereupon ensued the fall of man”;³⁰ second, biblical religion commands obedience to God and obedience to divine power; and third, since the focus of biblical religion is on the afterlife and divine rewards in heaven, there is no reason to relieve man’s estate on earth. In refutation of these Christian precepts, Bacon’s Instauration requires that human beings have unlimited access to knowledge about nature;³¹ second, that human beings are the final power on earth; and third,

²⁶ Ibid., preface and I.45.

²⁷ Bacon, *Advancement*, II.vii.7.

²⁸ Bacon, *Organon*, I.89.

²⁹ Bacon, *Advancement*, I.i.2-3.

³⁰ Ibid., I.i.2.

³¹ In response to the divines’ concerns, Bacon claims that it was not the desire for knowledge that caused the fall of man. Rather, “it was the proud knowledge of good and evil, with an intent in man to give law unto himself, and to depend no more upon God’s commandments, which was the form of the temptation.” In this way, Bacon solves the immediate problem: there is no divine

that it is desirable to overcome our natural impediments. Consequently, if modern science is successful and fulfills its promises to free man from nature and our bodies, the fundamental tenets of traditional religion will be undermined.

In his scientific writings, Bacon lays out his plan for the Instauration. Human utility, contrary to the pagan tradition, and human power, contrary to the biblical tradition, are essential to the project's success.³² The relief of man's estate requires not only scientific reform, but also reform of all human knowledge, including knowledge about human nature, religion, and politics.³³ Bacon's Instauration, therefore, "unsettles what is established";³⁴ it undermines existing power structures and questions regnant opinions—it is revolutionary, and it is dangerous. While many powerful and educated men of Bacon's time stand to lose their status as a result of the Instauration, still more stand to gain: the Instauration promises popular enlightenment and public utility.³⁵

decree that forbids man from seeking knowledge about nature. However, if man is prohibited from knowledge of good and evil, what is the relationship between scientific knowledge and moral knowledge? There are two options: first, science does not consider good and evil; or second, science does indeed consider good and evil. If the latter is the case, Bacon's original response to the divines' concerns becomes suspect, while the concerns of the divines become all the more salient. Ibid., I.i.3 and I.vi.6.

³² Bacon, *Instauration*, 16.

³³ As Weinberger puts it, Bacon's "intention was not just to reform human knowledge about nature but to found an entirely new world based on that knowledge. In this new world nature would be forced to serve human needs and desires, reason would form the basis of social life, and progress would be the end of human endeavors." Jerry Weinberger, introduction to *The History of the Reign of Henry the Seventh*, by Francis Bacon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 2.

³⁴ Bacon, *Organon*, I.90.

³⁵ This does not mean that science is completely open and that everyone has equal access to scientific knowledge and technological innovations. Bacon's scientific community is hierarchical, and the dissemination of information is controlled, as evidenced by his discussion in *New Atlantis*. The Instauration requires enlightened scientists who consider the potential

Public opinion is essential to the success of Bacon's project.³⁶ As Robert Faulkner, a renowned Bacon scholar, argues, "To be popular, a science must appeal to common and powerful desires, and Bacon's writings show how to do it."³⁷ Command of the "kingdom of opinions"³⁸ on behalf of science requires the reformation of our everyday moral, religious, and political opinions. Bacon knows that the Instauration will create enemies: as he debunks prevailing opinion, he threatens the social order. Since Bacon does not want to scare potential allies or compromise his own safety, he is cautious in how he says what he says.³⁹ Bacon is well known for his employment of the art of esoteric writing. *Advancement of Learning* includes a forthright presentation of "the enigmatical and disclosed" approaches to communication.⁴⁰ Bacon understands that the ancients wrote esoterically: "The pretense whereof is, to remove the vulgar capacities from being admitted to the secrets of knowledges, and to reserve them to

benefits and drawbacks that each discovery and invention might have on society. Bacon, *Atlantis*, 80.

³⁶ Stephen Gaukroger, *Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early-Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 10; Julian Martin, *Francis Bacon, the State, and the Reform of Natural Philosophy* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5; Brian Vickers, *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 3; Howard B. White, *Peace Among the Willows: The Political Philosophy of Francis Bacon* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), 21.

³⁷ Robert K. Faulkner, *Francis Bacon and the Project of Progress* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1993), 11.

³⁸ Bacon, *Instauration*, 11.

³⁹ I owe much of my understanding of Bacon's employment of esotericism to Lampert and Weinberger. For example, see Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 21-24; and Jerry Weinberger, *Science, Faith, and Politics: Francis Bacon and the Utopian Roots of the Modern Age, A Commentary on Bacon's Advancement of Learning* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 17-39.

⁴⁰ Bacon, *Advancement*, II.xvii.5.

selected auditors, or wits of such sharpness as can pierce the veil.”⁴¹ Although many of his texts include a frank and unabashed discussion of his use of esotericism, *Essays* contains no such revelation. In essay twenty, “Of Counsell,” in a discussion of secrecy, Bacon notes, “Princes are not bound to communicate all Matters...but may extract and select” (20.61).⁴² Prudent political men need not be unequivocally truthful in their speech. Bacon understands that cautious, careful speech is of paramount importance. It is reasonable for Bacon to fear reprisals for his project: if he is successful, human existence will be radically altered. In the 1597 CE edition of *Essays*, Bacon is explicit that the essays pose no danger to the prevailing power structures: by his account, “I have played my selfe the Inquisitor, and find nothing in my understanding in them contrarie or infectious to the state of Religion, or manners, but rather (as I suppose) medicinable.”⁴³ Bacon admits that he has checked his texts and carefully ensured that all of the content is as he designed it to be. Bacon’s rhetoric is precise and intentional. This dissertation argues that Bacon’s attempt to shape everyday opinion towards the Instauration is most clearly presented in his *Essays*.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. and intro. Michael Kiernan (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1985). Subsequent references to *Essays* will be cited parenthetically in the text as essay number followed by line number.

⁴³ Francis Bacon, *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath, 14 vols. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 6:523.

⁴⁴ Some scholars argue that the 1625 CE edition of *Essays* is unfinished. At the conclusion of the fifty-eighth essay is an essay fragment, titled “A Fragment of an Essay of Fame,” that ends with a comment: “The rest was not Finished” (59.61). Whitney claims that *Essays* is an example of Bacon’s “compulsion not to finish.” Similarly to Whitney, Box argues that Bacon’s continuous revision of *Essays* is a sign of a “work in progress rather than a philosophical system.” Charles Whitney, *Francis Bacon and Modernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 7-39; Ian Box, “Bacon’s moral philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon*, ed. Markku Peltonen (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 261.

PUBLICATION HISTORY AND DEDICATORY LETTERS

Etymologically, the term “essay” is derived from the French verb “essayer,” which means to try, attempt, or endeavor. As a literary form, the essay is “[a] composition of moderate length on any particular subject, or branch of a subject.”⁴⁵ Renaissance writer Michel de Montaigne, mentioned by Bacon in essay one, “Of Truth,” and essay thirty-five, “Of Prophecies,” is known as the first essayist.⁴⁶ Bacon’s *Essays* was the first English work to include the word “essay” in its title and the first of Bacon’s works to be published under his own name.⁴⁷

In Bacon’s extensive corpus, *Essays* occupies a unique place. Bacon composed three primary English editions, in 1597, 1612, and 1625 CE, and a Latin version, published posthumously,⁴⁸ which he believed “may last, as long as Bookes last” (DL.19).⁴⁹ Throughout his lifetime, Bacon revised each essay, added additional essays to the collection, and restructured the text: “the different editions cover the whole period of his active life.”⁵⁰ Michael Kiernan’s

⁴⁵ “essay, n.” *OED*, May 12, 2013. The title, *Essays*, is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁴⁶ Sessions reminds us that Bacon dedicates his first edition of *Essays* “to his brother Anthony, who has been a correspondent in France with Michel Montaigne, the originator of the form.” William A. Sessions, *Francis Bacon Revisited* (New York, NY: Twayne Publishers, 1996), 21; see also Kenneth Alan Hovey, “‘Mountaigny Saith Prettily’: Bacon’s French and the Essay,” *PMLA* 106.1 (January 1991): 71-82.

⁴⁷ Hovey, “Saith Prettily,” 72.

⁴⁸ For a detailed account of the publication history of *Essays*, see Michael Kiernan, introduction and commentary to *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, by Francis Bacon (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1985), liii-cxviii.

⁴⁹ DL refers to the Dedicatory Letter appended by Bacon to *Essays*.

⁵⁰ Edwin A. Abbot, preface and introduction to *Bacon’s Essays*, 2 vols., by Francis Bacon (London, UK: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881), xvii.

edition of *Essays* contains a detailed publication history.⁵¹ For the purposes of this dissertation, a few brief comments suffice.

The first edition, published in 1597 CE when Bacon was thirty-six years old, was composed of ten essays and exceptionally popular. According to Oliphant Smeaton, an early-twentieth-century editor of *Essays*, the first edition was “an epoch-making” work,⁵² whose “popularity was great, almost from the day of issue.”⁵³ Edwin Abbot, a nineteenth-century editor of *Essays*, describes the essays in this first edition as popular and of “interest [to] an ordinary student or gentleman leading a private life—*Discourses, Followers, Suitors, Expense, Health, Honour*. The only two that have any savour of the politician, *Faction* and *Negotiating*, come last in order, and they are short and incomplete.”⁵⁴ The two additional essays, “Of Studie” and “Of Ceremonies and respects,” are also pertinent to students and political men. William Sessions, a literary scholar, argues that “audiences found the immense life generated by this rhythmic formal interplay of ideas adaptable to their own lives.”⁵⁵

The second edition was published in 1612 CE when Bacon was fifty-two years old. Between the 1597 CE edition and the 1612 CE edition, Bacon’s concern seems to have shifted. In regard to the 1612 CE edition, Abbot notes, “we find the first place occupied by *Religion*; but it is religion treated from the statesman’s point of view, the most interesting subject in the

⁵¹ Kiernan, introduction, liii-cxvii.

⁵² Oliphant Smeaton, introduction to *Francis Bacon’s Essays*, by Francis Bacon (London, UK: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1962), xi.

⁵³ Ibid., xi and xviii.

⁵⁴ Abbot, introduction, xx.

⁵⁵ Sessions, *Revisited*, 21.

politics of the day.”⁵⁶ This second edition, expanded considerably from the first edition, contains thirty-eight essays. The third edition, published in 1625 CE when Bacon was sixty-four years old, includes fifty-eight essays. According to Abbot, this final edition is the work of a mature scholar:

But in 1625 the old man, drawing near his grave while the work of his life is yet unaccomplished, is driven back on that which he had made the object of fresh ambitions of his hopeful youth. *Death* comes near the beginning, but not first: the first place is given to *Truth*.⁵⁷

This dissertation focuses solely on the 1625 CE English edition, since it represents Bacon’s mature and final version of *Essays*.

Each of the three versions of *Essays* includes an accompanying Dedicatory Letter that helps us better understand Bacon’s intention for each text. In the 1597 CE Dedicatory Letter, Bacon addresses Anthony Bacon, his brother. In the Letter, Bacon does not mention the word “essays.” He does, however, compare the work to unripe fruit, which is picked “before it is ripe, to preuent stealing.”⁵⁸ In the 1612 CE Dedicatory Letter, Bacon refers to the content as “Essaies.”⁵⁹ Since Anthony Bacon has died, Bacon dedicates the text to his friend Sir John Constable. In these two early editions, Bacon expresses an urgent desire to share what he has learned and to publish what he has written.

The 1625 CE edition of *Essays* is dedicated to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who has been instrumental in Bacon’s rise to political prominence. Bacon begins the dedication with a statement about the importance of reputation: “Salomon saies; *A good Name is as a*

⁵⁶ Abbot, introduction, xx.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Bacon, *Works*, 6:523.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 6:539.

precious oyntment” (DL.8). Reputation and public perception are priceless. Bacon offers his *Essays*, his “most Currant” work (DL.13), as a gift to his friend whose “Fortune, and Merit both, have beene Eminent” (DL.10). The essays, Bacon explains, have been “enlarged...both in Number, and Weight” (DL.14)—that is, in quantity and depth: “they are indeed a New Worke” (DL.15). This work, Bacon tells us, is concerned with “Mens Businesse, and Bosomes” (DL.14). *Essays* addresses the personal and political affairs of men as well as those things that men desire.⁶⁰ Bacon believes that his *Essays* explicates the most fundamental human concerns. Further, he declares the 1625 CE edition “the best Fruits, that by the good Encrease, which *God* gives to my Pen and Labours, I could yield” (DL.24-26). Bacon makes a number of bold claims concerning his final edition of *Essays*: first, it is “a New Worke” (DL.16); second, it tackles the most important human concerns; and third, it is the best work that he could produce.

A PRIMER: SCHOLARLY CONSIDERATIONS AND CHIASMIC STRUCTURE

Despite Bacon’s own account of his *Essays*, considerable scholarly disagreement concerns the relationship between *Essays* and the Instauration. Some scholars argue that *Essays* is secondary or peripheral to Bacon’s grand project. If this line of argument is correct, Bacon’s *Essays* ought not to be studied for the purpose of discerning his political project. Many scholars who subscribe to this interpretation approach *Essays* from the perspective of literary criticism. According to Edwin Arber, the essays “formed no essential part of [Bacon’s] work; they entered not into his conceptions of the proficiency and advancement of knowledge...; these Counsels are by-works of his life.”⁶¹ Following Arber, Douglas Bush, another literary theorist, contends,

⁶⁰ “bosoms, n.” *OED*, May 13, 2013: “The seat of emotions, desires, etc.: hence used for ‘desire.’” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁶¹ Edward Arber, *A Harmony of the Essays. Etc. of Francis Bacon* (London, UK: Westminster A. Constable and Co., 1871), xxvii.

“Bacon’s *Essays* are in the category of admired books rather than among the well-thumbed and beloved. Everyone has read them, but no one is ever found reading them.”⁶² Similarly, C. S. Lewis, a literary theorist and notable author, echoes Bush’s arguments, that the reputation of the essays themselves outweighs the pleasure and benefit of reading them, and further states, “The truth is, it is a book for adolescents”⁶³ that is “better to quote than to reread.”⁶⁴ Arber, Bush, and Lewis all agree that *Essays* is peripheral to Bacon’s greater project and thus does not merit careful study. Most recently, Markku Peltonen posits a similar interpretation from the direction of philosophy, history, and political philosophy. Peltonen bases his assessment on his analysis of the twenty-ninth essay, “Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates,” and concludes that the lack of an overt discussion of science in the essay makes it and *Essays* unrelated to Bacon’s project.⁶⁵ While Peltonen’s argument may appear compelling,⁶⁶ and Arber’s, Bush’s, and Lewis’ respective analyses rhetorically persuasive, all misunderstand the purpose of *Essays*.

In a private letter to Bishop Lancelot Andrews, to whom he dedicates *An Advertisement Touching a Holy War*, Bacon refers to *Essays* “but as the recreations of...other studies.”⁶⁷

⁶² Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1962), 197.

⁶³ C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Seventeenth Century, Excluding Drama* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1954), 537.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 538.

⁶⁵ See Markku Peltonen, “Politics and Science: Francis Bacon and the True Greatness of States,” *The Historical Journal* 35.2 (1992): 279-305; and Markku Peltonen, “Bacon’s political philosophy,” in *The Cambridge Companion To Bacon*, ed. Markku Peltonen (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 283-310.

⁶⁶ The argument in this dissertation follows Faulkner’s explanation for the apparent lack of science and technology in *Essays*: “even if the *Essays* might be thought silent on science and technology (it is reserved on these topics, but not silent), the work could show the implications of the scientific outlook for other parts of private and public life.” Faulkner, *Progress*, 27.

⁶⁷ Bacon, *Works*, 14:374.

Bacon recognizes that *Essays* might yield him “lustre and reputation,” although that is not what he desires.⁶⁸ Contrary to Arber’s suggestion that the essays are but “by-works of his [Bacon’s] life,”⁶⁹ Bacon makes no such admission in this letter. As literary theorist Ronald S. Crane notes, such an interpretation is “a demonstrably mistaken one.”⁷⁰ At issue is how one ought to understand Bacon’s use of the word “recreation”: recreation may be understood as “[a]n activity or pastime which is pursued for the pleasure or interest it provides”; or as “[t]he action or process of creating again or in a new way.”⁷¹ Regardless of the interpretation of recreation, only if one disregards Bacon’s comments on the text in the 1625 CE Dedicatory Letter—a letter that he deliberately wrote and appended to the text in anticipation of publication—in favor of his vague, albeit humble comments made in a private letter, is the peripheral nature of the text plausible. Crane’s analysis does much to remedy this misinterpretation.

Another editorial complication, recognized by Faulkner, concerns the organization of Bacon’s *Works*.⁷² When James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath collected Bacon’s work, between 1857 and 1874 CE, they included *Essays* with Bacon’s literary works. In the preface to volume six of *Works*, Spedding explains the literary classification:

I mean works which were intended [by Bacon] to take their place among *books*; as distinguished from writings of business, which though they may be collected into books

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Arber, *Harmony*, xxvii.

⁷⁰ Ronald S. Crane, “The Relation of Bacon’s Essays to his Program for the Advancement of Learning,” in *Essential Articles for the Study of Francis Bacon*, ed. Brian Vickers (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1968), 272.

⁷¹ “recreation, n.” *OED*, May 13, 2013. Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of either of these usages.

⁷² Faulkner, *Progress*, 12.

afterwards, were composed without reference to anything beyond the particular occasion to which they relate.⁷³

Spedding's classification in no way suggests a peripheral or secondary importance to the literary works. In fact, he argues that the literary works have perennial, as opposed to particular, import. Bacon's literary works speak beyond his own times. Included in the literary works, Spedding claims, are "the Historical, Moral, and Political Works."⁷⁴ It is clear that Spedding counted *Essays* amongst Bacon's most important works.

Another group of scholars argues that *Essays* is persuasive and an essential part of Bacon's corpus. Two scholars have been particularly influential in recognizing the rhetorical nature of Bacon's project: literary scholar Brian Vickers and early-modern historian Lisa Jardine. In *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose*, Vickers argues that Bacon's employment of rhetoric indicates that "his whole life's work was dedicated to persuasion."⁷⁵ Vickers posits that *Essays*, in particular, reveals "the serious function of analyzing man in society."⁷⁶ In *Francis Bacon: Discovery and the Art of Discourse*, Jardine concludes that the rhetorical method in *Essays* is designed "to employ what Bacon calls 'imaginative' or 'insinuating' reason," the purpose of which "is to convince the reader to adopt spontaneously advised courses of action in particular circumstances."⁷⁷ These scholars claim that *Essays* is intended to sway people towards Bacon's

⁷³ James Spedding, preface to vol. 6 in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, by Francis Bacon (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 6:v.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Vickers, *Renaissance Prose*, 3.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 53.

⁷⁷ Lisa Jardine, *Francis Bacon: Discovery and the Art of Discourse* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 248.

opinions on its given subjects. Vickers and Jardine help us better understand the relationship between *Essays* and Bacon's corpus by explicating specific essays.

Amongst those scholars who recognize the essential nature of *Essays*, two general approaches are apparent. One group of scholars explicate specific essays. The most well-known of these studies is literary theorist Stanley Fish's analysis of essay ten, "Of Love."⁷⁸ Another diverse group of scholars mention the central position of *Essays* in studies of Bacon's other texts. For example, Jerry Weinberger, a political philosophy professor and noted Bacon scholar, states, "The *Essays*—admitted masterpieces of English style—are now seen as revealing pictures of the modern moral and psychological temperament and also as works that tell us much about the development of the modern state."⁷⁹ Similarly, Paolo Rossi argues, in a brief discussion, that the essays "were intended as another contribution to that science of man to which Bacon dedicated for many years the best part of his inexhaustible energies."⁸⁰ Benjamin Farrington lauds the essays, as "they constitute, perhaps [Bacon's] best claim to be a philosopher in the popular sense of the term, that is, a man who can think more wisely than his fellows on all the various contingencies of life."⁸¹ Finally, Karl Wallace, a rhetoric scholar, states, "For specific information on human nature we turn to the *Essays*."⁸² All of these scholars, despite

⁷⁸ Stanley Fish, "Georgics of the Mind: The Experience of Bacon's Essays," in *Self Consuming Artifacts*, ed. Stanley Fish (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 78-155.

⁷⁹ Weinberger, introduction to *Henry the Seventh*, 4.

⁸⁰ Paolo Rossi, *Francis Bacon, From Magic to Science*, trans. Sacha Rabinovitch (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 185.

⁸¹ Benjamin Farrington, *Francis Bacon, Pioneer of Planned Science* (New York, NY: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 61.

⁸² Karl R. Wallace, *Francis Bacon on Communication and Rhetoric or the Art of Applying Reason to Imagination for the Better Moving of the Will* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1943), 115.

disciplinary differences, agree that *Essays* is an essential part of Bacon's project and concerns the particulars of "Mens Businessse, and Bosomes" (DL.14).

Despite the recent interest in Bacon's work, especially in relation to the rapid rise in technological innovations and commensurate concerns, *Essays* has been the subject of only a single book-length study in political philosophy: Faulkner's seminal work, *Francis Bacon and the Project of Progress*. Faulkner's book has done much to increase awareness of Bacon's thought generally and of *Essays* in particular. One of Faulkner's most valuable contributions is his account of the coherent structure of the text. Previous scholars have suggested a thematic structure to the text, such as Smeaton's analysis of three themes: "(1) Man in his relations to the world and society; (2) Man in his relations to himself; and (3) Man in relations to his Makers."⁸³ Faulkner is the first scholar to apply a thematic interpretation with a structural support: Faulkner first analyzes the content and structure of the text; he then assesses the relationship between the two. In the process, Faulkner provides a defense of *Essays* as a deliberate text, created by Bacon with purpose.

In his account of the text, Faulkner argues that "*Essays* as a whole, like each essay, moves from undermining to establishing."⁸⁴ He identifies four sections: "essays 1-19 chiefly commit sedition on morality, religion, the political hierarchy of estates, and the Lord," and while advancing "economic development, they borrow a surface of traditional views";⁸⁵ "Essays 20-29...tutor especially those under cover but nevertheless rising in the new politics";⁸⁶ the third section, "essays 30-46, shows what's in the new project for rising individuals and becomes more

⁸³ Smeaton, introduction, xx.

⁸⁴ Faulkner, *Progress*, 29.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

open in unveiling...a self-regulating society based on mutual utility”;⁸⁷ the final section, “essays 47-58, shows how the superior prince creates an incentive for superior followers.”⁸⁸ As Faulkner understands it, *Essays* is Bacon’s improvement on Machiavelli’s *Prince*, intended for political men as a guide to aid them in the execution of their offices.⁸⁹

In *Advancement*, Bacon discusses structure as a literary tool that is part of our “rational knowledge...concerning the expressing or transferring [of] our knowledge to others.”⁹⁰ Bacon makes clear that “not only the architecture of the whole frame of a work, but also the several beams and columns” are an essential “part of knowledge, concerning Method.”⁹¹ Therefore, in order to understand Bacon’s substantive argument, one must consider the structure of his texts. This dissertation posits an alternative structural interpretation to that suggested by Faulkner. Throughout the analysis in this dissertation, a chiasmic or parallel reading is applied. That is, the essays are read as a mirrored structure: for example, essay one, “Of Truth,” and essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things,” form a pair; essay two, “Of Death,” and essay fifty-seven, “Of Anger,” form a pair; essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” and essay fifty-six, “Of Judicature,” form a pair; essay four, “Of Revenge,” and essay fifty-five, “Of Honour and Reputation,” form a pair; essay twenty-nine, “Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates,” and essay thirty, “Of Regiment of Health,” form a pair; and the pattern persists throughout the text. Heidi Studer, a Bacon scholar, presents a paralleled or mirrored structural account of *Of the Wisdom of the*

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 59-83.

⁹⁰ Bacon, *Advancement*, II.xvi.1.

⁹¹ Ibid., II.xvii.12.

Ancients.⁹² The validity and utility of a chiasmic reading of *Essays* is established in the first chapter of this dissertation. The chiasmic structure of the text, revealed throughout the analysis in this dissertation, helps us better understand the purpose of *Essays* and Bacon's thought in relation to his project of soul-craft.

Unlike Faulkner, this dissertation does not read *Essays* as intended solely for princes and political men. When the chiasmic reading is applied to the text, a different interpretation becomes clear. Re-education is essential to Bacon's project: in essay fifty, "Of Studies," Bacon states, "Naturall Abilities, are like Naturall Plants, that need Proyning by *Study*" (50.13). Human beings, Bacon claims in essay thirty-nine, "Of Custome and Education," can be cultivated. Through adversity, custom, and education, it is possible to build character. We must follow the examples of great men, historical accounts, and written works:

Some *Bookes* are to be Tasted, Others to be Swallowed, and Some Few to be Chewed and Digested: That is, some *Bookes* are to be read onely in Parts; Others to be read but not Curiously; And some Few to be read wholly, and with Diligence and Attention. (50.22-26)

The question, then, is which type of book is *Essays*. Is it the type of book that ought to be read in parts, as some scholars have argued? Is it the type of book that ought to be read in full yet not curiously, as some other scholars have maintained? Or, is it the type of book that ought to be read in full with both diligence and attention? *Essays* is of the latter category; it is intended to "serve for Delight, for Ornament, and for Ability" (50.3). If we take Bacon seriously, we should read *Essays* with his advice in mind: "Reade not to Contradict, and Confute; Nor to Beleeve and Take for granted; Nor to Finde Talke and Discourse; But to weigh and Consider" (50.20-22).

While the intended audience of *Essays* are those people who are willing "to weigh and Consider" (50.22) Bacon's words "with Diligence and Attention" (50.26), who precisely are

⁹² Studer, "Grapes Ill-Trodden," 31-32.

these people? Bacon wrote both an English and a Latin version of *Essays*. During Bacon's time, Latin was "the Universall" (DL.19) scholarly language. English literacy, after the publication of the English Bible, was on the rise in England, albeit mostly in London. This dissertation supposes that Bacon is not writing to a single group or a single time. First, his use of Latin indicates that he is speaking to the educated and powerful men of his own time—the divines, politiques, and men of learning. Second, his use of English indicates that he is also speaking to smart and capable men who will benefit from the Instauration. As is demonstrated throughout this dissertation, Bacon is not writing solely to political, ambitious men. *Essays* is a book not only for princes and men of place. In fact, as this dissertation argues, *Essays* alludes to an alternative for ambitious men: the life of science. If the Instauration is successful, the entire political structure will change—including those who wield power and those who are honored. Last, there are those people who have benefitted from the Instauration's success and who have been shaped by Bacon's project: people like us.

Essays, based on the analysis in this dissertation, is designed to serve as a primer for the Instauration. It is true that Bacon does not explicitly discuss science in *Essays*. Moreover, there is no account in *Essays* of the Idols of the Mind or many of the other topics that dominate Bacon's larger corpus. However, there is no reason to expect these topics to appear in a book dedicated to the study of political life and the desires of men, purposely designed to shape public opinion in favor of the Instauration. The Instauration does not require that everyone must actually understand science or be a scientist. Rather, Bacon posits that most people need only be receptive to modern science and progress; they do not actually have to participate in, let alone understand, science. The Instauration requires popular support and a new account of human

psychology, religious longings, and politics. Man is the subject of *Essays*, and *Essays* is a primer for a new type of man.⁹³

THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS DISSERTATION

This dissertation argues that *Essays* is essential to Bacon's project—the Great Instauration. First, *Essays* is a concise and accessible vehicle through which Bacon attempts to sway public opinion towards the Instauration; second, it provides an account of progress as a worldview; and third, it continues the themes that are present throughout Bacon's other works. In *Essays*, Bacon both questions and tinkers with the most important prevailing opinions of his time—those related to human psychology, religious longings, and politics—and ultimately reshapes them in light of his vision of modern science and technological progress. *Essays* is Bacon's attempt at soul-craft.

While the interpretation in this dissertation is, in many respects, dependent on the foundation established by Faulkner, it differs in four important respects. First, this dissertation is based on a chiasmic or parallel structural reading of the text, which, as is evident throughout this dissertation, influences our substantive understanding. Second, this dissertation understands *Essays* as a primer for the Instauration. Third, *Essays* is not simply Bacon's answer to Machiavelli; unlike Machiavelli, Bacon has a more optimistic understanding of human nature and offers an alternative to ambitious men. Fourth, *Essays* is not intended solely for princes and men of place; rather, it is intended for ambitious individuals who seek a life outside traditional politics.

⁹³ In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon outlines his division of knowledge. This dissertation presumes that *Essays* is a branch of human philosophy or knowledge of humanity. Bacon, *Advancement*, II.v.1-2.

This dissertation does not provide an analysis of all the essays in *Essays*. Further, it does not presume to provide a comprehensive account of Bacon's project, nor of Bacon's relationship to all of his predecessors. Instead, while this dissertation references many of the essays, it offers a close, exegetical analysis of fifteen essays that are connected thematically and chiasmically.

Essays is replete with references to previous thinkers, historical events, and allusions to ideas. At times, Bacon cites his references and quotations; at other times, he does not. When he does, it is possible to look up the original reference and compare Bacon's words to those of the original. In so doing, we can note significant similarities and differences between Bacon's reference and the original that affect interpretation. When Bacon does not direct his readers to the original source, we find ourselves in a bit of a predicament, as it is not always clear where he is directing his readers, which source ought to be considered definitive, or the manner in which we ought to interpret his references.

The first chapter of this dissertation, titled "Human Nature and Mundane Concerns," addresses part of Bacon's account of human nature. The purpose of the chapter is to consider the four most important human longings—our desire for truth, immortality, religion, and justice. The chapter considers the eight essays of the text that are both foundational and serve as bookends: essay one, "Of Truth"; essay two, "Of Death"; essay three, "Of Unity in Religion"; and essay four, "Of Revenge"; as well as their parallels, essay fifty-five, "Of Honour and Reputation"; essay fifty-six, "Of Judicature"; essay fifty-seven, "Of Anger"; and essay fifty-eight, "Of Vicissitude of Things."

The second chapter of this dissertation, titled "Bacon's Critique of Religion," turns to questions of religious longing and religious control. The purpose of the chapter is twofold: to consider the relationship between religion, specifically Christian religion, and the Instauration;

and to examine the place Bacon believes religion ought to hold in the future that he is creating. The chapter begins with a reconsideration of essays one, two, three, four, and fifty-eight, with a specific focus on religion. The remainder of the chapter focuses on four essays: essay thirteen, “Of Goodnesse, and Goodnesse of Nature”; essay sixteen, “Of Atheisme”; essay seventeen, “Of Superstition”; and essay thirty-five, “Of Prophecies.”

The third chapter of this dissertation, titled “The Perils of Political Rule,” presents the relationships amongst politics, religion, and the Instauration. This chapter includes a consideration of Bacon’s relationship to Machiavelli. The exegesis in this chapter focuses on three essays: essay eleven, “Of Great Place”; essay nineteen, “Of Empire”; and essay twenty-nine, “Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates,” which is the first of the two central essays in this text.

These three chapters begin with Bacon’s account of human nature, those aspects of existence that are most important for the human intellect to understand ourselves and other people better. The second chapter builds upon the presentation of human nature and considers religion, our desires to be part of something greater than ourselves, and the ways in which our religious longings leave us vulnerable. The final chapter considers the relationships amongst human nature, religion, and politics, with a specific emphasis on war and science.

Despite the unknown ends of Bacon’s project and the project’s potential for failure, Bacon remains the great propagandist of modern science and technological innovation. In order to embark on Bacon’s Instauration, human beings must undergo a radical reorientation in three respects: first, people must come to understand what human nature truly is and how to act in accord with these principles; second, human beings must accept their ignorance about the world, no longer listen to pretty stories from the church, and re-evaluate their religious longings; and

third, political life, once the ultimate aim for ambitious individuals, must be understood as administrative and base compared to the potentials offered by science.

We, those of us in the liberal west, live in a world that has been shaped by Bacon. The depth of his contributions to modernity ought not be underestimated. In order to understand our own times, it is helpful to appreciate how we arrived at this point. *Essays* provides us with insight into the type of individuals who believe in progress—individuals much like ourselves. Our world has been inspired by Bacon: he has shaped our outlooks and crafted our identities. Bacon's *Essays* is a subtle text, intended to reshape popular opinion in favor of the Instauration.

CHAPTER ONE: HUMAN NATURE AND MUNDANE CONCERNS

Essays is more than an analysis of the human condition or a catalogue of the nature of men and the nature of men in society;⁹⁴ at its core, it is an exercise in learning to understand the human condition and in assessing the nature of men. Bacon is adamant that *Essays* is a work of political philosophy—it “come[s] home, to Mens Businessse, and Bosomes” (DL.14); thus, it is a consideration of man’s estate.⁹⁵ The most practical human concerns are addressed by Bacon in *Essays*: it is a critique of the affairs of men⁹⁶ and the desires of men.⁹⁷

If Bacon is taken at his word, the text is a primer for understanding our own natures—both our strengths and our weaknesses—and, based on our self-understanding, a guide for making accurate assessments as regard the natures and actions of other men. According to Bacon, all assessment begins from self-love and self-knowledge (23). Therefore, a wise student of *Essays* will follow Bacon’s advice (22.60-92) to “weigh and Consider” (50.22) the details, quotations, historical examples, and seeming contradictions. In doing so, a wise student will also be compelled to examine “the Glasse or Bodie, which giveth the Reflection” (53.3): that is, a careful consideration of *Essays* demands reflexivity and attention to detail. Bacon does not tell his readers what to think; rather, he shows us how to think: the essays are more diagnostic than prescriptive, and more formative than diagnostic. That is, the study of *Essays* includes a reconstruction of how one understands oneself and the world.

⁹⁴ Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, introduction to *History of Political Philosophy*, third edition, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1-6.

⁹⁵ “estate, n.” *OED*, March 14, 2011: “State or condition in general, whether material or moral, bodily, or mental.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁹⁶ “businessse, n.” *Ibid.* A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁹⁷ “bosoms, n. and adj.” See footnote 60.

To this end, Bacon tasks his readers to discover the “Often Hidden” natures of men (38.4), learn to master and subdue human nature (38.5-15), cultivate useful and desirable characteristics, and enervate those that are not (38.52-54). For Bacon, the most important knowledge is knowledge of human wants and desires. What is the essential human knowledge? Bacon does not compose a list; rather, through the order in which he presents the essays, he ranks the four most important issues that concern human life and, in the process, the fundamental questions of political philosophy: truth; death; religion; and justice, which is presented by Bacon in its unbridled form, revenge. Essay one, “Of Truth,” tackles an issue of incomparable importance: Bacon considers whether or not it is possible to have actual knowledge of human concerns, or whether the human things are matters of mere perception. Bacon’s entire project hinges on the ability of men to know the truth about things. In this first essay, Bacon rebuts the arguments of those who deny that there is truth and claim that we are incapable of knowing about our reality and existence with certitude. In essay two, “Of Death,” Bacon examines the greatest unknown about human existence: death. We all know that death is inevitable; however, what death entails and what happens to us when we die are mysteries. Accounts of death and dying necessarily include competing accounts of the soul and of the good life. Therefore, explanations of death often include a prescriptive analysis of how we should live our lives. Since our ignorance and consequent fear of death render us exploitable, Bacon attempts to assuage our concerns; in so doing, he mitigates our susceptibilities to manipulation and provides his own alternative foundation for the good life. In essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” Bacon considers the power of religion in the daily lives of many individuals: he explicates the manner by which those who wield religious powers are able to control believers, and he discusses how religious sectarianism and religious disagreement threaten the stability of a state. In essay four, “Of

Revenge,” Bacon explores our desire for justice, which underscores our quest for truth, our attempts to understand death, and our susceptibility to religious explanations of the world. Our vengeful longings result from our need to live in a world that is fair, wherein bad behaviors are punished and good ones rewarded. These four opening essays introduce the four questions of most import to our existence and establish the foundation of Bacon’s psychology and political philosophy. Competing answers to these questions not only punctuate our intellectual history, but also inform the ways in which we live.

Bacon’s explanations of and proposed solutions for these four issues are addressed throughout *Essays*. Notably, the consideration in these first four essays directly mirrors the discussion in the last four essays: our longing for justice, presented in essay four, “Of Revenge,” is connected to our pursuit “Of Honour and Reputation,” the title of essay fifty-five; the hold that religion has on the human soul, introduced in essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” is tempered by human law, as discussed in essay fifty-six, “Of Judicature”; the inevitability and resultant fear of death, discussed in essay two, “Of Death,” is further elucidated in essay fifty-seven, “Of Anger”; and the possibility of actually knowing, presented in essay one, “Of Truth,” is reconsidered in essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things.”⁹⁸ Thus, Bacon begins and ends *Essays* with mirrored considerations of the fundamental human concerns and the issues most pertinent to our daily lives. This chapter, divided into eight sections, each of which explicates one of these eight essays, provides an analysis of Bacon’s treatment of truth, death, religion, and justice.

⁹⁸ Minkov recognizes the relationship between essay one, “Of Truth,” and essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things.” He contends that “the pair of truth and death...come full circle.” Svetozar Y. Minkov, *Francis Bacon’s “Inquiry touching Human Nature”: Virtue, Philosophy, and the Relief of Man’s Estate* (New York, NY: Lexington Books, 2010), 57.

ESSAY ONE, “OF TRUTH”: THE SOVEREIGN GOOD

Bacon divides his first essay into two unequal sections: the first three-quarters of this essay (1.3-61) concerns “Theologicall, and Philosophicall *Truth*” (1.62); the final quarter of this essay (1.63-81) concerns “the *Truth* of civill Businesse” (1.63). Bacon does not reveal this distinction until his transition from the first part to the second (1.62). This section of the dissertation is divided into two parts that correspond to Bacon’s own division. In the first part—“What is Truth?”—we explicate Bacon’s presentation of Pilate and Jesus’ discussion; his account of why truth is both knowable and desirable; his explanation of the reasons men tell lies—“for Pleasure” (1.17) and “for Advantage” (1.17); his analysis of the effects of lying on those who tell lies; and his belief that truth is our “Soveraigne Good” (1.41), which he corroborates with a biblical example from Genesis and a philosophical example from Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*. In the second part of this section, “The Truth of Civil Business,” we examine Bacon’s introduction to the relationship between truth and politics. This much shorter section is composed of two references: the first is to Montaigne; and the second, a biblical example, reintroduces Bacon’s reference to Pilate and Jesus that opens this essay and returns the consideration to the question of truth.⁹⁹

Part I: What is Truth?

“*What is Truth*; said jesting *Pilate*; And would not stay for an Answer” (1.3). Undoubtedly, this question has been asked by countless individuals throughout history. To underscore its importance, Bacon ascribes this question to “jesting *Pilate*,” who “would not stay for an Answer” (1.3). In the Bible, Pilate’s question—“*What is Truth*”—is an inquiry into

⁹⁹ Faulkner argues that essay one, ““Of Truth,” comes across as a parody of fulsome learning larded with quotations and illusions.” Faulkner, *Progress*, 28.

Christ's divinity that precipitates Jesus' trial and execution.¹⁰⁰ Bacon interprets Pilate's query as insincere: first, he "said," rather than asked the question; second, he is "jesting" or scoffing while he speaks;¹⁰¹ and third, since he "would not stay for an Answer" (1.3),¹⁰² he does not care to know the response. Bacon's contemporaries, as discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation, experienced the dangers of religious struggles and sectarian disagreements. Based on Bacon's analysis, Pilate's flippant inquiry into Christ's divinity is a clear example of the importance of the sincere inquiry into certain truths.¹⁰³ The answer to some questions may alter the course of history, while the answers to other questions may alter the course of one person's life. An extrapolation from Bacon's discussion demonstrates this point: had Pilate actually sincerely inquired into Christ's divinity and waited for his answer, thousands of years of sectarian strife might have been prevented. Clearly, if one sincerely asks a question, one ought to "stay for an Answer" (1.3), despite its potential unpleasantness.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ John 18:38.

¹⁰¹ "jesting, adj." *OED*, January 28, 2011: "That jests; jocose; trifling; scoffing, jeering." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁰² "stay, v." *Ibid.*: "to stay for. To wait or tarry for (a person or thing) before doing or beginning to do something. Sometimes contextually, to be compelled to wait for." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁰³ In the first essay, Bacon leaves to his readers the task of making the connection between Pilate's question and subsequent sectarian struggles; in essay three, "Of Unity in Religion," and in essay fifty-eight, "Of Vicissitude of Things," Bacon makes this relationship explicit.

¹⁰⁴ Bacon begins *Of the Wisdom of the Ancients* with his version of the Greek fable of Cassandra, which illustrates the complications that may arise when speaking the truth. In Bacon's rendition of the fable, Cassandra is ignorant: she does not "learn thoroughly and observe the modes and measures of things, the acute and grave tomes of discourse, and also the difference between the more skilled and the more vulgar ear, in a word, the times when to speak and when to be silent." Bacon's lesson presents the importance of prudent speech, regardless of truth. Other than simply to tell the truth, speaking the truth, Bacon posits, is useless if one is not believed. As such, one must know the truth not only of things, but also of one's times and of

If we choose to proceed with Bacon's warning in mind, we too must begin to ask questions. Our first question concerns Bacon's question: what exactly is Bacon asking us to consider? There are two ways to interpret Bacon's query. First, his question could be epistemological—what is the truth about truth itself? Were this the case, Bacon's answer should elucidate the nature of truth: what is knowing? how do we learn that which we know? what is it that we know? and how do we know whether that which we think we know is correct? Since Bacon does not answer any of these questions in *Essays*, the assumption that Bacon's question—"What is Truth" (1.3)—is, in fact, epistemological and the expectation of an epistemological answer reveal a misunderstanding concerning the purpose of *Essays*.¹⁰⁵ As Bacon explains in his Dedicatory Letter, this text concerns "Mens Businessse, and Bosomes" (DL.14). *Essays* is a practical work, dedicated to real-world subjects. Bacon is asking us to consider the relationship between what we think truth is—that is, our common opinions about truth and untruth—and the role of truthfulness in our lives. There is no other question more fundamental to human knowledge and understanding. Our ability to ask questions—about ourselves, other people, and the world—and our ability to assess different answers based on our rational capacities—our "Light of Reason" (1.44)—makes us unique amongst the animals. Bacon's explanation of the

one's listeners. Francis Bacon, *Of the Wisdom of the Ancients*, trans. Heidi Studer (Toronto, ON: unpublished, 2002), "Cassandra."

¹⁰⁵ Many scholars, as evidenced by Padhi in particular, have misinterpreted Bacon's question as epistemological, with a twofold consequence: first, scholars of this type have interpreted this essay with dissatisfaction and contempt; and second, scholars of this type have misunderstood the purpose of *Essays* as a whole. Shanti Padhi, *Serpent and Columbine* (Bombay, India: Orient Longmans, 1969).

world, his aspirations for human beings, and his account of human nature are premised on man's cognitive capacity to understand the world.¹⁰⁶

Whether or not it is actually possible for people to know reality has been the subject of considerable practical and philosophic disagreement. From an experiential perspective, most people have encountered truth in contrary ways—it is difficult to have knowledge of things; accounts of the same events often conflict; and people often employ falsehood—that have resulted in temporal and thus incomplete accounts of our relationship with truth. Bacon begins by acknowledging the arguments of the Greek skeptics and contemporary skeptics:

Certainly there be, that delight in Giddinesse; And count it a Bondage, to fix a Beleefe; Affecting Free-will in Thinking, as well as in Acting. And though the Sects of Philosophers of that Kinde be gone, yet there remaine certaine discoursing Wits, which are of the same veines, though there be not so much Bloud in them, as was in those of the Ancients. (1.4-10)¹⁰⁷

As analyzed by Bacon, the skeptics claim that for the sake of a “delight in Giddinesse” (1.4) and freedom of the mind, truth cannot be had. In Bacon's view, however, the conclusions reached by

¹⁰⁶ In contrast to the interpretation presented in this dissertation, Abbot ascribes Bacon's question—“*What is Truth*” (1.3)—to an “old man”: since essay one, “Of Truth,” is newly added to the 1625 CE edition of *Essays*, Abbot declares it the work of one who chooses to “begin for all posterity with the indignant protest against the indolence of mankind, who question Nature in jest and will not believe that the Truth—Nature's answer—is attainable, if they will wait to be taught.” Abbot, introduction, xx-xxi.

¹⁰⁷ There is a punctuation issue in this passage. In contrast to the Kiernan edition of *Essays*, the Hawkins edition and the Spedding, Ellis, and Heath edition have different punctuation: “Certainly there be that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting free-will in thinking, as well as in acting.” The discrepancies in punctuation affect the interpretation of this passage: Kiernan, unlike both Hawkins and Spedding, et al., inserts a comma after “be” and “Bondage” and a semi-colon, as opposed to a comma, after “giddiness.” Why does this matter? The punctuation changes the manner in which we read the passage and thus where we place emphasis; in turn, where we place emphasis affects how we understand Bacon's intended meaning. Francis Bacon, *Essays*, ed. and intro. Michael J. Hawkins (London, UK: Everyman, 1999), 3; and Bacon, *Works*, 6:377.

the ancient skeptics are the result of “Thoughtless folly, flightiness, [or] fickleness,”¹⁰⁸ while the “discoursing Wits” (1.8) of Bacon’s time are busy, shallow, thinkers.¹⁰⁹ Bacon does not deny that it is “a Bondage, to fix a Beleefe” (1.5), nor does he deny “that when it [the truth] is found, it imposeth upon mens Thoughts” (1.11).¹¹⁰ In agreement with the skeptics, Bacon admits not only that the truth is difficult to discern, but also that it changes the ways in which we comprehend the world. The more correct knowledge that we accrue—including through experiences—the better we expect to understand the world. However, Bacon concludes, “the Difficultie, and Labour, which Men take in finding out of *Truth*” (1.10) is insufficient to explain the arguments of the skeptics.

The ancients believed that the truth was either a form of personal subjugation, or impossible to obtain: if truth is subjugation, it is undesirable; if truth is impossible, it is simply unknowable.¹¹¹ Compared to the ancients’ arguments, the lesser, more moderate arguments of Bacon’s contemporaries posit that there are only degrees of knowing—truth, then, is relative.¹¹² Bacon disregards both accounts and offers this response: neither the fact that people perpetuate lies, nor the fact that different people see the same event in different ways precludes the

¹⁰⁸ “giddiness, n.” *OED*, January 28, 2011: “Thoughtless folly, flightiness; fickleness, instability.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁰⁹ “di’scoursing, adj.” *Ibid.*: “Passing rapidly from one thought to another; busily thinking.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹¹⁰ “impose, v.” *Ibid.*: “To impose itself forcibly, authoritatively, or strikingly; to exert an influence *on*; to be of imposing character or appearance.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹¹¹ Kiernan argues that the reference to those who “count it a Bondage, to fix a Beleefe; Affecting Free-will in Thinking, as well as in Acting” (1.5) is directed at the Anabaptists. Kiernan, commentary, 179.

¹¹² Bacon, *Organon*, I.178-179 and IV.69.

possibility of knowing the truth. On this point, Bacon is adamant: it is possible to know the truth, or at least the truth about certain things.

Human beings lie. That fact raises a question: why do we lie? Bacon ponders what “bring[s] *Lies* in favour” (1.13) and determines, “it is not onely the Difficultie, and Labour, which Men take in finding out of *Truth*; Nor againe, that when it is found, it imposeth upon mens Thoughts” (1.10). Rather, he states, it is “a naturall, though corrupt Love, of the *Lie* it selfe” (1.13). In order to explain the reasons “that men should love *Lies*; Where neither they make for Pleasure, as with Poets; Nor for Advantage, as with the Merchant; but for the *Lies* sake” (1.16-18), Bacon analyzes a statement by Lucian, whom he describes as “One of the later Schoole of the Grecians” (1.14). Lucian, a Greek rhetorician who lived between 115 and 180 CE, was well traveled, educated in law, and part of the Roman government. Intellectually, Lucian is known for his employment of satire. As a result, his actual philosophic beliefs and teachings are difficult to establish. The text that Bacon refers to is Lucian’s “The Liar,” a dialogue that features two interlocutors: Tychiades and Philocles. Lucian, Bacon contends, finds himself “at a stand” (1.15) in his attempt to answer this question, “unable to proceed in thought, speech, or action.”¹¹³ Bacon is at a similar impasse; he, too, “cannot tell” (1.18) why “men should love *Lies*...for the *Lies* sake” (1.16-18). Neither Lucian nor Bacon is able to explain why a sane man would prefer to lie, in order to lie, rather than to tell the truth. One is led to presume that men do not lie, simply to lie, nor do they “love *Lies*...for the *Lies* sake” (1.16-18). Men lie for a purpose. Lucian’s interlocutors in “The Liar” conclude that lying, simply to lie, is an act of

¹¹³ “stand, n.” *OED*, January 30, 2011: “A state of being unable to proceed in thought, speech, or action; a state of perplexity or nonplus. Nearly always in the phrases to be at a stand, to put to a stand, to set (a person) in a stand (*rare*).” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

“quackery.”¹¹⁴ Moreover, men do not tell lies because men are evil: “Those that do,...must be fools, if they really prefer evil to good.”¹¹⁵ In fact, at the end of Lucian’s dialogue, the interlocutors dub poetic lies a “demoniacal poison,” the cure to which is “Truth and good sense.”¹¹⁶

Bacon identifies two reasons that people tell lies: “for Pleasure” (1.17) and “for Advantage” (1.17). In the first case, poets weave tales for enjoyment, and fiction functions as art. Our experience of reality often exposes the natural world as hostile and its inhabitants as inhospitable. Under scrutiny, “a Naked, and Open day light...doth not shew, the Masques, and Mummeries, and Triumphs of the world, halfe so Statelily, and daintily, as Candlelights” (1.19-21). The world, Bacon submits, is composed of “Masques and Mummeries” (1.20): life is, to some degree, a performance that includes ostentatious and absurd spectacles.¹¹⁷ Pursuant to this account, individuals are all, to varying degrees, actors who partake in a continuous exhibition.¹¹⁸ For most people, then, the human condition is most bearable in the shadows. While Bacon does not explicitly state that the world is a hard and cruel place, that view is implicit in this essay. In

¹¹⁴ Lucian, “The Liar,” in *The Complete Works of Lucian of Samosata*, trans. H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1949), 3:233.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 3:231.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 3:252. Later in essay one, “Of Truth,” Bacon states, “One of the Fathers, in great Severity, called Poesie, *Vinum Daemonum*” (1.30-32).

¹¹⁷ “mummeries, n.” *OED*, April 21, 2013: “a performance by mummers.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹¹⁸ “masques, n.” Ibid.: “A pretence, a front, an outward show intended to deceive.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

the spaces between that which we know and that which we believe we understand about the world, we construct an account of existence that is sufferable.¹¹⁹

Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of Mens Mindes, Vaine Opinions, Flattering Hopes, False valuations, Imaginations as one would, and the like; but it would leave the Mindes, of a Number of Men, poore shrunk Things; full of Melancholy, and Indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? (1.25-30)

Bacon is well aware that, for some people, lies are necessary: they make the world bearable.

Without the lies that we tell for the purpose of pleasure or comfort, the human psyche would not be able to withstand the cruel truth of existence.¹²⁰

In the second case, merchants engage in puffery, as they embellish themselves, their intentions, and their products for material gain.

These are lies for utility, rather than lies for survival. Merchants, in contrast to poets, do not lie to protect their psyches, maintain their mental well-being, or for the good of the whole; they lie for their personal material benefit.

Lies, even those told with purpose, affect both the one to whom the lie is told and the liar. Some lies—those “that passeth through the Minde” (1.33)—have limited effects: the one to whom the lie is told is neither irreparably harmed, nor compelled to reconsider his fundamental comportment towards the world. Other lies, however—those “that sinketh in, and setleth in” (1.34)—have profound implications for the ways in which we understand the world and our place within it.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ “daintily, adv.” Ibid., March 11, 2011: “Excellently, finely, handsomely, delightfully.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage. It is at this point in the argument that Bacon begins the movement towards the second essay, “Of Death.”

¹²⁰ “shrunk, adj.” Ibid., January 28, 2011: “To wither or shrivel through withdrawal of vital fluid or failure of strength.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹²¹ The effects of a lie, on both the one to whom the lie is told and the liar, may depend on the skill of the speaker and the psyches of both the listener and the speaker.

At this point in the essay, Bacon has established three facts. First, sane men do not lie, simply to lie, but do so with purpose. As such, he has rebutted the arguments of the skeptics—that men lie as a result of their “delight in Giddinesse” (1.4). Second, human beings, for the most part, are ignorant of the world in which we live. As such, we spend much of our life in the “Candlelights” (1.21); our ignorance about the world compels us to provide potentially fictitious accounts of those things that we do not know and those things that are too painful to accept. And third, we are affected by the lies that we tell and the lies that we are told; some lies are necessary and useful for some people, while other lies are dangerous. The tendency towards falsehood is strong in human beings: it is “naturall” (1.13); it is explicable; and, in some cases, it is necessary. Once he explains the reasons that humans lie and reminds his readers that lies do not preclude the importance of truth, Bacon addresses the fundamental relationship between truth and human nature.

Bacon states that truth “is the Sovereigne Good of humane Nature” (1.41). Truth and its connection to human flourishing is described by Bacon as others might describe a

relationship:¹²²

Truth, which onely doth judge it selfe, teacheth, that the Inquirie of *Truth*, which is the Love-making, or Wooing of it; The knowledge of *Truth*, which is the Presence of it; and the Beleefe of *Truth*, which is the Enjoying of it; is the Sovereigne Good of humane Nature. (1.37-42)¹²³

¹²² Bacon’s discussion of truth in this first essay has elements of Machiavelli’s discussion of fortune in *The Prince*. For example, see Nicollo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. and intro. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1998), 1, 3, 6-9, 11-14, 17-18, 20-21, and 24-26.

¹²³ This section is punctuated differently in different versions of *Essays*. The Kiernan punctuation is used above. However, the Spedding, Ellis, and Heath edition and the Hawkins version of the text contain no semi-colons, but only commas: “truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature.” From a substantive perspective, the punctuation influences

Truth, insofar as it is our sovereign good, is composed of three parts: inquiry, knowledge, and belief. The exercise of our sovereign good is a continual process that involves these three distinct stages.¹²⁴ First, one must have a desire for the truth, which prompts “the Love-making, or Wooing of it” (1.39). Truth, then, must be something that one actively pursues: it must be courted.¹²⁵ Second, one attains the truth and has “The knowledge of” it (1.39), “which is the Presence of it” (1.40). Truth, then, must be something that one acknowledges knowing. Third, one must believe the truth, which enables “the Enjoying of it” (1.41). Truth, then, necessarily changes the way one understands the world. For one to live in accord with “the Sovereign Good” (1.41), one must actively seek the truth, recognize when one has obtained the truth, and enjoy one’s knowledge of it. Truth, understood as Bacon does, is our greatest good: it is our *summum bonum*.

As evidence that truth is our highest good, Bacon provides two examples: the first is biblical, and the second is philosophical. In his first example, Bacon echoes the biblical account of creation and appears to emphasize the relationship between man and God in Genesis. As described by Bacon, “the Light of the Sense” (1.43) is the first of God’s creatures, generated

interpretation. At issue is whether all three of these behaviors constitute our “Sovereign Good” (1.41), or whether it is composed of only “the Beleefe of *Truth*, which is the Enjoying of it” (1.40).

¹²⁴ Faulkner interprets this passage in the opposite manner. Instead of as an exhortation to align one’s life with knowledge of the truth, Faulkner argues that Bacon “gives the game away with the unphilosophic assertion that ‘belief of truth,’ not inquiry or presence of truth is what is enjoyed.” This interpretive disagreement seems to result from the punctuation issue mentioned in footnote 123. It is true that Bacon does state, “the Beleefe of *Truth*...is the Enjoying of it” (1.40). However, this same passage begins with “*Truth*...teacheth, that the Inquirie of *Truth*, which is the Love-making, or Wooing of it; [and] The knowledge of *Truth*, which is the Presence of it” (1.38-40). All three—the inquiry, knowledge, and belief of truth—form our sovereign good. Faulkner, *Progress*, 95.

¹²⁵ “lovemaking, n.” *OED*, February 2, 2011: “Courtship, wooing; an instance of this.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

when “he breathed Light, upon the Face of the Matter or Chaos” (1.45). “The last” of His creatures is “the Light of Reason” (1.43), produced when “he breathed Light, into the Face of Man” (1.46). Thereafter, God “breatheth and inspireth Light, into the Face of his Chosen” (1.47), the people of the Book. While Bacon seems to affirm the account in Genesis, he actually echoes his own “Writer’s Prayer,”¹²⁶ which is not an affirmation of the perfection of God’s creation; rather, it is an exaltation of human ingenuity and our ability to perfect nature. In the biblical account, God observes His creations and declares them good.¹²⁷ According to Bacon’s account, unlike God, “Man reflecting on the works which he [God] had made, saw that *all was vanity and vexation of Spirit*, and could by no means acquiesce in them.”¹²⁸ As such, in the “Writer’s Prayer,” Bacon asks that man be endowed “to convey a largeness of new alms to thy family of Mankind.”¹²⁹ Knowledge of our “Sovereign Good” (1.41), therefore, includes an exhortation to improve our natural condition. The reference to the “Writer’s Prayer” reminds Bacon’s readers of the relationship between science and Bacon’s Instauration. The project of progress promises men power tantamount to that of the gods.

Following his strange biblical example, Bacon presents an equally strange philosophic example. Lucretius, whom Bacon describes as “The Poet, that beautified the Sect, that was otherwise inferiour to the rest” (1.48), is a first-century BCE Roman poet and epicurean about whom little is known. In his only work that survives, *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of the Universe), he considers the gratifications of truth. Bacon paraphrases Lucretius:

¹²⁶ Kiernan, commentary, 179.

¹²⁷ Genesis 1.

¹²⁸ Bacon, “Writer’s Prayer,” in *Works*, 7:260.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tost upon the Sea: A pleasure to stand in the window of a Castle, and to see a Battaile, and the Adventures thereof, below; But no pleasure is comparable, to the standing, upon the vantage ground of Truth: (A hill not to be commanded, and where the Ayre is alwaies cleare and serene;) And to see the Errours, and Wandrings, and Mists, and Tempests, in the vale below: So alwaies, that this prospect, be with Pitty, and not with Swelling, or Pride. Certainly, it is Heaven upon Earth, to have a Mans Minde Move in Charitie, Rest in Providence, and Turne upon the Poles of Truth. (1.50-61)

From the vantage of truth, Bacon's Lucretius suggests, one can see the mistakes, missteps, ignorance, and chaos of those who know less about reality than one does. Those who lack truth are akin to those who are tossed at sea or those who fight a constant battle. Pleasure is derived from knowledge of the truth: there is enjoyment in watching the ship at sea from the shore, or the battle while safely ensconced in a castle.¹³⁰ Despite the increased knowledge which affords this higher "prospect," Bacon is clear that "alwaies...this prospect, be with Pitty, and not with Swelling, or Pride" (1.57). Increased knowledge, then, ought not to make one "proud, haughty, or indignant" towards others.¹³¹ Our "Soveraigne Good" (1.41) is the inquiry, presence, and belief in truth when a "Mans Minde...Turne[s] upon the Poles of *Truth*" (1.59-61), without a need for action. As a reward for ordering our lives in accord with the principle of truth, we obtain "A state of supreme bliss."¹³²

When we consider these two examples, the one from Bacon's "Writer's Prayer" and the other from Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, a contradictory picture emerges. The "Writer's Prayer"

¹³⁰ Bacon is clear that knowledge of the truth will give us pleasure; however, he does not claim that the truth will bring us happiness. In essay fifty-eight, "Of Vicissitude of Things," Bacon makes this point more explicit in his paraphrase of Ecclesiastes 1 (58.1-6).

¹³¹ "swelling, n." *OED*, January 28, 2011: "Inflation by pride, vanity, etc.; proud, haughty, or indignant feeling; also, proud or arrogant behaviour or talk, swagger." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹³² "heaven, n." *Ibid.*: "A state of supreme bliss; an immensely enjoyable experience. In later use freq. with infinitive phrase." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

appears to be a call to action, insofar as man is urged to help mankind. *De Rerum Natura*, however, appears to be a justification for inaction, insofar as man derives pleasure from being above others. Lucretius does not unconditionally advocate that we take pleasure in the suffering or the “great tribulation” of others, but he notes, “to perceive what ills you are free from yourself is pleasant.”¹³³ Further, in the third essay, “Of Unity in Religion,” Bacon makes reference to Lucretius in relation to the evil actions done in the name of religion (3.127). Bacon suggests that had Lucretius been aware of the travesties executed in the name of religion since his death—that is, had he been Bacon’s contemporary—“He would have beene, Seven times more Epicure and Atheist, then he was” (3.129); in other words, Bacon believes that Lucretius’ views would have been more extreme than they were. When the above statement from essay three is applied to Bacon’s employment of Lucretius in this essay, we learn, first, that the pleasures of truth are more extensive than are those discussed and, second, that we need not always tell the truth nor act in accord with truth. Sometimes truth requires inaction.

Nevertheless, Bacon is certain that “it is Heaven upon Earth, to have a Mans Minde Move in Charitie, Rest in Providence, and Turne upon the Poles of *Truth*” (1.59-61).¹³⁴ This religious definition of truth and the previous philosophic conception of truth as “the Sovereigne Good of humane Nature” (1.41) are parallel. First, “the Sovereigne Good of humane Nature” (1.41) in the philosophic construction parallels “Heaven upon Earth” (1.59) in the theological construction. Second, both formulations contain a tripartite structure: “the Inquirie of *Truth*, which is the Love-making, or Wooing of it” (1.38), is compared to the “Minde [that] Move[s] in

¹³³ Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse and rev. Martin Ferguson Smith (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1997), 95.

¹³⁴ Smeaton identifies this passage as an example of Bacon’s maintenance of “the sanctity of truth.” Smeaton, introduction, xxi.

Charitie” (1.59); “The knowledge of *Truth*, which is the Presence of it” (1.39), is equated to the mind that “Rest[s] in Providence” (1.60); and “the Beleeve of *Truth*, which is the Enjoying of it” (1.40), is likened to the mind that “Turne[s] upon the Poles of *Truth*” (1.60). Inquiry into truth is an act of charity or benevolence insofar as it increases human knowledge and thus improves the human condition; the call to truth is evidenced by Bacon’s exhortation towards action in his “Writer’s Prayer.” Presence of truth is accompanied by providential understanding insofar as increased knowledge of truth enables man to have more grounded expectations for the future and thus make more informed decisions. Belief in truth—that is, a conviction that what one knows about the world is accurate—compels one to organize one’s life in accord with “the Poles of *Truth*” (1.60), for if one truly knows something, one must live according to its precepts.

Part II: The Truth of Civil Business

At this point in the essay, Bacon shifts his substantive consideration “from Theologicall, and Philosophicall *Truth*, to the *Truth* of civill Businesse” (1.62). His examples thus far have been biblical and philosophical. Now his argument and examples turn from theory to practice. His first statement in his explicit discussion of civil business is initially puzzling: “It will be acknowledged, even by those, that practize it not, that cleare and Round dealing, is the Honour of Mans Nature” (1.63-65). Bacon posits that, despite one’s particular actions, uprightness and honesty are honorable and good for human nature. If one knows something—truly knows it—is there not an imperative to act in accord with that knowledge? Therefore, if one truly believes “that cleare and Round dealing, is the Honour of Mans Nature” (1.64), does one not have an imperative to act clearly and roundly? In the previous discussion of the love of the lie, Bacon concludes that men do not lie without purpose (1.12-33). If we accept that these men of whom Bacon speaks are not ill, there are two ways to understand this statement: first, these liars care

about something more than their natures—that is, in their rank order of goods, the condition of their natures is not supreme; or second, these liars want other men to believe that lying is a corruption of a liar’s nature, so that these liars may better exploit the men to whom they lie. Therefore, Bacon’s argument, that we ought to be honest and transparent in our business, admits of exceptions.

Abbot provides a reminder of that which is at stake in Bacon’s consideration. In his interpretation of this passage, Abbot recounts that “when human bodies are diseased...and when society is diseased, the physic of society is falsehood.”¹³⁵ Abbot contends that there are certainly instances wherein one ought not to behave either clearly or roundly. For example, if the regime is diseased and corrupt, an honest man is likely to come to an undesirable end. In fact, Abbot argues that “Bacon is gradually breaking himself...for the sake of his mistress Science.”¹³⁶ That is, the ends of science and progress may require that a man proffer falsehoods. Lying, regardless of the reasons, is not without consequence.

In the case of the liar, lies may be expedient, but they are corrupting. Telling lies, Bacon claims, has two ramifications: first, lying necessarily debases one’s character; and second, since lying is a vice, being caught in a lie brings one shame. In the first instance, the dangers of lying are personal. Likening a man’s nature to a gold or silver coin,¹³⁷ Bacon asserts that the “Mixture of Falshood, is like Allay...; which may make the Metall worke the better, but it

¹³⁵ Abbot, introduction, xxxi.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ In this case, Bacon seems to distinguish between four types of men: men naturally of gold natures, men naturally of silver natures, and men of either above category who have allowed themselves to be corrupted by falsehood.

embaseth it” (1.65-67).¹³⁸ While lies may be expedient, falsehood is inferior to truth. Lies, then, may be useful for the accomplishment of one’s ends, yet, in the process, they alter one’s nature. In the second instance, the danger of telling lies is political: “Shame” (1.70). The problem, according to Bacon, is not actually in telling a lie, but rather in getting caught in a lie: “There is no Vice, that doth so cover a Man with Shame, as to be found false, and perfidious” (1.70). The great vice of which Bacon speaks is not being “false, and perfidious,” but being exposed as “false, and perfidious” (1.71).¹³⁹

Although Bacon condones certain types of lies, he believes that our “corrupt” proclivity towards lying results from “mens depraved Judgements, and Affections” (1.36). Even liars argue that lying is a dishonor to man’s nature. At the same time, Bacon does not advocate unconditional truthfulness or unequivocal trustfulness. Thus, the uncomfortable truth about truth is that knowledge of the truth includes knowing to whom one should lie, about which topics to prevaricate, and when to misrepresent oneself to the world.

Since we all lie, why is lying considered such a culpable offense? In order to answer this question, Bacon turns to Michel de Montaigne, the first essayist:¹⁴⁰

And therefore *Mountaigny* saith prettily, when he enquired the reason, why the word of the *Lie*, should be such a Disgrace, and such an Odious Charge? Saith he, *If it be well*

¹³⁸ “allay, n.” *OED*, March 11, 2011: “Inferior metal mixed with one of greater value.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹³⁹ Bacon returns to this theme in essay fifty-five, “Of Honour and Reputation.”

¹⁴⁰ Michel de Montaigne lived from 1533 to 1592 CE. Donald Frame, a notable translator, believes that Montaigne “resists simple definitions. He is the first essayist, a skeptic, an acute student of himself and of man, a champion of a man-based morality, a vivid and charming stylist, and many other things besides.” There is thus a parallel between Montaigne as the first essayist and Bacon as an essayist. Donald M. Frame, introduction to *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, by Michel de Montaigne (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958), v.

*weighed, To say that a man lieth, is as much to say, as that he is brave towards God, and a Coward towards Men. (1.71-76)*¹⁴¹

According to Montaigne, “Lying is an ugly vice.”¹⁴² men who lie are hubristic in the face of God and weak in the face of men. In his estimation, “he who breaks his word betrays human society.”¹⁴³ Unlike Montaigne, whose condemnation of falsehood exceeds Bacon’s, Bacon does not speak of betrayal:¹⁴⁴

For a *Lie* faces God, and shrinkes from Man. Surely the Wickednesse of Falshood, and Breach of Faith, cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last

¹⁴¹ “charge, n.” *OED*, February 4, 2011: “Attribution or imputation of something culpable; accusation.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁴² Michel de Montaigne, “Of giving the lie,” in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. and intro. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958), 505.

¹⁴³ While Bacon paraphrases Montaigne, Montaigne has paraphrased Plutarch, who lived from 46 to 120 CE and was one of the priests of the Oracle at Delphi. In “Life of Lysander,” Plutarch discusses oaths: “Furthermore, there is a saying of Lysander’s, recorded by Androcleides, which makes him guilty of the greatest recklessness in the matter of oaths. It was his policy, according to this authority, ‘to cheat boys with knuckle-bones, but men with oaths,’ thus imitating Polycrates of Samos; not a proper attitude in a general towards a tyrant, nor yet a Laconian trait to treat the gods as one’s enemies are treated, nay, more outrageously still; since he who overreaches his enemy by means of an oath, confesses that he fears that enemy, but despises God.” Montaigne is more vehemently opposed to lying than is Bacon: “It is not possible to represent more vividly the horror, the vileness, and the profligacy of it. For what can you imagine uglier than being a coward towards men and bold toward God? Since mutual understanding is brought about solely by way of words, he who breaks his word betrays human society. It is the only instrument by means of which our will and thought communicate, it is the interpreter of our soul. If it fails us, we have no more hold on each other, no more knowledge of each other. If it deceives us, it breaks up all our relations and dissolves the bonds of our society.” Plutarch, “Lysander,” in *Plutarch’s Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1962), 4:251; Montaigne, “Of giving the lie,” 505.

¹⁴⁴ As concerns the relationship between Bacon and Montaigne, Smeaton recognizes that “Montaigne was the greater literary artist, Bacon was the profounder moral and intellectual force.” Smeaton, introduction, xix-xx.

Peale, to call the Judgements of God, upon the Generations of Men, It being foretold, that when Christ commeth, *He shall not finde Faith upon the Earth.* (1.76-81)^{145,146}

According to Bacon, since all men lie, there will not be a soul to save at the time of the final judgment. Bacon refers to the biblical parable of the unjust judge and the widow.¹⁴⁷ In the parable, a widow consistently solicits a judge to grant her justice against an adversary. After a time, despite his initial refusals, the judge agrees to grant her suit, not because he is afraid of God or respects man, but because he is tired of her persistence.¹⁴⁸ In the parable, God responds to the judge's statement:

the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?¹⁴⁹

While the judge may have acted in a just manner by granting the widow her request, his actual motivations are known by God. Bacon concludes this essay with a reminder of the final judgment (1.78-81): regardless of one's actions in this life, Bacon suggests that in the next life one's actions will be judged and either punished or rewarded. Strangely, in essay two, "Of Death," Bacon contradicts this point, as he argues that death may not be "the *wages of sinne*" (2.5).

¹⁴⁵ "wickedness, n." *OED*, February 1, 2011: "The quality of being wicked; wicked character or disposition; depravity, iniquity, immorality." A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁴⁶ "breach, n." *Ibid.*: "A breaking of relations (*of union or continuity*)." A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁴⁷ Luke 18:1-8.

¹⁴⁸ Bacon returns to this theme in essay eleven, "Of Great Place," which is explicated in the third chapter of this dissertation.

¹⁴⁹ Luke 18:7-8.

Although Bacon states that this essay is divided into two parts—the first, a consideration of “Theological, and Philosophicall *Truth*” (1.62) and the second, a consideration of “the *Truth* of civill Businesse” (1.63)—the second part of the essay is as much a consideration of theological truths as it is a discussion of civil business. Throughout his explicit discussion of “civill Businesse” (1.63), Bacon repeatedly employs religious examples: first, he references “the Goings of the Serpent” (1.68), which is a reminder of original sin and the expulsion from Eden; second, he cites Montaigne, who argues, “*To say that a man lieth, is as much to say, as that he is brave towards God, and a Coward towards men*” (1.74-76), because only an overly bold man would dare to stand before God as a liar; and third, he reminds his readers of the final reckoning, at which time Christ “*shall not finde Faith upon the Earth*” (1.81). We are left with a question: unless one fears God, is there a compelling reason to tell the truth?

In the first essay, “Of Truth,” Bacon introduces three competing accounts of the world: the accounts of the philosophers, the theologians, and the politicians. From these vantage points, three different accounts of human nature, human potential, and the good life are discussed. There are thus also at least three different answers to the question posed at the beginning of the first essay—“*What is Truth*” (1.3)? In this essay, Bacon provides a fourth answer: truth “is the Sovereigne Good of humane Nature” (1.41). The question, then, could as effectively be the answer—what is the sovereign good of human nature?—in which case, the answer would be truth. If we accept Bacon’s preliminary answer, that truth is our “Sovereigne Good” (1.41), from the outset of *Essays* we are motivated sincerely to love or woo the truth (1.39). Bacon has prepared us to be receptive to the truth, and he now proceeds systematically to disprove the truths that we think we know.

ESSAY TWO, “OF DEATH”: NO SUCH TERRIBLE ENEMY

In the second essay, “Of Death,” Bacon addresses the one truth that we know about nature: all organic things necessarily die. Since no one has returned from death to tell the living what definitively happens to us when we die, what occurs during and after death remains contested and speculative. Thus, the greatest mystery and the most profound question about human existence is what happens to us when we die. This section is divided into three parts: the first part addresses the natural tendency to fear death and Bacon’s attempts to assuage such concerns; the second part considers the relationship between suicide and reputations; and the third part, as a continuation of the second part, explicitly discusses the relationship between death and fame. Bacon’s purpose in this essay is clear: as he explains, “It is as Naturall to die, as to be borne” (2.49), and, as a consequence, “Death, is no such terrible Enemie” (2.23). If death is not a frightening part of life, its inevitability cannot be used to control or manipulate men. Essay two, “Of Death,” is a lesson in acceptance of the certainty of our own demise.

Part I: The Fear of Death

In the first essay, “Of Truth,” Bacon alludes to the relationship between truth and death. His reference to Lucretius, in the first essay (1.48-49), foreshadows the discussion of death in the second essay. Bacon’s treatment of death in the opening lines of the second essay is similar to Lucretius’ account in *De Rerum Natura*:

For just as children tremble and fear all things in blind darkness, so we in the light fear, at times, things that are no more to be feared than what children shiver at in the dark and imagine to be at hand. This terror of the mind, therefore, and this gloom must be dispelled, not by the sun’s rays nor the bright shafts of the day, but by the aspect and law of nature.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 99.

Echoing Lucretius, Bacon asserts that ignorance is the cause of fear: “Men feare *Death*, as Children feare to goe in the darke: And as that Natural Feare in Children, is increased with Tales, so is the other” (2.3-5). Children fear the dark because it is unknown. Our childhood fear of death and the unknown is natural: it is borne of ignorance about the world. We naturally fear that which we cannot see and that which we do not know. In the first essay, Bacon makes this point clear: “*Truth*...doth not shew, the Masques, and Mummeries, and Triumphs of the world, halfe so Stately, and daintily, as Candlelights” (1.19-21). Living in the “Candlelights” further exacerbates the problem: we live in shadows because we are ignorant about the world and thus fearful; and our ignorance and fear of the world compel us to create imaginative stories that magnify our ignorance and fear. Tales designed to explain those things that we do not understand, Bacon posits, increase our childhood fears (2.4). It is also possible that with the proper tales, our natural fear can be decreased. Some lies are, perhaps, even noble.¹⁵¹

However, the “Natural Feare in Children” (2.4) of the dark is different than that of an adult who fearfully contemplates those things which are not known: paraphrasing St. Paul’s letter to the Romans,¹⁵² Bacon states, “Certainly, the Contemplation of *Death*, as the *wages of sinne*, and Passage to another world, is Holy, and Religious; But the Feare of it, as a Tribute due unto Nature, is weake” (2.5-8). Death is natural: the decay of our physical bodies is a part of the natural cycle and initiates our “Passage to another world” (2.6). If one lives a righteous life, death, according to this biblical account, is a new beginning.

Nevertheless, there is a contrast between the biblical account, at least in Romans, and the later religious commentaries. According to Bacon, many contemplations of death are empty,

¹⁵¹ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, ed. and trans. Alan Bloom (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1991), 414b-414c.

¹⁵² Romans 6:23.

devoid of actual substance, and ill-founded. They depict death as a painful and terrifying experience: “Yet in Religious Meditations, there is sometimes, Mixture of Vanitie, and of Superstition” (2.8).¹⁵³ Bacon does not address the speculative question regarding what, if anything, happens to us after we die; rather, he considers the two tangible issues that we do know: first, the physical experience of death itself—that is, the actual act of dying; and second, the trappings of death—that is, the experience of the survivors and mourners.

Robert Parsons,¹⁵⁴ a Jesuit Priest, states in “the Friars Books of *Mortification*, that a man should thinke with himselfe, what the Paine is, if he have but his Fingers end Pressed, or Tortured; And thereby imagine, what the Paines of *Death* are, when the whole Body, is corrupted and dissolved” (2.10-14). Parsons claims, as Bacon records, that death is accompanied by unspeakable pain. We have all experienced physical pain, and many of us have been incapacitated by pain. The pain of death, Parsons asserts, compounds the pain that we have suffered during life. If death is “when the whole Body, is corrupted and dissolved” (2.13), death is unimaginably painful and should be contemplated with a terror befitting putrefaction and decay of the flesh, accompanied by the conscious knowledge that indeed one’s body is dying.

As a rebuttal to Parsons’ example, Bacon reminds his readers that death need not be accompanied by pain: “many times, *Death* passeth with lesse paine, then the Torture of a Limme: For the most vitall parts, are not the quickest of Sense” (2.14-16). Speculations of the pain of death are unverifiable, since no one has returned from death to recount to those alive the precise feeling of death. As witnesses to those who have died, we have seen the pain that

¹⁵³ “superstition, n.” *OED*, April 22, 2013: “Religious belief or practice considered to be irrational, unfounded, or based on fear or ignorance; excessively credulous belief in and reverence for the supernatural.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁵⁴ Robert Parsons (1546-1610 CE), a British Jesuit Priest, was forced to resign as a result of his Catholic sympathies. Following his resignation, he permanently left England.

accompanies illness, but not the pain of death itself. The slow decay and deterioration of our bodies may be painful, as may be the suffering associated with injury and accident, yet the pain, or lack thereof, of death itself is unknown. Parsons' account stands as an example of a Christian (Jesuit or Catholic) understanding of death: death is unspeakably painful because death is associated with sin.

Bacon next presents a non-Christian example. He cites Seneca the Younger, who lived from 4 to 65 CE and was a Roman stoic, tutor, and later advisor to the Emperor Nero. After a failed assassination of Nero, Seneca committed suicide. By Bacon's Seneca, who "spake onely as a Philosopher, and Naturall Man, it was well said; *Pompa Mortis magis terret, quam Mors ipsa*" (2.17)—it is the trappings of death that terrify, rather than death itself. All of the processes and actions associated with death, rather than death itself, cause fear. Bacon echoes Montaigne,¹⁵⁵ whose description of "Groanes and Convulsions, and a discoloured Face, and Friends, weeping, and Blackes, and Obsequies, and the like, shew *Death* Terrible" (2. 18-20). The funeral rites, the black garb, the emotions, and the sorrows all imbue death with a horror that is unwarranted. In fact, Bacon claims, our fear of death is but one of many passions of the mind:

It is worthy the observing, that there is no passion in the minde of man, so weake, but it Mates, and Masters, the Feare of *Death*: And therefore Death, is no such terrible Enemie, when a man hath so many Attendants, about him, that can winne the combat of him. *Revenge* triumphs over *Death*; *Love* slights it; *Honour* aspireth to it; (delivery from *Ignominy* chuseth it;) *Griefe* flieth to it; *Feare* pre-occupateth it. (2. 21-27)

Our fear of death, Bacon argues, is the weakest human passion. Man has countless concerns—dominant passions—which direct our attentions away from our "Feare of *Death*" (2.22) and

¹⁵⁵ Michel de Montaigne, "That to philosophize is to learn to die," in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958), 56-68.

“overcome, defeat, [and] subdue”¹⁵⁶ it.¹⁵⁷ Our other passions, however, do not simply compete with death for our attention; rather, Bacon contends that when we are forced to consider our fear of death in light of other passions, we compromise our lives for other ends. We would rather die than forego an opportunity for revenge, since our desire to repay wrongs that we believe we have suffered outweighs our desire to live. We would rather obtain love than live without it, so much so that, faced with unrequited love or a loss of love, we may choose to relinquish our lives rather than live with love’s absence. Since honor is often procured as a result of one’s death or following one’s death, those who desire honor, often desire death, too.¹⁵⁸ In times of sorrow, we may seek comfort in death. It is fear, however, that is absorbed with death. Since all of these powerful passions can lead us to desire death, one might wonder why anyone remains alive.

Part II: Suicide and Honorable Death

Once he has established the powerful passions that may evoke a desire for death, Bacon transitions into a discussion of suicide: “Nay we reade, after *Otho* the Emperour had slaine himselfe, *Pitty* (which is the tenderest of Affections) provoked many to die, out of meere compassion to their Sovereigne, and as the truest sort of Followers” (2.27-31). Marcus Salvius Otho overthrew Galba and reigned over the Roman Empire for three months in 69 CE. He died at his own hands after defeat in battle. Tacitus, the first-century CE Roman senator and historian, interprets the events that surround Otho’s death, particularly the tenderness that his suicide, viewed as a noble act intended to prevent civil war, evoked in his followers and subjects.

¹⁵⁶ “mate, v.” *OED*, February 21, 2011: “To overcome, defeat, subdue.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁵⁷ In this context, Bacon appears to grasp the influence of the passions on men. Abbot, however, states that both Bacon and Machiavelli “ignore the subtler side of the human nature; they are ignorant of the rudiments of the passions; they have not even learned the meaning of love, which is the alphabet of morality.” Abbot, introduction, clv.

¹⁵⁸ See essay fifty-five, “Of Honour and Reputation.”

Fear of death, Bacon declares, is not overcome simply by our other passions, but as a result of life itself:

Nay *Seneca* addes *Nicenesse* and *Saciety*; *Cogita quam diu eadem feceris; Mori velle, non tantum Fortis, aut Miser, sed etiam Fastidiosus potest*. A man would die, though he were neither valiant, nor miserable, onely upon a wearinesse to doe the same thing, so oft over and over. (2.31-36)

In this context, Bacon explicitly identifies Seneca as his source. Satiety—being sated with life—is also, Bacon proposes, an impetus towards death. The tedium of life causes some men to desire death. Seneca, in “On Taking One’s Own Life,” recounts the experience of Tullius Marcellinus, who “became old prematurely, [and] fell ill of a disease which was by no means hopeless.”¹⁵⁹ Marcellinus, according to Seneca, “departed neither with difficulty nor with suffering. Though he committed suicide, yet he withdrew most gently, gliding out of life.”¹⁶⁰ Since it is inevitable, there is no reason to lament death. Seneca’s example reveals that it is important “to die honourably, sensibly, bravely,”¹⁶¹ as did Marcellinus.

To emphasize the importance of dying honorably, Bacon presents five historical examples—Augustus Caesar, Tiberius, Vespasian, Galba, and Septimus Severus—who indicate that “It is no lesse worthy to observe, how little Alteration, in good Spirits, the Approaches of *Death* make; For they appeare, to be the same Men, till the last Instant” (2.36-39). Augustus Caesar founded the Roman Empire, which he ruled between 27 BCE and 14 CE; Tiberius ruled for twenty-three years, between 14 and 37 CE; Vespasian ruled for ten years, between 69 and 79 CE; Galba ruled for seven months in 68 and 69 CE; and Septimus Severus ruled for eighteen years between 193 and 211 CE. Four of them took power by force: Augustus Caesar, the first

¹⁵⁹ Seneca, “On Taking One’s Own Life,” in *Epistulae Morales*, trans. R. M. Gummere (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1970), 2:171.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:175.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 2:173.

Emperor of the Roman Empire, took power after the death of his uncle, Gaius Julius Caesar; Vespasian was the final Emperor of the year of four Emperors, after the deaths of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius; Galba took power after Nero's suicide; and Septimus Severus killed the incumbent Emperor. Only Tiberius inherited the office upon the death of his step-father, Augustus Caesar. In considering their deaths, three died of illness—Augustus Caesar, Vespasian, and Septimus Severus—one was murdered—Galba was killed by Otho, whom Bacon discusses earlier as a suicide (2.27-31)—and Tiberius may have died of natural causes or may have been murdered.

What do these five historical examples have in common? All five of these men were Roman Emperors; moreover, all five of these men are remembered for their final moments.¹⁶² When considered in conjunction with Otho, Bacon's previous example, these five exemplars teach an important lesson regarding death: in some case, the precise manner in which one dies is irrelevant; rather, one's self-control at the time of one's death matters. History remembers that these emperors maintained their composure and did not appear fearful of their imminent deaths.¹⁶³

Even the Stoics are not immune from Bacon's criticisms of our perceptions of death: "Certainly, the *Stoikes* bestowed too much cost upon *Death*, and by their great preparations, made it appeare more fearefull" (2.46-48). Presumably, Bacon's discussion of the Stoics, here, is related to their contemplations of death as the gift of nature. As evidence, Bacon paraphrases

¹⁶² Bacon states, "*Augustus Caesar* died in a Complement; *Livia, Conjugii nostri memor, vive et vale. Tiberius* in dissimulation; As *Tacitus* saith of him; *Iam Tiberium Vires, et Corpus, non Dissimulatio, deserebant. Vespasian* in a Jest; Sitting upon the Stoole, *Ut puto Deus fio. Galba* with a Sentence; *Feri, si ex re sit populi Romani*; Holding forth his Necke. *Septimus Severus* in dispatch; *Adeste, si quid mihi restat agendum. And the like*" (2.39-46).

¹⁶³ One's composure at the time of one's death is remembered: did one die and provoke "*Pitty*" (2.28), as did Otho? with "a Complement" (2.39), as did Augustus Caesar? "in dissimulation" (2.40), as did Tiberius? "in a Jest" (2.42), as did Vespasian? "with a Sentence" (2.43), as did Galba? or "in Dispatch" (2.45), as did Septimus Severus?

Juvenal, a Roman satirical poet who wrote in the late first and early second century CE: “Better saith he, *Qui Finem Vitae extremum inter Munera ponat Naturae*” (2.48). Unlike the Stoics who believe that death is a gift of nature, Bacon argues that while death is natural—“It is as Naturall to die, as to be borne” (2.49)—it ought not be regarded as a gift.

Part III: Death and Fame

Since we know that death is inevitable, how does one overcome “that Natural Feare” (2.4) which accompanies it? In the concluding section of this essay, Bacon provides two ways to mitigate our fear of death and discusses one advantage of death: the first approach to ameliorate our concerns of death is to remain active; the second is to set attainable goals; and the advantage of death is reputation. First, one must continually strive:

He that dies in an earnest Pursuit, is like one that is wounded in hot Bloud; who, for the time, scarce fees the Hurt; And therefore, a Minde fixt, and bent upon somewhat that is good, doth avert the Dolors of *Death*. (2.51-54)

If one does not fixate upon the inevitability of one’s own death, one may avoid the grief and sorrow that accompany death and thus escape the tendency to fear death. Death, however, remains inevitable. In essay eleven, “Of Great Place,” Bacon considers the plight of the aged and the difficulty of engagement “in an earnest Pursuit” (2.51). Here, Bacon focuses on the requirement for activity, which is presented as a contrast to death.

Second, Bacon returns to the biblical accounts of death: “above all, beleieve it, the sweetest Canticle is, *Nunc dimittis*; when a Man hath obtained worthy Ends, and Expectations” (2.55-57). The canticle¹⁶⁴ that Bacon discusses is *Nunc dimittis*, the song of Simeon from

¹⁶⁴ “canticle, n.” *OED*, January 29, 2011: “One of the hymns (mostly taken from the Scriptures) used in the public services of the Church. (In the English Prayer-Book applied only to the *Benedicite*; but often used also of the *Benedictus*, *Jubilate*, *Magnificat*, *Cantate*, *Nunc Dimittis*, and *Deus misereatur*, and sometimes of the *Te Deum*.)” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Luke.¹⁶⁵ Simeon, a devout Jew who has been promised by the Holy Ghost that he would not die before he sees the son of God, refuses to die until this promise is fulfilled. After he sees Jesus, he is able to depart this world in peace. The example of Simeon encourages one to establish tasks or goals that compel one to remain active. These examples indicate, first, that there is no need to focus on death and, second, that one ought to stay busy and strive towards noble ends. In closing this essay, Bacon presents a benefit of death: “*Death* hath this also; That it openeth the Gate, to good Fame, and extinguisheth Envie.—*Extinctus amabitur idem*” (2.57-59). When a man is dead, there is no reason for others to think ill of him, or to covet that which he achieved or acquired in life. Following our deaths, all that remains is our legacies.

Bacon begins and ends this essay with the inevitability of our deaths. Our “Natural Feare” (2.4), despite being “weake” (2.8), can be exploited by tales. Since we do not know what happens to us when we die, but we all know that we will die, our ignorance coupled with our fear leaves us susceptible to manipulation. Bacon attempts to convince his readers that death is a part of life and “that there is no passion in the minde of man, so weake” as the fear of death (2.21). Since death is a part of life, “It is as Naturall to die, as to be borne” (2.49). Therefore, there is no reason to fear death. There are two facts regarding death that must be accepted. First, death is inevitable; barring some unprecedented scientific discovery and technological innovation, everything that is alive will eventually die. And second, death need not be feared because death need not be painful. Death, unlike in the tales of the Christians, is not agony: death is not “the *wages of sinne*” (2.5). Rather, death is the natural conclusion to our lives and the greatest democratizing force; we all die, even the emperors. If something happens to us after we die, the

¹⁶⁵ “nunc dimittis, n.” Ibid., March 1, 2011: “The song of Simeon in Luke 2:29–32; this song used liturgically as a canticle at evensong or compline. Also: a musical setting of this canticle.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

manner in which we have lived in this life may affect what happens to us in the next life. In that case, the “Tales” (2.4), “Religious Meditations” (2.8), “the Friars Books of *Mortification*” (2.10), and the philosophic accounts matter. Bacon’s discussion of death explains the hold that religion has over men and thus provides an account of the manner in which we should live. Bacon’s argument in “Of Death” steels us to possible exploitation as a result of our fear of the unknown. In so doing, he leads us into his third essay, a discussion of those who exploit our fears.

ESSAY THREE, “OF UNITY IN RELIGION”: RELIGION, FAITH, AND THE POWER OF UNITY

Religion has been a continuous theme in the first two essays. In the third essay, religion is explicitly addressed. Following his introductory comments (3.4-14), Bacon divides his third essay into three parts (3.15). This section of this dissertation is divided into four parts, the last three of which are identified by Bacon (3.15): in the first part, Bacon places religion at the forefront of society as “the chiefe Band” (3.4); in the second part, the benefits of unity are discussed; in the third part, the limits to unity are delineated; and in the fourth part, advice for procuring unity is outlined. The second chapter of this dissertation, “Bacon’s Critique of Religion,” examines Bacon’s account of religion throughout *Essays*. Although we return to essay three in the next chapter of this dissertation, it is now explicated in order to establish the importance of religion in Bacon’s Instauration.

Part I: The Chief Band

Bacon begins his third essay, “Of Unity in Religion,” with an assertion: religion, under the auspices of the true—Christian—religion, can be the primary bond¹⁶⁶ within society; “*Religion* being the chiefe Band of humane Society, it is a happy thing, when it selfe, is well contained, within the true Band of *Unity*” (3.4-6). In the first two essays, “Of Truth” and “Of

¹⁶⁶ “band, n.” Ibid., April 3, 2011: “A uniting or cementing force or influence by which a union of any kind is maintained.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Death,” Bacon has established that human beings live in ignorance of the world—in the realm of “Candlelights” (1.21). As a consequence, we rely on religion to provide explanations of those things that are otherwise inexplicable and to direct our behaviors and actions towards a good life. In the first respect, religion can provide accounts of events and phenomena that are not rationally explainable. In the second respect, religion can propose a code of conduct which ensures that adherents can expect certain behaviors from fellow adherents.

Bacon does not question religious belief as such; rather, he creates a dichotomy—perhaps an embellished one—between ancient and modern belief. Unity of religion is a distinctly modern requirement. For the ancient heathens, Bacon contends, “*Religion*...consisted rather in Rites and Ceremonies; then in any constant Beleefe” (3.8). Ancient religion, as depicted by Bacon, was based on ritual practices, rather than on faith; ancient religion was under the auspices of the poets, who tell lies “for Pleasure” (1:17 and 2:3-5), rather than under the direction of the theologians: “For you may imagine, what kinde of Faith theirs was, when the chiefe Doctors, and Fathers of their Church, were the Poets” (3.9-11). As a result of such practices, “The Quarrels, and Divisions about *Religion*, were Evils unknowne to the Heathen” (3.6). If the utility of religion is as “the chiefe Band of humane Society” (3.4) and ancient religion was not subject to “Quarrels, and Divisions” (3.6), why does Bacon not advocate a return to ancient religion? The answer rests with the gods. The heathens may not have suffered sectarian conflict, because they worshipped a pantheon of gods. The disputes occurred amongst the gods, who continually manifested their own conflicts in the human realm. Since the religion of the ancients requires the worship of multiple deities simultaneously, it is incompatible with the true “Faith” (3.10). The God of the Old Testament demands monotheistic observance: “But the true God hath this Attribute, That he is a *Jealous God*; And therefore, his worship and *Religion*, will endure no

Mixture, nor Partner” (3.11-14). Therefore, in modern observance, there can be no compromise; monotheistic faith requires that “thou shalt worship no other god.”¹⁶⁷

From the outset of this essay, Bacon acknowledges the fundamental danger inherent in true faith: if one has faith—that is, a true belief in God or religion—there is no room for theological discussion or compromise. For the ancients, religion was based on ritual, rather than on theology. For the moderns, religious faith requires singular adherence to God. As such, modern religion is subject to those “Quarrels, and Divisions about *Religion*, [which] were Evils unknowne to the Heathen” (3.6). Bacon divides his subsequent discussion of “the *Unity of the Church*” (3.15) into three sections: “*What are the Fruits thereof; what the Bounds; And what the Meanes*” (3.15-16).

Part II: The Fruits of Religion

The primary fruit, or benefit,¹⁶⁸ of unity of religion, which Bacon mentions but does not elaborate—since it goes without saying—is “the well Pleasing of God, which is All in All” (3.17). Instead, he discusses two different types of religious effects: “The One, towards those, that are *without the Church*; The Other, towards those, *that are within*” (3.18-20). First, Bacon presents the negative case: how and why disunity in the Church drives adherents from the Church. Second, in a much shorter discussion, Bacon presents the positive case: how those within a unified Church are benefitted.

In his examination of the negative case, Bacon discusses the things that “keepe Men out of the Church, and drive Men out of the Church” (3.25). He identifies two potential behaviors, both of which are discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation, that may “hinde[r] reception

¹⁶⁷ Exodus 34:14.

¹⁶⁸ “fruit, n.” *OED*, April 28, 2013: “Advantage, benefit, enjoyment, profit.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

of the faith or obedience to the Divine law.”¹⁶⁹ first, “Heresies, and Schismes” (3.20); and second, “Corruption of Manners” (3.22).¹⁷⁰ The first behavior is theological and includes religious disagreements within the Church and between churches. The second is proprietary and includes the immoral actions of Church members and Church fathers. Bacon does not mention a lack of faith as a reason that people either leave or do not join the Church. At this point, he is not concerned with atheists, a topic that he explicitly considers in essay sixteen, “Of Atheisme”; rather, he is presently concerned with those who have faith. Bacon claims that sectarian and theological disunities drive people from the Church more so than do the actions of individuals or fathers within the Church: “It is certaine, that Heresies, and Schismes, are of all others, the greatest Scandals” (3.20) since they include “Breach of *Unity*” (3.26).

As explanation, Bacon compares the Church to a human body: “For as in the Naturall Body, a Wound or Solution of Continuity, is worse then a Corrupt Humor; So in the Spirituall” (3.22-24). Since the Church is a unified whole, composed “of normally continuous parts,”¹⁷¹ corruption of the whole is worse for the Church than is corruption of a part. Ancient and medieval physiologists believed that the human body was composed of four humors or essential fluids: blood; phlegm; choler; and melancholy, also known as black choler. One’s disposition and health, the ancient and medieval physiologists averred, was based on the distribution of one’s humors. By likening the Church to the body, Bacon argues that a wound, or damage to the

¹⁶⁹ “scandal, n.” *Ibid.*, April 2, 2011: “Something that hinders reception of the faith or obedience to the Divine law; an occasion of unbelief or moral lapse; a stumbling-block.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁷⁰ Bacon returns to this discussion in essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things.”

¹⁷¹ “solution, n.” *OED*, April 2, 2011: “Solution of Continuity, *Med.* (Also solution of connection, solution of unity.) The separation from each other of normally continuous parts of the body by external or internal causes.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

whole, is worse than a disruption in the balance of one of the parts. Sectarian strife, Bacon claims, harms the Church as a wound harms the body. Since a believer's desire for the comfort afforded by the Church does not diminish when the Church is corrupted, the believer seeks that comfort elsewhere. Sectarian strife in the Church enhances men's susceptibility to heresy. As evidence of this predisposition, Bacon turns to the Bible: first, he cites Jesus' advice to his disciples in Matthew 24; second, he cites Paul's advice in I Corinthians 14; and last, he cites Psalms 1.

Bacon refers to Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.¹⁷² Jesus warns his disciples not to be led astray by false prophets; distracted by wars, famines, or earthquakes; or converted through torture and ostracism.¹⁷³ Christ will be found neither in the deserts or the secret chambers, nor "in the Conventicles of Heretikes, and others, in an Outward Face of a Church" (3.29). Christ will not be found in the desert, as suggested by the Old Testament; in the secret chambers; or in the "private, clandestine, or illegal" meetings of unsanctioned religion.¹⁷⁴ Salvation, Jesus claims, will come to those who remain resolute in their faith.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Matthew 24:1-2.

¹⁷³ Ibid. 24:3-12.

¹⁷⁴ "conventicle, n." *OED*, April 2, 2011: "A religious meeting or assembly of a private, clandestine, or illegal kind; a meeting for the exercise of religion otherwise than as sanctioned by the law." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁷⁵ Matthew 24:13-14.

St. Paul, whom Bacon calls “The Doctor of the Gentiles (the Propriety of whose Vocation, drew him to have a speciall care of those *without*)” (3.32),¹⁷⁶ chronicles the struggles of the Corinthian community’s conversion to Christianity. The passage from I Corinthians 14, which Bacon paraphrases, highlights the nature of continuity within religious communities. In the Bible, Paul draws the distinction between tongues—the power of speaking in unknown languages, understood as a gift from the Holy Spirit—and prophecy. As a means of explanation, Bacon ascribes a rhetorical question to Paul: “*If an Heathen come in, and heare you speake with severall Tongues, Will he not say that you are mad?*” (3.34) In the biblical verse, Paul makes clear that “the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues.”¹⁷⁷ When nonbelievers or heathens witness a congregation talking in tongues, Paul continues, “will they not say that ye [those who talk in tongues, as do the Corinthians] are mad?”¹⁷⁸ Those who are not part of the Corinthian Church, Paul argues, do not understand the rituals of the Church. Paul, therefore, distinguishes between believers and nonbelievers: “Tongues, then, are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers.”¹⁷⁹ Speaking in tongues is evidence of faith and religiosity for nonbelievers, rather than for believers, while prophecy, Paul posits, is evidence of faith and religiosity for believers, rather than for nonbelievers. Neither Bacon nor Paul elaborates on the reasons that prophecy is a sign to believers while tongues is a sign to nonbelievers. Presumably, since believers already have faith in the existence of God, they do not require a sign of God’s existence; speaking in tongues,

¹⁷⁶ “propriety, n.” *OED*, April 2, 2011: “The fact of belonging or relating specially to a particular thing or person; peculiarity, particularity.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁷⁷ I Corinthians 14:23.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 14:22.

as a sign of God's existence, is proof to those nonbelievers. Tongues, then, is evidence of divine power and an impetus to join the Church. The believer desires advice and guidance from God, which is presented through God's prophecies. As such, tongues are evidence for nonbelievers, while prophecy is evidence for believers.

As a final biblical example in this consideration, Bacon cites Psalms 1, which provides advice to "those who do not follow the...wicked"¹⁸⁰ and is a guide for the exalter in his worship. One must, therefore, not "*sit downe in the chaire of the Scorners*" (3.39).¹⁸¹ The emphasis in the Psalm is on the believer, who is counseled to continue on the path of righteousness and to avoid heresy, atheism, and profanity. Bacon, in his reference to this Psalm, inverts the actual teaching. In this essay, Bacon's emphasis is on the atheists or profaners and what "avert[s] them from the Church" (3.38). Atheists and profaners are deterred from the Church, Bacon claims, when they "do heare of so many Discordant, and Contrary Opinions in *Religion*" (3.37). When atheists and profaners experience incongruous behaviors and hear irreconcilable opinions in the Church, they are driven from belief and faith; alternately, when heretics experience incongruous behaviors and hear irreconcilable opinions in the Church, they are driven towards belief and faith, albeit in other churches. Believers have a predilection to disregard controversies and support the Church; atheists and profaners have a predisposition to believe the negative aspects of the Church; and heretics choose to hold false beliefs as concern God, regardless of the actions of the Church.

Those who are driven to other churches—the heretics—pose a greater danger to the Church, Bacon argues, than do atheists and profaners. As evidence, Bacon uses a secular

¹⁸⁰ Psalms 1:1.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

example: Francois Rabelais, a sixteenth-century Renaissance humanist and satirist whom Bacon describes as “a Master of Scoffing” (3.41). One of Rabelais’ works contains a catalogue of the collection of a fictitious library.¹⁸² A title of one of the books in that library, identified by Bacon, is “*The morris daunce of Heretikes*” (3.43):

For indeed, every Sect of them, hath a Divers Posture, or Cringe by themselves, which cannot but Move Derision, in Worldlings, and Depraved Politickes, who are apt to contemne Holy Things. (3.44-47)

Each sect of heretics, according to Bacon, is akin to each group of Morris Dancers. The Morris Dance is a traditional form of English folk dance: each troupe of Morris Dancers is unique and different from all the others; similarly, each group of heretics is unique and different from all the others, presumably in terms of theology, ritual, and practice. Much like the Morris Dancers, who, despite their many differences, are united under the single auspices of Morris Dance, each group of heretics has one important characteristic in common: they inspire scorn and ridicule in nonbelievers, especially in those people who are concerned with the mundane.

In his presentation of the negative case—how disunity drives adherents from the Church—Bacon distinguishes between five types of people: believers, heathens, heretics, atheists, and profaners. Heretics, atheists, and profaners pose unique dangers to Church unity and are affected in different ways by disunity within the Church. Heathens, atheists, and profaners—those who believe in false gods, do not believe in God, or have contempt for God—choose to believe the divisive and unfavorable accounts and opinions of the Church.

Contemptuous nonbelievers—of whom Bacon specifically identifies atheists and profaners—

¹⁸² *Gargantua and Pantagruel* a satirical work by Francois Rabelais, who is identified by the Council of Trent as a heretic, tells the story of the adventures of two giants: Gargantua, the father; and Pantagruel, the son. The library in question is happened upon by Pantagruel. Francois Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, trans. and ed. M. A. Screech, 5 vols. (Toronto, ON: Penguin Books, 2006), 2:37-44.

avoid the Church. Heretics, who have faith, but espouse false theological beliefs and practice incorrect rituals, pose a greater danger to the Church than do nonbelievers, since they appear in the garb of religion, yet corrupt the Church.

Bacon's discussion of the positive case—how those within the Church are benefitted by their association to religion—is much shorter than is his presentation of the negative case. Five advantages of the Church are presented. First and most fundamentally, for those who have faith and are members of the true Church, the benefit is simple: for “*those that are within; It is Peace; which containeth infinite Blessings*” (3.48). Peace and its resultant blessings can be understood on two levels: politically, as freedom, which results from religious unity and stability; and emotionally, as calmness and serenity, which derive from the knowledge that one is favored by the divine. Second, the Church “*establisheth Faith*” (3.49). Membership in the Church affirms one's existing faith. Third, “*It kindleth Charity*” (3.50), insofar as Church membership promotes generosity and right feeling towards others. This third advantage of the Church is considered in more detail in the next chapter of this dissertation. Fourth, “*The outward Peace of the Church, Distilleth into Peace of Conscience*” (3.50). When the Church is not subject to sectarian disagreements, members of the Church enjoy a calmness with respect to their ethical and moral concerns. In turn, members are benefitted by security in their “*Faith*” (3.49). From this stable foundation, adherents are more apt to be charitable (3.50), in terms of generosity towards the less fortunate and love of one's fellow man. And fifth, this peace allows individuals to direct their faith inwards and use their “*Labours of Writing, and Reading*” (3.52) for “*Treaties of Mortification, and Devotion*” (3.53), rather than for “*Controversies*” (3.52). As a consequence, there is an increase in positive religious treatises that affirm and further proliferate the Christian faith (3.51-53).

Part III: The Bounds of Religion

Having presented the effects of religion, Bacon turns to his second point, “the *Bounds of Unity*” (3.54). This section concerns “two extremes” (3.55) in religious faith: the tendency to aggravate and the tendency to placate. The first extreme claims that “all Speech of Pacification is odious” (3.56). For “*Zelants*” (3.56), religious extremists of a particular sort,¹⁸³ there is no room for compromise in theological disputes. As an example, Bacon directs his readers to II Kings 9, where Elisha, chosen by Elijah as his successor, fulfills the command from I Kings 19 to anoint Jehu as the King of Israel. This biblical passage is an example of the interaction of the spiritual and the political: in ancient Israel, there was no separation of church and state; God selected the king who ruled over the political kingdom. Jehu’s anointment is initially secret. In order for Jehu to be officially proclaimed king, divine decree commands that the Kings of Israel and of Judea must be informed, and the descendants of King Ahab, the King of Israel, and his wife, Jezebel, must be killed.¹⁸⁴ Bacon’s quotation occurs in this context: “*Is it peace Jehu? What hast thou to doe with peace? Turne thee behinde me. Peace is not the Matter, but Following and Party*” (3.57-59).¹⁸⁵ According to this passage, peace is not Jehu’s foremost concern; rather, Jehu is bound to follow the precepts of the divine decree. God demands that Jehu murder many people in order to assume the throne. There can be no compromise.

Juxtaposed to the model of Jehu, who serves as Bacon’s example of one who pursues God’s murderous instructions with ardor, is the model of the Laodiceans, who, as recounted in

¹⁸³ “zelant, n.” *OED*, April 3, 2011: “One who is zealous or full of zeal; one who pursues his object with passionate ardour; usually in disparaging sense, one who is carried away by excess of zeal; an immoderate partisan, a fanatical enthusiast.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as the first example of this usage.

¹⁸⁴ II Kings 9:22.

¹⁸⁵ I Kings 19:18-20.

Revelations, are a community renowned for their “lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot” Christianity.¹⁸⁶ The Laodiceans, Bacon posits, “thinke they may accommodate Points of *Religion*, by Middle Waies, and taking part of both; And witty Reconcilements; As if they would make an Arbitrement, betweene God and Man” (3.60-63). Men of this sort believe that they can take a moderate path, including points from both sides, and thereby make a “Settlement or arrangement”¹⁸⁷ between the divine and the human. Indifferent Christianity, Revelations shows, leaves the Laodiceans “wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked”; and, despite their financial prosperity, ignorant of their true condition.¹⁸⁸

Neither extreme—a proclivity towards either confrontation or compromise—according to Bacon’s presentation, is conducive to true religious unity. As such, Bacon recounts two maxims to maintain order: first, “*He that is not with us, is against us*” (3.66); and second, “*He that is not against us, is with us*” (3.67). Bacon admits that his explanation may seem to have been “done already” (3.72). Indeed, these maxims have biblical roots. In Matthew 12, the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees is recounted, and, in Luke 11, the conflict between Jesus and Beelzebub, the devil, is recounted: Jesus states, “*He that is not with us, is against us*” (3.66).¹⁸⁹ This statement tends towards the first extreme; anyone who does not believe in Jesus and does not support the Christian Church is an enemy of the Church. In Mark 9, John tells Jesus of an exorcist who, despite no official affiliation, has been practicing exorcisms in Jesus’ name: Jesus

¹⁸⁶ Revelations 3:15.

¹⁸⁷ “arbitrament | arbitrement, n.” *OED*, April 3, 2011: “Settlement or arrangement of a dispute; compromise, friendly agreement.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁸⁸ Revelations 3:17.

¹⁸⁹ Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23.

states, “*He that is not against us, is with us*” (3.67).¹⁹⁰ This statement tends towards the second extreme; anyone who does an act in the name of Jesus and supports the Christian Church, despite not being officially sanctioned by the Church, is a friend of the Church. In order to avoid controversies, one must learn to distinguish between “Points Fundamentall and of Substance” (3.68) and “Points not meere of Faith, but of Opinion, Order, or good Intention” (3.70). One must learn to distinguish important from unimportant points of religious controversy.

Bacon proffers one piece of modest advice:¹⁹¹ “Men ought to take heede, of rending Gods Church, by two kinds of Controversies” (3.75). The first type of controversy results “when the Matter of the Point controverted, is too small and light, not worth the Heat, and Strife about it, kindled onely by Contradiction” (3.76-78). This type of disagreement, Bacon contends, does not warrant a Church dispute. As an example, Bacon cites the controversy regarding Christ’s coat and the church vestments (3.79-81). Is the apparel of the Church fathers essential to faith and religiosity? Bacon claims that it is not: “They be two Things, *Unity*, and *Uniformity*” (3.82). Unity occurs when all of the essential aspects of the religion are united; uniformity occurs when they are all the same.¹⁹² With respect to attire, there needs to be unity, but there need not be uniformity. The second type of controversy occurs “when the Matter of the Point Controverted is great; but it is driven to an over-great Subtilty, and Obscurity” (3.83). In the second case, as opposed to the first case, the contentious issue is of import. However, if in discussion of the

¹⁹⁰ Mark 9:40.

¹⁹¹ “model, n.” *OED*, April 4, 2011: “Scale of construction; allotted measure; the measure of a person's ability or capacity.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁹² “uniformity, n.” *Ibid.*, April 10, 2011: “The condition of having the parts similar in appearance; presentation of one regular or unvaried form on this account; similarity of appearance, design, structure, style, etc.; freedom from or lack of variety, diversity, or irregularity.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

issue, the distinctions become overly precise, the original controversy is obscured and the original disagreement rendered “Ingenious” (3.85). In the first case, Bacon reminds his readers of the difference between continuity in religion and exactness in religion; in the second case, Bacon reminds his readers to avoid officious controversies.

Thus far in the essay, Bacon’s advice appears to be sound; problematically, in order to enact his recommendations, all individuals must approach religion, and religious controversy, from the same perspective:

A man that is of Judgement and understanding, shall sometimes heare Ignorant Men differ, and know well within himselfe, that those which so differ, meane one thing, and yet they themselves would never agree. And if it come so to passe, in that distance of Judgement, which is betweene Man and Man; Shall wee not thinke, that God above, that knowes the Heart, doth discerne, that fraile Men, in some of their Contradictions, intend the same thing; and accepteth of both? (3.86-94)

Bacon distinguishes between two types of men: men “of Judgement and understanding” (3.86) and “Ignorant Men” (3.87). These two categories of men can be further refined: there are men “of Judgement and understanding” (3.86) who are participants in religious controversies and those who are not; so, too, there are “Ignorant Men” (3.87) who are participants in religious controversies and those who are not. As such, in this discussion, Bacon presents four types of men: men “of Judgement and understanding” (3.86) who participate in religious disagreements; men of ignorance who participate in religious disagreements; men “of Judgement and understanding” (3.86) who do not participate in religious disagreements; and men of ignorance who do not participate in religious disagreements. When one finds oneself a participant in controversy, it is often difficult to “heare” (3.87) what is actually being discussed. Often, in fact, two interlocutors may argue the same point, but fail to understand the continuity in their respective arguments. Bacon realizes that when men fail to reach an agreement, the believer knows “that God above...knowes the Heart” (3.91). Bacon’s point is powerful. The particulars

of theology and ceremony are less important than that which is in “the Heart” of men (3.92).

That is, Bacon believes that faith trumps doctrine and theology.

As an example, Bacon turns to St. Paul’s “Warning and Precept” (3.95) to his disciple, Timothy—his “loyal child in the faith”:¹⁹³ “*Devita profanas vocum Novitates, et Oppositiones falsi Nominis Scientiae*” (3.96), which translates as avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.¹⁹⁴ Paul’s advice, in context, distinguishes between true and false teachings: Timothy is commanded to maintain the knowledge of Christ, entrusted by Paul, and to ignore the false truths of the heretics.

Human beings, by nature, “create Oppositions, which are not” (3.97), and focus on the definitions and parameters that obscure our actual knowledge: “And put them into new termes, so fixed, as whereas the Meaning ought to governe the Terme, the Terme in effect governeth the Meaning” (3.98-100). This precept that concerns human intellection is a recurrent theme in Bacon’s work. The Idols of the Tribe, which have been discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, explain this tendency. People tend to focus on differences, note distinctions that lead to increased polarization, and create new differences, all of which exacerbate controversies. Since human beings tend towards definition and categorization, the process of naming and organizing ideas leads people to create definitions and categories that highlight the differences yet obscure the similarities between objects and ideas.¹⁹⁵

At the same time, our desire to avoid controversy compels us to create similarities, which are not. Therefore, Bacon recommends that we do not succumb to the “two false *Peaces*, or

¹⁹³ I Timothy 1:2 and Acts 16:1-2.

¹⁹⁴ I Timothy 6:20.

¹⁹⁵ Bacon appears to anticipate the rise of the logical positivists.

Unities” (3.101). While this point is addressed here in the context of Bacon’s discussion, a more detailed consideration occurs in the next chapter of this dissertation. Our tendency to create oppositions which are not is mirrored by our equally powerful tendency to create similarities which are not. First, when the peace is founded on an unmitigated ignorance (3.101),¹⁹⁶ the agreement is based on false or incomplete information, and, as a result, the agreement, too, is false or incomplete: “For all Colours will agree in the Darke” (3.102). Second, when the agreement is based on irreconcilable points (3.103), there is no actual agreement.

Nebuchadnezzar’s statue serves as Bacon’s example. Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king who besieged Jerusalem and initiated the Babylonian captivity,¹⁹⁷ has a disconcerting dream. In the biblical account, he refuses to reveal the content of his dream, yet commands his magicians and prophets not only to interpret the dream, but to describe it as well;¹⁹⁸ those who are unable to do so “shall be torn limb from limb and [their] houses shall be laid in ruins.”¹⁹⁹ Daniel, a Jewish prophet who has “insight into all visions and dreams,”²⁰⁰ recounts Nebuchadnezzar’s dream:

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of bronze, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind

¹⁹⁶ “implicit, adj.” *OED*, April 4, 2011: “Hence (erroneously): Absolute, unqualified, unmitigated, as in implicit ignorance.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

¹⁹⁷ For example, see II Kings 24 and 25; I Chronicles 6; II Chronicles 36; and Daniel 1.

¹⁹⁸ Daniel 2:1-12.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. 2:5.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. 1:17.

carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.²⁰¹

In his interpretation of the dream, Daniel likens the head of the statue to King Nebuchadnezzar and predicts that, after the King's reign, inferior kingdoms will arise: one of silver, followed by one of bronze, after which an iron kingdom will arise. The iron kingdom will conquer the other kingdoms, but this fourth kingdom will be divided: it shall be of both iron and clay.²⁰² Bacon employs the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's statue to prove his point: "Truth and Falshood...are like the *Iron and Clay, in the toes of Nebucadnezzars Image*; They may Cleave, but they will not Incorporate" (3.105-107).²⁰³ While truth and falsehood may come together for a time, they cannot "unite so as to form one body."²⁰⁴ The consideration in this essay is reminiscent of Bacon's discussion in "Of Truth": "that Mixture of Falshood, is like Allay in Coyne of Gold and Silver; which may make the Metall worke the better, but it embaseth it" (1.65-67). Daniel interprets the King's dream politically; Bacon interprets the King's dream morally, rather than politically. Bacon removes this biblical image from its context and uses a political image as a metaphor for a religious problem.

This section of Bacon's third essay concerns the relationship between the desire for unity and the limits of unity. In many respects, it simultaneously affirms the need for unity while disregarding the existing forms of unity. Bacon's condemnation of religious controversies is a castigation of regnant religious belief. Bacon begins this essay by distinguishing between ancient and contemporary religion: the difference between polytheistic and monotheistic religion

²⁰¹ Ibid. 2:31-35.

²⁰² Ibid. 2:38-45.

²⁰³ Ibid. 2:33 and 2:42-43.

²⁰⁴ "incorporate, v." *OED*, April 4, 2011. This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

concerns the number of gods, yet Bacon makes clear that monotheism, as opposed to polytheism, is conducive to sectarian disagreements. Bacon's most revealing statement in this context concerns the manner in which God manifests: "God...knowes the Heart" (3.91). As a consequence, all that matters is what men think and feel, not what the Church demands. How, then, is religious unity obtained?

Part IV: The Means to Religious Unity

At this point in his discussion, Bacon turns to his third point, "the *Meanes of procuring Unity*" (3.108). Bacon begins with a warning: "Men must beware, that in the Procuring, or Muniting, of *Religious Unity*, they doe not Dissolve and Deface the Lawes of Charity, and of humane Society" (3.108-111). In the attempt to obtain and strengthen religious unity,²⁰⁵ there is a danger that men may contravene the precepts or rules of charity and humanity. If men resort to violence, their desire for religious unity may undermine the principles of charity and society. Throughout this essay, Bacon emphasizes the power that the Church holds over many men.

Here, Bacon distinguishes between three different types of Church power: "There be two Swords amongst Christians; the Spirituall, and Temporall" (3.111). The Church has "Spirituall" power over the theological and devotional concerns of men, as well as "Temporall" power over the political and societal concerns of men. The "Temporall" power of the Church is derivative of the Church's "Spirituall" power. Since the Church commands the souls of men in the next life, it is able to control the actions of men in this life: "both have their due Office, and place, in the maintenance of *Religion*" (3.112). As such, the Church wields considerable power, yet Bacon warns the Church to "not take up the Third sword, which is Mahomets Sword, or like unto it; That is, to propagate *Religion*, by Warrs, or by Sanguinary Persecutions, to force Consciences"

²⁰⁵ "muniting, n." Ibid., April 10, 2011: "To fortify, strengthen, [or] protect." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

(3.114-117).²⁰⁶ Bacon elaborates on this theme in essay twenty-nine, “Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates.” At this point in his argument, it suffices to say that adherence encouraged through wars, bloodshed,²⁰⁷ or force is unacceptable.

Of course, there are exemptions to this indictment against the military sword. Church violence may be condoned, so Bacon argues, in particular circumstances:

in cases of Overt Scandall, Blasphemy, or Intermixture of Practize, against the State; Much lesse to Nourish Seditions; To Authorize Conspiracies and Rebellions; To put the Sword into the Peoples Hands; And the like; Tending to the Subversion of all Government, which is the Ordinance of God. (3.117-122)

When the State is in danger, Bacon authorizes the Church to intervene. If, for example, a religious scandal threatens the stability of the state and thus the unity of the Church, the Church may take up the sword. However, it is incumbent on the Church, Bacon claims, to remember that men are men, regardless of whether or not they are Christians: “For this is, but to dash the first Table, against the Second; And so to consider Men as Christians, as we forget that they are Men” (3.122-124). Given the human propensity towards violence, Christians must be especially aware that “they doe not Dissolve and Deface the Lawes of Charity, and of humane Society” (3.110), in the name of religious unity.

Bacon employs an ancient example that demonstrates the evils done in the name of religion (3.127): Agamemnon’s sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia to compel the wind (3.125). According to the Greek myth, Artemis, the goddess of the hunt, punishes Agamemnon, the King of Mycenae or Argos, for killing one of her sacred deer. As retribution, Artemis refuses to raise the winds so that Agamemnon’s ships may sail to the Trojan War; in an effort to compel the

²⁰⁶ Bacon, clearly, is referring to Jihad.

²⁰⁷ “sanguinary, adj. and n.” *OED*, April 10, 2011: “Attended by bloodshed; characterized by slaughter; bloody. Of laws: Imposing the death-penalty freely.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as the first example of this usage.

Goddess, Agamemnon's seer advises him to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, who is then sacrificially murdered. Bacon cites Lucretius' response to Agamemnon's decision: "*Tantum Relligio potuit suadere malorum*" (3.127),²⁰⁸ translated as, to such evil actions could religion persuade. Since "The Quarrels, and Divisions about *Religion*, were Evils unknowne to the Heathen" (3.6), Bacon posits that Lucretius "would have beene, Seven times more Epicure and Atheist, then he was" (3.129)²⁰⁹ had he "knowne of the Massacre in France, or the Powder Treason of England" (3.128).²¹⁰ Had Lucretius known of the actions conducted in the name of Christianity, his antireligious views would have been more recalcitrant than they were. It is true that horrible acts have been justified by religious doctrine; it is also true that horrible acts have been justified without religious sanction. As Joseph de Maistre rightly argues, Bacon clearly advocates a separation of Church and state.²¹¹ In Bacon's view, the Christian Church should not use its power in mundane matters, except in extreme cases. In fact, Bacon posits, doing so goes against the natural order.²¹²

It is, Bacon suggests, more impious to speak ill of God than to speak well of the devil:

"It was great Blasphemy, when the Devill said; *I will ascend, and be like the Highest*; But it is

²⁰⁸ Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 10-11.

²⁰⁹ Bacon's statement is particularly strange. One either is or is not an atheist: one either believes or does not believe in God. There cannot be degrees of atheism, since there cannot be degrees of belief in God. There can, however, be degrees of Epicureanism, as one refines one's tastes.

²¹⁰ For a further discussion of this point, see chapter two of this dissertation.

²¹¹ Joseph de Maistre, *An examination of the Philosophy of Francis Bacon, Wherein Different Questions of Rational Philosophy are Treated*, trans. and ed. Richard A. Lebrun (Montreal, PQ: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).

²¹² "monstrous, adj., adv., int., and n." *OED*, April 10, 2011: "Of a thing (material or immaterial): deviating from the natural or conventional order; unnatural, extraordinary." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

greater Blasphemy, to personate God, and bring him in saying; *I will descend, and be like the Prince of Darknesse*” (3.135-138). As Bacon indicates previously, heretics—those who speak ill truths of God—are more dangerous than are atheists and profaners. Heretics “make the cause of *Religion*, to descend, to the cruell and execrable Actions, of Murthering Princes, Butchery of People, and Subversion of States, and Governments” (3.139-141). The Church must ensure that it is doctrinally unified and above reproach from heathens:

it is most necessary, that the Church by Doctrine and Decree; Princes by their Sword; And all Learnings, both Christian and Morall, as by their Mercury Rod; Doe Damne and send to Hell, for ever, those Facts and Opinions, tending to the Support of the same; As hath beene already in good part done. Surely in Counsels, Concerning *Religion*, that Counsel of the Apostle would be prefixed; *Ira hominis non implet Justiciam Dei*. And it was a notable Observation, of a wise Father, And no lesse ingenuously confessed; *That those, which held and perswaded, pressure of Consciencs, were commonly interested therin, themselves, for their owne ends*. (3.145-156)

Church fathers, princes, and theological scholars are responsible for maintaining the caduceus²¹³ of religion and ethics. Those who fail to do so, according to Bacon, are likely interested in their own betterment, rather than in the betterment of the Church.²¹⁴ Therefore, Bacon argues that those interested in the good of the Church will strive to maintain its unity; likewise, those interested in the good of the people will strive to maintain the unity of the Church.

If we accept Bacon’s argument, we are left with two possibilities for religion: one, religious adherence demands zealous obedience, wherein all obstacles to religious unity are excised; or two, religious adherence becomes watered down, wherein religion becomes a matter

²¹³ “mercury rod, n.” Ibid., March 3, 2011: “The wand carried by an ancient Greek or Roman herald. The fabled wand carried by Hermes or Mercury as the messenger of the gods; usually represented with two serpents twined round it (This is the earliest and proper sense in English).” This passage is cited in the *OED* as the first example of this usage.

²¹⁴ “pressure, n.” Ibid., April 10, 2011: “Psychological or moral influence, esp. of a constraining or oppressive kind; coercive, persuasive, or dissuasive force; coercion, persuasion, or dissuasion.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

of individual choice. New religions tend to demand zealous devotion; however, with time, religions tend to become more malleable and more amenable to other religions. Bacon's argument indicates how difficult, if at all possible, it is to maintain religious unity. Given the two possibilities for religion that Bacon has left us, there are two possible outcomes for religion. In the first case, all people must adhere to the same religion. Thus, religion would become completely homogenous, while faith and ritual would become strict and exacting. In the second case, there must be a plethora of religions, none of which could gain too many adherents or be practiced too faithfully. Thus, religion would become completely heterogeneous, while faith and ritual would become tepid and weak. In either case, the type of religion that Bacon advocates bears little resemblance to the regnant understanding of God and the Church. In fact, Bacon's account of religion threatens the pre-existing religious power structures. The second chapter of this dissertation further explicates Bacon's account of religion in *Essays*.

ESSAY FOUR, "OF REVENGE": JUSTICE, SELF-LOVE, AND OUR DESIRES FOR REVENGE

Human beings, as Bacon has established, are best served by living a good life: in Bacon's estimation, a life dedicated to truth (1.36-42). In order to live such a life, Bacon emphasizes, one must believe two truths: first, one's good deeds will be rewarded; and second, the ill actions of others, particularly those that cause one to suffer, will be punished. Thus, justice undergirds all of our actions. Essential to our ability to arrange our lives according to "the Poles of *Truth*" (1.60) is a desire for recompense or payback. Bacon describes two types of justice: moral justice, which is general—that is, not contingent on particulars; and legal justice, which is particular and under human control—that is, man-made justice. Bacon is concerned with justice in the legal sense, as administrative, procedural, and precedential action, which is necessarily

connected to justice in the moral sense, as righteousness or correct action.²¹⁵ In this essay, “Of Revenge,” Bacon discusses the relationship between our understanding of justice in the moral sense, as right action and just desserts, and the importance of legal justice. Moral justice is the foundation of legal justice; however, in a secular society, legal justice trumps moral justice.

At the end of this essay, Bacon identifies an argument that concerns “Publique *Revenues*” (4.38). As a consequence, one is encouraged to consider the rest of the essay (4.1-38) as not focused on public revenges; rather, the bulk of this essay considers private revenges. In this dissertation, this section is divided into four parts: the first part examines the relationship between our longings for justice and our ability to obtain justice; the second part presents two types of revenge and two types of vengeance seekers; the third part considers the distinct case of revenge against a friend; and the fourth part addresses the expediency of public revenges and the differences between public and private revenge.

Part I: Justice as Vengeance

The only true arbiters of justice are God and the state. We not only yearn for justice, but also aspire to be active participants in its execution. Bacon does not begin this essay by defining justice, presumably because individuals all have a common sense understanding of justice.

Instead, Bacon begins by indicating the relationship between justice and our desires for vengeance:

Revenge is a kinde of Wilde Justice; which the more Mans Nature runs to, the more ought Law to weed it out. For as for the first Wrong, it doth but offend the Law; but the *Revenge* of that wrong, putteth the Law out of Office. (4.3-6)

²¹⁵ “justice, n.” Ibid., March 25, 2011: “The administration of law, or the forms and processes attending it; judicial proceedings; in early use, Legal proceedings of any kind.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Although we long for justice, or at least an approximation of justice, human beings cannot mete out justice in our own cases. Since we have a vested interest in the outcome of our own suits, we cannot be impartial adjudicators. If we were judges in our own cases, we would undermine moral justice. Revenge is not justice; it “is a kinde of Wilde Justice” (4.3) or unbridled justice. Justice, in the moral sense, is a universal standard beyond the particular. Revenge, alternately, is concerned with particulars. In instances of revenge, each individual is a judge in his own case. Since each person is likely a biased arbiter, revenge is a biased undertaking.

Our vengeful longings are connected to our understanding of right and wrong, our place in the world, and our principles that concern how we ought to treat and be treated by other people. Those actions that we believe deserve revenge, why we seek revenge, and how we exact our vengeance all differ according to our individual natures, the people involved, and the circumstances.²¹⁶ For those who are predisposed to seek revenge, law mitigates that natural tendency. As Bacon states, “Wilde Justice” (4.3) puts the law—codified justice—“out of Office” (4.6). The initial wrong is illegal, but the second wrong—the “*Revenge* of that [first] wrong” (4.6)—undermines the foundations of the law. In effect, it returns us to the state of nature.

In order to ensure that the law is not undermined, revenges must be undertaken cautiously: when one undertakes an act of revenge, one is equal to the one who inflicts the initial wrong—“A Man is but even with his Enemy” (4.7)—since he, too, commits a wrong; however, “in passing it [the initial wrong] over, he is Superiour: For it is a Princes part to Pardon” (4.8). If a man can overlook a wrong that he has suffered, Bacon claims that “he is Superiour” to his enemy (4.8), although the exact nature of his superiority is unstated by Bacon. If it is a prince’s

²¹⁶ “revenge, n.” Ibid., February 28, 2011: “An act of repaying a wrong or injury suffered. Formerly also *of* the person inflicting the original wrong.” A later passage from this essay is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

part to pardon,²¹⁷ a man need not pardon his enemy, but rather allow the law the opportunity to pass judgment. It is the king's, prince's, or God's duty to exact judgment in matters of justice: "And Salomon, I am sure, saith, *It is the glory of a Man to passe by an offence*" (4.9).²¹⁸

Men who are desirous of revenge do not live in the present; they dwell on the wrongs that they believe they have suffered in the past and plot the revenges that they will exact in the future. According to Bacon, men must learn to accept some of the wrongs that they have suffered: "That which is past, is gone, and Irrevocable; And wise Men have Enough to doe, with things present, and to come: Therefore, they doe but trifle with themselves, that labour in past matters" (4.10-13). What is done is done. There is nothing that can change past events. Wise men, Bacon claims, are able to live in both the present and the future and to disregard past wrongs that they have suffered. Unwise men, on the other hand, live in the past and fixate upon past wrongs that they have suffered.

Despite understandable upset as regard the wrongs that individuals have suffered, most people have also inflicted a wrong, perhaps one that even deserves vengeance, on another person. Self-interest is the essence of Bacon's understanding of revenge:

There is no man, doth a wrong, for the wrongs sake; But therby to purchase himselfe, Profit, or Pleasure, or Honour, or the like. Therefore why should I be angry with a Man, for loving himselfe better then mee? And if any Man should doe wrong, meerely out of ill nature, why yet it is but like the Thorn, or Bryar, which prick, and scratch, because they can doe no other. (4.13-20)

²¹⁷ "pardon, n." Ibid.: "The excusing of a minor error or something causing, or presumed to have caused, offence; courteous forbearance or indulgence; acquittance of blame." A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²¹⁸ Proverbs 19:11-12: "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass."

No man does a wrong for the sake of doing a wrong, Bacon claims. As in the previous discussion of truth (1.18), a man does a wrong because he believes that he obtains some type of benefit, whether it be profit, pleasure, honor, or something else. As a result, Bacon rhetorically asks, “why should I be angry with a Man, for loving himselfe better then mee?” (4.16)

Experience reveals that one loves oneself more than one loves other men; since each man loves himself most, why should one expect other men not to love themselves most? Why should one expect other men to behave other than one does? However, Bacon does not endorse unconditional abuse and exploitation of other people. Despite our self-love, according to Bacon, we harm others with purpose, for “Profit, or Pleasure, or Honour, or the like” (4.15). Those individuals who commit wrongs, simply to commit wrongs, are sick.

Part II: Two Types of Revenge and Two Types of Vengeance Seekers

It is highly likely that at some point we will seek vengeance and will have vengeance sought against us. Since we all love ourselves more than we love other men, we must learn to seek revenge effectively. Here, Bacon divides revenges into two types—paralleling his previous discussion that “the *Revenge* of that wrong, putteth the Law out of Office” (4.5)—and ranks them based on their social consequences. First, “The most Tolerable Sort of *Revenge*, is for those wrongs which there is no Law to remedy” (4.20). If there is no formal legal avenue for recompense, revenge is required to assuage any feelings of injustice. In cases such as these, the only way that the wrong can be repaid is to take matters into one’s own hands. There is, however, a danger in doing so: “Else, a Mans Enemy, is still before hand, And it is two for one” (4.23). When there is no law, revenge is “most Tolerable” (4.20),²¹⁹ because there is no formal

²¹⁹ “tolerable, adj.” *OED*, February 28, 2011: “Such as to be tolerated, allowed, or countenanced; sufferable, allowable.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

mechanism in place to remedy “the first Wrong” (4.5). However, one must ensure that the avenging act is not, itself, punishable by law. If it is, one’s enemy will be ahead twice: first, having inflicted the initial or “the first Wrong” (4.5); and second, in seeking legal compensation for the avenging act. The less tolerable revenge, which Bacon does not make explicit, is one wherein there is a law.

For those who decide to exact revenge, there are two approaches: first, vengeance seekers who want their victim to know who they are and why they are punishing him; and second, vengeance seekers who either do not want their victim to know who they are and why they are punishing him, or do not care whether their victim knows who they are and why they are punishing him. According to Bacon, the first type of vengeance seeker “is the more Generous” (4.25) of the two. Those who want the other party to know who they are and why he is being punished, “Delight...not so much in doing the Hurt, as in Making the Party repent” (4.26). Vengeance seekers of this sort are “the more Generous” (4.25), since they “are Desirous the party should know, whence it commeth” (4.24).²²⁰ The primary motive of this type of vengeance seeker is not to harm or damage the other party, but rather to educate him and have him reflect upon his previous behavior.²²¹ Vengeance seekers of this sort are not motivated by a desire to harm their victim; rather, their motivation is, first, to have their victim admit that he actually did the initial wrong and, second, in doing so, to ensure that their victim does not commit the same wrong a second time. Therefore, the first type of vengeance seekers believe in

²²⁰ “desirous, adj.” Ibid.: “Having desire or longing; characterized by or full of desire: wishful; desiring.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²²¹ “repent, v.” Ibid., March 26, 2011: “To review one’s actions and feel contrition or regret for something one has done or omitted to do; (*esp.* in religious contexts) to acknowledge the sinfulness of one’s past action or conduct by showing sincere remorse and undertaking to reform in the future. Formerly also in weakened sense: to change one’s mind.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

rehabilitation. The second type of vengeance seekers, the “Base and Crafty Cowards, are like the Arrow, that flyeth in the Darke” (4.27). That is, one cannot see them coming. The purpose of their vengefulness is the detriment of the one who harmed them—to cause a compensatory “Hurt” (4.27)—rather than for the purpose of reform. As such, these vengeance seekers do not care whether or not their victim is aware of the relationship between the immediate harm that he suffers and his previous actions.

Bacon’s distinction between the two types of vengeance seekers, and their accompanying ranking, is consistent with his account of our sovereign good. If truth is our good, there is nothing worse, Bacon posits, than being ignorant. In the first case, vengeance is meted out for the purposes of compensation and education: since the victim is aware of who harms him and why he is being harmed, there is a rehabilitative potential. The person who inflicts the original wrong, now the victim of revenge, is made aware of the consequences of his actions and thus provided with the opportunity to repent and ensure that he does not, again, commit the same offense that has motivated revenge. In the second case, rehabilitation and repentance are irrelevant to the vengeance seeker. It matters not to the vengeance seeker that the wrongdoer knows why he is suffering; it matters only that he does suffer. There is thus no connection between the current circumstances of his suffering and his previous actions.

Part III: Revenge and Friends

The desire for revenge is further complicated when one is wronged by one’s friends. Does the maxim of self-love that Bacon previously presents (4.16) apply in the case of friends? Do we not expect more from our friends than we do from strangers? As an example, Bacon makes reference to a saying of Cosmos I de’ Medici, Duke of Florence from 1537 to 1574 CE:

Cosmus Duke of Florence, had a Desperate Saying, against Perfidious or Neglecting Friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable: You shall reade (saith he) that we are

commanded to forgive our Enemies; But you never read, that wee are commanded, to forgive our Friends. (4.29-33)

Bacon's employment of the Duke's remark suggests that one should expect one's friends to behave as one does: in one's own interest. First, if one has unfaithful friends, why would one expect them to love another more than they love themselves? Second, unless one wants to exact a later revenge, why should one forgive one's friend? We are more likely to forgive our enemies than we are our friends, because we do not expect friendship and loyalty from them: betrayal by one's supposed friends suggests failure on one's own part—an inability to recognize the true nature of the individual and the relationship. However, those whom we believe to have been our friends and who have harmed us, were not really our friends. They acted in an unfriendly way.²²² In essay one, "Of Truth," Bacon states, "There is no Vice, that doth so cover a Man with Shame, as to be found false, and perfidious" (1.70). In this context, Bacon's concern is with those who have untrustworthy friends. Bacon does not actually agree with this biblical command to forgive our enemies.²²³ In fact, he appears to advocate the opposite. Bacon does not recommend that we "Love [our] enemies, [or] do good to them which hate you."²²⁴ Rather, Bacon implies that we should expect to be betrayed by both friends and enemies and, therefore, prepare accordingly.

Job's ability to forgive is the biblical example that Bacon provides. In the Bible, Job is described as "perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."²²⁵ Job is the central figure in a theological debate between God and Satan: in the absence of divine

²²² "neglecting, adj." Ibid., February 28, 2011: "That neglects something; neglectful." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²²³ Matthew 5:44 and Luke 6:27.

²²⁴ Luke 6:27.

²²⁵ Job 1:1.

punishments and rewards, will humans remain religious? Job, the object of this divine experiment, suffers: his herds are destroyed; his servants and children are murdered; and he is subjected to physical ailments. Despite his suffering, Job does not forsake God. According to Bacon, “the Spirit of *Job*, was in a better tune; *Shall wee* (saith he) *take good at Gods Hands, and not be content to take evill also?* And so of Friends in a proportion” (4.33-36). Bacon compares Job’s suffering at the hands of God and Satan to the suffering that one’s friends may cause, yet the situations are not comparable. If one’s friends inflict the type of suffering that God allows to be inflicted on Job, one would be naïve and imprudent to allow such agony to continue. An important subtext to this argument relates to Bacon’s larger project. With the advent of certain types of technologies, men may be able to inflict suffering of biblical proportions. If the Instauration is a success, Bacon’s project promises humans this type of power. For Bacon’s contemporaries, however, human mastery of divine power is either an impossibility or a dream. Throughout this discussion, Bacon prepares his readers for the time when man will have mastery of divine power. Science, it would appear, requires justice to guide its development and use. Therefore, the men of the Instauration must maintain the humility of Job when faced with the power of God.

Those men who desire revenge fixate on the initial offense and are unable to live in the present: “This is certaine; That a Man that studieth *Revenge*, keepes his owne Wounds greene, which otherwise would heale, and doe well” (4.36-38). The desire for revenge, regardless of its purpose, keeps the wounds fresh.²²⁶ One cannot heal from the initial hurt, if one constantly strives to payback the wrong that one has suffered.

²²⁶ “green, adj. and n.” *OED*, February 28, 2011: “Unaltered by time or natural processes; fresh, new. Of a wound: Recent, fresh, unhealed, raw.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Part IV: Public Revenges

At this point in the essay, Bacon considers public revenges, thereby suggesting that all prior ideas in this essay pertain to private revenges. Public revenges, those undertaken for the good of the whole rather than for personal gain,²²⁷ can be beneficial.

Publique *Revenues*, are, for the most part, Fortunate; As that for the Death of *Caesar*; For the Death of *Pertinax*; for the Death of *Henry* the Third of France; And many more. But in private *Revenues* it is not so. (4.38-42)

Public revenges, Bacon believes, are good for the whole. He provides three historical examples to prove his point: Julius Caesar, whose assassination in 44 BCE resulted in civil war; Pertinax, whose death in 193 CE was the first in the year of five emperors; and Henry III of France, whose death in 1589 CE prevented the attack of Paris. While none of these three examples are mentioned in essay two, “Of Death” (2.39-46), all three of these rulers were murdered. Is Bacon actually advocating regicide? Bacon closes his fourth essay with a warning to those who plot revenge: “Vindicative Persons live the Life of Witches; who as they are Mischievous, So end they Infortunate” (4.42-44). Bacon does not provide any examples of those who inflicted revenge and ended unfortunate; his previous examples are of those who were the victims of public revenges.

Our understanding of and desire for revenge is inseparable from our sense of justice. As such, revenge, as Bacon explains it, is connected to how we understand the nature of existence and how we see ourselves in relation to other men. Yet, revenge is not justice; revenge is unfettered justice: it is “Wilde Justice” (4.3). From his initial distinction between revenge and justice, Bacon’s argument has proceeded in three stages: first, he advocates the avoidance of revenge and the dismissal of perceived offenses; second, he establishes that there is no reason to

²²⁷ Kiernan, commentary, 188.

“be Angry with a Man, for loving himselfe better then mee” (4.16); and third, he turns to acceptable revenges and advocates revenges for the good of the whole. According to this discussion, there are differences between public revenges—those for the good of the whole—and private revenges—those for personal goods. There are also differences between revenges for which there are existing laws to deal with the original offenses, and revenges for which there are no laws. Finally, there is a distinction between whether or not the object of the vengeance seekers is aware that he is being sought. While Bacon correctly states that revenge makes our wounds stay fresh, to behave as would Job is difficult for most people and perhaps unwise. The pursuit of revenge is connected to our belief in our reputations. Even if our material needs are satisfied, our reputational requirements may compel us to seek vengeance.

The first four essays in the text provide a preliminary, albeit incomplete account of the issues considered. In fact, these initial essays raise more questions in regard to the topics that they address, than they provide answers. Through these four essays—“Of Truth,” “Of Death,” “Of Unity in Religion,” and “Of Revenge”—Bacon establishes the limitations of our conventional understandings of these topics and compels his readers to consider them more carefully. Simultaneously, Bacon establishes the foundation for his political philosophy and psychology. Bacon first grapples with the issue of truth, which forms the basis for this entire text and his larger project. If it is not possible to know the truth, at least about certain things, man must always live in the “Candlelights” (1.21). However, if man always lives in the shadows, no man will ever be able to achieve his “Sovereigne Good” (1.41). Countless obstacles stand between a man and his good. Our desire to know the truth about those things that we do not know leaves us open to manipulation, especially from those individuals and organizations

who purport to know the unknowable things. The greatest unknown, and thus the source of our fear, is death. According to Bacon, death need not be feared. If death is not a terrifying experience—that is, if death is not “the *wages of sinne*” (2.5)—man is not vulnerable to manipulations by the Church. Fear of death is one reason that people seek comfort in the Church. Religion, Bacon claims, can be “the chiefe Band of humane Society” (3.4), if religion is in service to society. At the heart of this account, Bacon seems to suggest that although humans are self-interested (4.16), sane men are not cruel: men do not lie, simply to lie, nor do they harm other men, simply to cause harm. In fact, human beings are capable of kindness and generosity. These first four essays outline the fundamentals of Bacon’s teaching, yet the account is incomplete. The final four essays—the mirror essays to the first four essays—are necessary to flesh out Bacon’s account.

The final four essays are the culmination of Bacon’s political and psychological teaching in *Essays*. In the last essays—“Of Honour and Reputation,” “Of Judicature,” “Of Anger,” and “Of Vicissitude of Things”—Bacon returns to the first topics that he presents in the text. The chiasmic structure of the text is evident as *Essays* concludes. The questions addressed at the beginning of the text are reconsidered at the end—with the additional knowledge that Bacon has presented in the intervening essays: essay fifty-five, “Of Honour and Reputation,” returns to the concerns presented in essay four, “Of Revenge”; essay fifty-six, “Of Judicature,” explores ideas of right conduct presented in essay three, “Of Unity in Religion”; essay fifty-seven, “Of Anger,” addresses issues of frustration and impotence introduced in essay two, “Of Death”; and essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things,” limits the endorsement of truth that Bacon declares in essay one, “Of Truth.”

ESSAY FIFTY-FIVE, “OF HONOUR AND REPUTATION”: HONOR, REPUTATION, AND REVENGE

Our desire for justice, according to the conclusion of essay four, “Of Revenge,” is futile. In “Of Revenge,” Bacon declares, “There is no man, doth a wrong, for the wrongs sake; But thereby to purchase himselfe, Profit, or Pleasure, or Honour, or the like” (4.13-16). Since we are calculating beings, able to determine the potential actions that best facilitate the accomplishment of our goals, we are able to behave with purpose. Revenge is based on our desire to seek compensation for wrongs that we believe we have suffered. As such, revenge is a result of self-love (4.16), derived from our sense of our own worth, which in turn affects how we interact with the world and expect to be treated by others. In this essay, “Of Honour and Reputation,” Bacon discusses the importance of one’s sense of honor and of worth, after which he presents a series of behaviors that may aid in the pursuit of a reputation for honor.

This section of this dissertation is divided into three parts. In the first part, Bacon’s definition of honor is explicated, with emphases on the distinctions between honor and the reputation for honor and on the political utility of a reputation for honor. In the second part, the recommendations for honor are considered. In the final part, Bacon’s typologies of those who obtain honor and of the degrees of honor are presented.

Part I: Honor Defined

Honor, as defined by Bacon, is the public recognition of a man’s social value: “The Winning of *Honour*, is but the Revealing of a Mans Vertue and Worth, without Disadvantage” (55.4). Honesty and integrity of action are not the subjects of this essay; rather, Bacon’s concern is with “The Winning of Honour” (55.4). Public recognition of honor is based on the acknowledgment of one’s virtue and worth, yet one need not be honorable to obtain honor and reputation. In order “to purchase himselfe, Profit, or Pleasure, or Honour, or the like” (4.15), a

man may need to commit dishonorable acts. Therefore, there is a tension between good or virtuous action and the procurement of one's desired ends. In this essay, Bacon does not advocate virtue; rather, he explains how one may gain a reputation for virtue. Virtue itself is not at issue: for this reason, Bacon is able to state that recognition of one's honor is "without Disadvantage" (55.5), since one need not sacrifice one's desires for virtue.

Reputations are contingent on the ability of the public to identify virtue and value. As discussed in essay fifty-three, "Of Praise," the public cannot necessarily accurately identify worth: "*Praise* is the Reflection of Vertue. But it is as the Glasse or Bodie, which giveth the Reflection" (53.3). Here, Bacon does not state that the public is accurately able to recognize and mete out honor; rather, he discusses two instances wherein honor is improperly bestowed—first, on those whose virtue and worth are overvalued by the public; and, alternately, on those whose virtue and worth are undervalued by the public:

For some in their Actions, doe Wooe and affect *Honour*, and *Reputation*: Which Sort of Men, are commonly much Talked of, but inwardly little Admired. And some, contrariwise, darken their Vertue, in the Shew of it; So as they be under-valued in opinion. (55.5-9)

Some men actively attempt to gain honor and reputation.²²⁸ Those who court honor may be publically discussed and acknowledged for their virtue and worth, but privately—secretly and actually—not admired. Others, in the opposite way, "darken"—shadow, obscure, and make less visible—their virtue. As a result, they may "be under-valued in opinion" (55.9). In this context, Bacon does not discuss why different types of men choose to achieve or avoid honor and reputation. He does, however, make clear that there is no necessary connection between one's actual virtue or worth and one's subsequent honor and reputation. Thus, "The Winning of

²²⁸ "woo, v." *OED*, March 1, 2011: "To sue for or solicit the possession or achievement of; hence to 'court', 'invite', 'tempt'." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Honour” is not “the Revealing of a Mans [actual] Vertue and Worth” (55.4). It is simply an acknowledgement of social perceptions. Therefore, in this essay, Bacon addresses behaviors and conditions that are likely to increase one’s public appearance of virtue and worth and examines the consequent public acknowledgement of one’s honor and reputation.

Part II: Practical Advice for the Achievement of Honor and Reputation

If actual virtue and worth are nonessential to the procurement of honor and reputation, how does one obtain a reputation for virtue? Bacon identifies four types of men who are honored by the public: those who are trailblazers, inspirational, successful, or excellent. First, those who are founders or trailblazers are more honored than those who are followers:

If a Man performe that which hath not beene attempted before; Or attempted and given over; Or hath beene atchieved, but not with so good Circumstance; he shall purchase more *Honour*, then by Effecting a Matter of greater Difficulty, or Vertue, wherein he is but a Follower. (55.9-14)

Founders or trailblazers, Bacon claims, gain honor for two types of actions: first, for a new action; or second, for a relatively new action that has not previously been executed well or under the correct conditions. Someone who succeeds at something new, even if it has been previously attempted and accomplished, albeit not well, will gain more honor than someone who accomplishes something “of greater Difficulty” (55.13) that has been done previously. Human beings more admire novelty than adversity. Therefore, one who accomplishes something new, or relatively new, is more likely to gain or obtain more honor than one who accomplishes something of increased difficulty that has already been done, albeit perhaps not done well.

Second, a man who is inspirational, and thus able to excite many people, is more likely to be honored than one who is less inspiring: “If a Man so temper his Actions, as in some one of them, hee doth content everie Faction, or Combination of People, the Musicke will bee the fuller” (55.14-16). The more people whom one can please or inspire, the more people will

consider one worthy; and the more people who consider one worthy, the more honor one will receive. People gravitate toward inspirational and charismatic individuals. One who is able to excite many people from different backgrounds is likely to rouse a greater following than one who is less able to do so. As a result, an inspirational individual is able to form an association, from previously disparate individuals, for the enhancement of honor.²²⁹

Third, a man who succeeds in his attempt to complete an action is more likely to obtain honor than one who fails in his attempt. In his discussion of the trailblazers, Bacon indicates that the person who first and most successfully completes a task is more likely to obtain more honor than one who accomplishes a more difficult task second. Difficulty is not at issue; success and timing are: “A man is an ill Husband of his *Honour*, that entreth into any Action, the Failing wherein may disgrace him more, then the Carying of it through can *Honor* him” (55.17-19). A man must be able to weigh outcomes and determine the likelihood of accomplishment. It is poor management of one’s business if failure to obtain one’s goal results in more dishonor than the potential honor afforded by its success.²³⁰

And fourth, since the public appreciates competition, honor is most quickly obtained if one is able to overcome a rival:

Honour, that is gained and broken upon Another, hath the quickest Reflection; Like Diamonds cut with Fascets. And therefore, let a Man contend, to excell any Competitors of his in *Honour*, in Outshooting them, if he can, in their own Bowe. (55.19-23)

²²⁹ “combination, n.” Ibid.: “An association or society thus formed.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²³⁰ “husband, n.” Ibid.: “With qualifying epithet: One who manages his household, or his affairs or business in general, well or ill, profitably or wastefully, etc. Most commonly good husband: One who manages his affairs with skill and thrift; a saving, frugal, or provident man; an economist.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

When we compare like pairs, we are better able to make normative assessments. In the case of men, we are better able to assess the honor and worth of men when we can compare the same feats of different men: one man will necessarily be better than the other man. In competition, the most effective way to obtain honor is to overcome a rival who is known for his excellence.

Bacon suggests that the public admires an underdog: since an underdog faces greater adversity than does the favorite and is thus expected to fail, people rally for the success of an underdog; if the underdog succeeds, he gains more honor than he would have received had he been favored from the outset.

At this point, Bacon's discussion appears to be contradictory: in his presentation of the trailblazer, Bacon states that one will garner more honor by being the first person to accomplish a task "then by Effecting a Matter of greater Difficulty, or Vertue, wherein he is but a follower" (55.13); however, in his presentation of the underdog, Bacon states that one will garner more honor by outdoing competitors "in their own Bowe" (55.23). The first example recommends that one accomplish something new, regardless of the difficulty associated with the task; the second example recommends that one do something that has been done, because of the adversity in overcoming another individual. Two competing factors are at issue: first, the newness of the task; and second, its associated difficulty. As such, the most expedient approach is contingent on context: time, place, the individuals involved, and the task at hand. One who is desirous of honor and reputation is required to assess the situation, weigh the potential for success, and act accordingly. Consequently, while there are no clear rules for success, there are ways in which an individual can maximize his chances to obtain honor.

Bacon considers the behaviors that help one translate action into a reputation: how does one ensure that one does not "darken [one's] Vertue" (55.8)? First, "Discreet Followers and

Servants helpe much to *Reputation: Omnis Fama a Domesticis emanat*” (55.23-25), which translates as all his fame by domestic waters flows. Well-placed followers, servants, and friends can foster one’s reputation.²³¹ Second, one must ensure that one remains humble, so as not to incur anger or envy in others:

Envy, which is the Canker of *Honour*, is best extinguished, by declaring a Mans Selfe, in his Ends, rather to seeke Merit, then Fame: And by Attributing a Mans Successes, rather to divine Providence and Felicity, then to his owne Vertue or Policy. (55.25-29)

Envy threatens to corrode or corrupt one’s reputation.²³² If one’s reputation is based solely on opinion—especially false opinion—it is subject to extreme changeability. However, if one’s reputation is based on merit—especially actual worth—it is less subject to changeability than if one’s reputation is based purely on perception. As such, one must control and discourage envy, since envy can erode one’s reputation. To this end, Bacon recommends that one attribute one’s successes to luck or favorable circumstances, rather than to one’s own virtue or planning.

Based on the preceding discussion, gaining a reputation for virtue and worth is variable: while one can attempt to foster the conditions that make a reputation for virtue more likely, one remains beholden to public opinion; reputation is founded on sentiments that are based on opinions. However, opinions can be wrong. Bacon has already made this point clear: the reputations of individuals may be overvalued or undervalued (55.6-10).

²³¹ Bacon has already discussed this point in essay forty-eight, “Of Followers and Friends,” in which he states, “the most Honourable Kinde of *Following*, is to be Followed, as one that apprehendth, to advance Vertue and Desert” (48.28).

²³² “canker, n.” *OED*, March 1, 2011: “A malignant or destructive influence that corrodes or corrupts, and is difficult to eradicate.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Part III: The Types of Men Who Obtain Honor

The question, then, is who obtains the highest honor? Bacon lists five types of political leaders who possess “The true Marshalling of the Degrees of *Sovereigne Honour*” (55.29)—founders of states, lawgivers, liberators, propagators of the empire, and those who rule in times of peace. In addition, he presents five types of “Degrees of *Honour* in *Subjects*” (55.48). All of these types of men are public professionals: in order to obtain “*Sovereigne Honour*” (55.30), one must be a political actor. Based on Bacon’s discussion in this essay, there is no other forum in which men may obtain the highest honors and reputations.

The most effective way to gain “*Sovereigne Honour*” (55.30) is to found a state: “In the First Place are *Conditores Imperiorum; Founders of States, and Common-Wealths*” (55.30-32). As examples, Bacon cites Romulus, who along with his twin brother, Remus, is said to have founded Rome in the eighth century BCE; Cyrus, who founded the Persian Empire in the sixth century BCE; Caesar, who founded the Roman Empire in the first century BCE; Ottomon, presumably Othman, who founded the Ottoman Empire in the fourteenth century CE; and Ishmael, to whom Bacon refers as “the *Sophy of Persia*” (43.13), whose life is mentioned in Genesis and in the Quran.²³³ Bacon does not elaborate upon his list, nor does he explain why founders obtain the highest honors; it would appear that, for Bacon, this account speaks for itself. Founders fulfill all four of the criteria previously identified by Bacon as precursors to honor: they are trailblazers insofar as they create a new state; they inspire otherwise disparate groups to

²³³ Genesis 16, 17, 21, and 25; *The Koran*, trans. A. J. Arberry, (Toronto, ON: The Macmillian Company, 1969), II:119-128, III:74, VI:85, XIX:55, XXI:85, and XXXVIII:47.

come together in their new state; they successfully found lasting empires; and they are excellent insofar as they have overcome the previous rulers.²³⁴

The second degree of honor is afforded to lawgivers: “In the Second Place are *Legislatores*, *Law-givers*; which are also called, *Second Founders*, or *Perpetui Principes*, because they Govern by their Ordinances, after they are gone” (55.33-36). Bacon provides six examples: Lycurgus, the lawgiver of Sparta, who died in the eighth century BCE; Solon, the lawgiver of Athens, who died in the sixth century BCE; Justinian, who codified the laws of Ancient Rome and Byzantium and died in the sixth century CE; King Edgar, who collected the laws of the united England and died in the tenth century CE; and the King of Spain “*Alphonsus of Castile*, the *Wise*, that made the *Siete Partidas*” (55.37),²³⁵ who died in the thirteenth century CE. The reason lawgivers are considered lesser than founders is unclear, since they seem to fulfill all of the criteria outlined by Bacon: they are trailblazers insofar as they create, or compile, the laws; they inspire people to follow their laws; their laws are successfully implemented; and they are considered excellent for replacing, organizing, or reiterating the laws that previously have been followed. The difference between lawgivers and founders, then, may not be as clear as Bacon’s division initially suggests.

Below lawgivers, Bacon lists liberators or refounders: “In the Third Place, are *Liberatores*, or *Salvatores*: Such as compound the long Miseries of Civill Warres, or deliver their Countries from Servitude of Strangers, or Tyrants” (55.38-40). These men ameliorate unsettled

²³⁴ Presumably, the previous rulers, having been overthrown, are no longer sufficiently excellent to maintain power.

²³⁵ This seven-part code served as the Castilian law statutes.

political times²³⁶ and liberate their people from oppressive foreign rule and enslavement.²³⁷ As examples, Bacon lists “*Augustus Caesar, Vespasianus, Aurelianus, Theodoricus, K. Henry the 7. of England, K. Henry the 4. of France*” (55.41). Members of this third honorable type fulfill three of the criteria outlined by Bacon: they are inspirational, since they are able to motivate oppressed people to unite; they are successful in their undertaking, since they are remembered as refounders; and they are excellent, since they, as the underdogs, are able to unseat the regnant power.

The fourth group of men “are *Propagatores or Propugnatores Imperii*; Such as in Honourable Warres enlarge their Territories, or make Noble defence against Invaders” (55.43-45). Bacon names no exemplars who have defended or propagated their respective empires or enlarged their respective kingdoms. Finally, there “are *Patres Patriae*; which reigne justly, and make the Times good, wherein they live” (55.46). While Bacon provides ample examples for the first three types, the last two, he claims, “need no Examples, they are in such Number” (55.47). These two types of honorable men fulfill only one of the criteria: they successfully enlarge or maintain their territory—that is, they perpetuate the relative status quo of their states or empires. Since even Bacon does not name specific men of this type, his omission of specific examples, despite his explanation, leads one to believe that enlarging one’s kingdom and ruling during peaceful times are less effective means of obtaining “*Sovereigne Honour*” (55.30) than are the previous three types of achieving honor.

²³⁶ “compound, v.” *OED*, March 1, 2011: “To settle or compose (disturbance, strife, litigation, a difference).” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²³⁷ “servitude, n.” *Ibid.*: “The condition of being politically enslaved; subjection to a foreign power or to oppressive rule. With *of* (or possessive): The state of being under the yoke *of* (a tyrant, a conqueror).” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Bacon also presents five “Degrees of *Honour in Subjects*” (55.48). More specifically, these are honors bestowed upon subjects by sovereigns. First are the “*Participes Curarum*” (55.49), those who, literally translated, are partakers of cares. Men with this honor are the confidants and advisors of the sovereign. Second are the “*Duces Belli*” (55.52), those who are the military leaders and advisors of the sovereign. Third are the “*Gratiosi*” (55.53), or influential oligarchs, who do not exceed their power or place and thus pose no threat to the sovereign’s power or to the people.²³⁸ Fourth are the “*Negotiis pares*” (55.56), who have great respect and great responsibility; literally translated, they have the affairs of equals.

To these four honors of subjects, Bacon adds a fifth, less common, unexpected honor with which he concludes this essay: “That is, of such as *Sacrifice themselves, to Death or Danger, for the Good of their Countrey: As was M. Regulus, and the Two Decii*” (55.59-61). Those men who sacrifice themselves for the good of their sovereign, according to Bacon, should “be ranked amongst the Greatest, which happeneth rarely” (55.58). Since men of this highest honor die in service to their respective states, they are truly exceptional. Bacon’s first example is M. Regulus, the Roman General who was captured by Carthage and then returned to Rome to negotiate a peace. Instead of supporting the interests of Carthage, the General encouraged the Romans to reject the terms of the peace. On his return to Carthage, around 250 BCE, he was tortured and killed.²³⁹ Bacon’s second and third examples are of a father and son, who, according to Livy,²⁴⁰ were both captured in battle and sacrificed themselves. This rare type of honor may, in fact, be true honor. In this case, honor does have a drawback: death. Men of this

²³⁸ “scantling, n.” Ibid.: “Limited measure, space, amount: a limit.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²³⁹ It is unclear why the General did not remain in Rome.

²⁴⁰ Livy (59 BCE to 17 AD), also known as Titus Livius, was a Roman historian.

sort willingly sacrifice themselves for the good of the whole, a topic discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation.

In this essay, Bacon declares that honor and reputation are variable and subject to change. There need not be a correlation between virtue and merit, and honor and reputation. Honor is based on perceptions and opinions, but perceptions and opinions are not necessarily based on actualities. Our desire for honor and reputation is connected to our sense of justice. We all have a sense of our just desserts: we want to be rewarded for our honorable acts and accomplishments, and others to be punished for their dishonorable acts and behaviors. Since true virtue and honor are difficult to quantify, reputation and material well-being are considered approximations of worth or merit. When we consider essay fifty-fifty, “Of Honour and Reputation,” in conjunction with essay four, “Of Revenge,” the futility of our aspirations for justice become clear. Since we each have a strong sense of self-love (4.16) and rationally understand that we should not “be angry with a Man, for loving himselfe better then mee” (4.16), all honor and all reputation are based on perspective, rather than on virtue or merit. Human justice, therefore, can only ever be approximate, while human honor can only ever be relative. It is necessary, therefore, not only to enact good laws, but also to train competent lawyers and judges.

ESSAY FIFTY-SIX, “OF JUDICATURE”: HUMAN JUSTICE AND LAW

Law stands as a compromise between perfect justice and wild justice: perfect justice demands a wise, benevolent, unbiased judge who, based on the model of Solomon—Bacon’s epitome of a just judge—metes out flawless justice; wild justice assumes that each individual is the judge in his own case, who metes out justice based on individual interest and self-love (4.16). Barring a Solomon-like judge, there must be a way to temper wild justice despite our inability to have perfect justice. If one believes in a divine order, God and the Church provide a solution. It

is incumbent on man to behave justly in this life in order to garner the benefits of the next life. When one suffers an inevitable injustice in this life, one's desire for wild justice must be tempered by one's knowledge that although there is no perfect justice in this life, there may be in the next. If one is not a believer, however, one is left with the approximation of perfect justice that is provided by law. Since legal justice is man-made, it is conventional and varies from place to place and time to time. It is, at its base, subject to human error. The same impetus that compels one towards "Wilde Justice" (4.3) can affect judicature. Self-love is powerful and must not be underestimated. As such, law serves as the foundation of civil society and a fundamental means of social organization. Judicature, as Bacon understands it, provides compelling reasons to behave well in this life, without a divine impetus.

This section of the dissertation is divided into three parts. In the first part, Bacon's account of effective judges is considered. In this discussion, Bacon provides practical directions for judges. In the second part, Bacon considers judicial accountability. He outlines those to whom a judge is obligated and the manner in which a judge ought to behave. In the final part, Bacon presents Solomon as an exemplar of the just judge. In many respects, Smeaton correctly considers Bacon's argument in this essay "lofty,"²⁴¹ based on Bacon's biography.

Part I: The Role of Judges

Bacon begins his fifty-sixth essay, "Of Judicature," with a warning: "*Judges* ought to remember, that their Office is *Jus dicere*, and not *Jus dare*; *To Interpret Law*, and not to *Make Law*, or *Give Law*" (56.3-5). Judges are public officials, not lawgivers,²⁴² and, therefore, are

²⁴¹ Smeaton, introduction, xv-xvi.

²⁴² "judge, n." *OED*, April 22, 2011: "A public officer appointed to administer the law; one who has authority to hear and try causes in a court of justice." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

authorized to apply the law, not create law. If a judge forgets his place, “it be like the Authority, claimed by the *Church of Rome*; which under pretext of Exposition of Scripture, doth not sticke to Adde and Alter; And to Pronounce that, which they doe not Finde; And by *Shew of Antiquitie*, to introduce *Noveltie*” (56.5-9). Bacon charges the Vatican with acting beyond its bounds, under the pretext of scriptural interpretation. Therefore, judges must ensure that they do not create, alter, or extend the law under the pretext of interpretation of the law, or by the pretext of antiquity—that is, maintenance of the status quo—invent new laws.

Since judges are counseled not to behave as lawgivers, how should they comport themselves? Bacon presents three pairs of behaviors between which a good judge must mediate: “*Judges* ought to be more Learned, then Wittie; More Reverend, then Plausible; And more Advised, then Confident” (56.9-11). The intellectual ability of judges—that is, their cleverness or their genius²⁴³—is less important than their knowledge of the law; they must be reverential to the law, rather than desirous of popular approval; and they must be more reflective as regards their legal pronouncement than fully assured in their judgments. Most importantly, “Above all Things, Integrity is their Portion, and Proper Vertue” (56.11). In addition to these three characteristics—knowledge of the law, reverence for the law, and reflection on the law—a judge must not become corrupt and must have suitable virtue in order to adjudicate disputes based on legal statutes.

A judge must be able to distinguish between purposeful and accidental wrongdoing. According to biblical law,²⁴⁴ one who intentionally alters a property line, by moving the stone marker that serves as the divide, transgresses the law and is consequently cursed. In contrast,

²⁴³ “witty, adj.” Ibid.: “Having (good) intellectual ability; intelligent, clever, ingenious; skillful, expert, capable.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁴⁴ Deuteronomy 27:17.

one who accidentally alters a property line, by misplacing²⁴⁵ the stone marker that serves as the divide, is blameful, but not legally culpable. In some cases, a stone serves as a marker; in other cases, a stone is simply a stone. The interpretation of biblical law requires a judge to determine purpose and intent:

Cursed (saith the Law) *is hee that removeth the Land-marke*. The Mislaiier of a *Meere Stone* is to blame. But it is the Unjust *Judge*, that is the Capitall Remover of Land-markes, when he Defineth amisse of Lands and Propertie. (56.12-16)

Bacon's employment of this biblical reference serves a twofold purpose. First, the example indicates that the duties of a judge require the ability to distinguish intention and premeditation from accident and incident. Second, the example serves to further elucidate the nature of law: all judicial decisions serve as landmarks. When a judge determines and defines²⁴⁶ the boundary of the law, his ruling establishes a precedent. Therefore, a judge who erroneously defines the law is unjust. Since law is based on precedent, every judicial decision both forms the law and reforms the law: "One Foule Sentence, doth more Hurt, then many Foule Examples. For these doe but Corrupt the Streame; The other Corrupteth the Fountaine" (56.16-18). Bacon's metaphor indicates that one corrupt legal decision is worse—presumably, more detrimental to justice—than are multiple illegal actions: "So saith *Salomon*; *Fons turbatus, et Vena corrupta, est Justus cadens in causa sua coram Adversario*" (56.18), which translates as a fountain troubled, and a corrupted spring, is the just man falling down in the cause of his own before the

²⁴⁵ "mislay, v." *OED*, April 23, 2011: "To lay, place, or set wrongly; to err in placing (a thing)." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁴⁶ "define, v." *Ibid.*: "To determine, decide." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

adversary.²⁴⁷ When a just man loses his suit, the judge's ruling corrupts the fountain of justice and the spring of law.

As Bacon presents the role of the judge in this essay, a justice ought to be above reproach. A judge stands as an arbiter of law, rather than as a creator of law. In this respect, then, a judge ensures that our longings for justice are maintained. Unlike those of other men, the decisions of a justice are permanent. They have ongoing implications for the entire legal system. Therefore, a judge must understand the gravity of his position and act with integrity.

Part II: Judicial Accountability

A judge is accountable for his actions: "The Office of *Judges*, may have Reference, Unto the *Parties that sue*; Unto the *Advocates that Plead*; Unto the *Clerkes* and *Ministers of Justice* underneath them; And to the *Sovereigne* or *State* above them" (56.20-23). A judge may be scrutinized by four different groups: the suing parties, the lawyers, the clerks, and the state. In the remainder of this essay, Bacon considers the responsibilities that a judge has to these four groups: the plaintiffs; the lawyers; the political actors, which include the bureaucrats; and the state.

In the first case, with respect for those who sue, a judge must avoid injustices and delays (56.24-27). The first duty of a judge, Bacon contends, is to subdue instances of physical violence and repress instances of cheating or deception:

The Principall Dutie of a *Judge*, is to suppress Force and Fraud; whereof Force is the more Pernicious, when it is Open; And Fraud, when it is Close and Disguised. Adde thereto Contentious Suits, which ought to be spewed out, as the Surfet of Courts. (56.27-31)²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ Psalms 25:26.

²⁴⁸ Smeaton identifies this passage as an example of Bacon's theoretical "love and respect for justice." Smeaton, introduction, xxi.

Force is more dangerous when it is in the open, while fraud is more dangerous when it is hidden. Public physical violence is more likely to become widespread than is hidden violence, as more people are given an opportunity to join. As a result, the possibilities increase for substantial civil unrest and property damage. Fraud, in contrast, is most dangerous when it is hidden because more people are likely to become defrauded and suffer property damage. Once fraud is exposed, the duty of the judge is to dismiss quarrelsome suits that are excessive or superfluous to the court.

The purpose of the law is to ensure that justice is served. Therefore, a judge must ensure that he is just in his sentencing. Following the example of God in Isaiah 40:3-4, a judge must appear to both sides to have been a fair adjudicator. The virtue of a judge is to make inequalities appear to be just and to apply the law fairly: “*Judges* must beware of Hard Constructions, and Strained Inferences; For there is no Worse Torture, then the Torture of Lawes” (56.41-43). A judge must not apply an interpretation²⁴⁹ to the law that is based on weak premises:²⁵⁰

Specially in case of Lawes Penall, they ought to have Care, that that which was meant for Terrour, be not turned into Rigour; And that they bring not upon the People, that Shower, whereof the Scripture speaketh; *Pluet super eos Laqueos*: For Penall Lawes Pressed, are a *Shower of Snares* upon the People. Therefore, let *Penall Lawes*, if they have beene Sleepers of long, or if they be growne unfit for the present Time, be by Wise *Judges* confined in the Execution; *Judicis Officium est, ut Res, ita Tempora Rerum, &c.* In *Causes of Life and Death*; *Judges* ought (as farre as the Law permitteth) in Justice to remember Mercy; And to Cast a Severe Eye upon the Example, but a Mercifull Eye upon the Person. (55.43-55)

Judicature is not simply the pronounced judgment on a dispute; judicature also concerns how the judge applies the law and determines punishment and compensation. Laws that are intended to

²⁴⁹ “construction, n.” *OED*, April 23, 2011: “A particular explanation or interpretation put upon a law, etc.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁵⁰ “inference, n.” *Ibid.*: “That which is inferred, a conclusion drawn from data or premisses. Also, an implication; the conclusion that one is intended to draw.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

scare people, Bacon avers, should be recognized as such and not be employed unnecessarily. Laws that have been dormant,²⁵¹ or have fallen into disuse,²⁵² should be applied with clemency and compassion; the act itself should be condemned rigorously, but a compassionate stance towards the offender should be maintained.

In the second case, a judge must respect “the *Advocates* and *Counsell that Plead*” (56.56). With respect for those who present the case, a justice must remain calm and serious in order to ensure “Patience and Gravitie of Hearing” (56.57). Further, a judge ought not be “Over-speaking” (56.58) or verbose.²⁵³ In order to judge with “Grace” (56.59), a judge must avoid three actions that Bacon deems undignified: “first to finde that, which hee might have heard, in due time, from the Barre; or to shew Quicknesse of Conceit in Cutting off Evidence or Counsell too short; Or to prevent Information, by Questions though Pertinent” (56.59-62). First, the judge must ensure that his behavior does not pre-empt evidence from being presented; second, the judge must not interrupt or stop the presentation of evidence by the advocates; and third, the judge must not limit the presentation of incriminating information by asking too many questions.

According to Bacon, a judge has “Foure” (56.63) tasks in a hearing: “To direct the Evidence; To Moderate Length, Repetition, or Impertinency of Speech; To Recapitulate, Select, and Collate, the Materiall Points of that, which hath beene said; And to Give the Rule or Sentence” (56.63-66). It is the task of a judge to moderate a hearing. Therefore, prior to passing sentence, it is a judge’s responsibility to collect, choose, and bring together for summation the

²⁵¹ “sleeper, n.” Ibid.: “A thing in a dormant or dead state.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁵² “long, adj. and n.” Ibid.: “Of long: since a remote period; for a long time past.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁵³ “overspeaking, adj.” Ibid., March 11, 2011: “Verbose; over-elaborate in speech.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as the first example of this usage.

relevant points that have been presented.²⁵⁴ Any judge who attempts to do more than these tasks, Bacon claims, oversteps his office: “Either of Glory and willingnesse to Speake; Or of Impatience to Heare; Or of Shortnesse of Memorie; Or of Want of a Staid and Equall Attention” (56.68-70).

Two behaviors are singled out by Bacon that a judge must avoid: first, a judge must not act as a lawyer who presents the case; and second, a judge must not play favorites. Judges should strive to “imitate *God*, in whose Seat they sit; who *represseth the Presumptuous*, and *giveth Grace to the Modest*” (56.72). As does God, the judge ought to “resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”²⁵⁵ It is the task of the judge to confer honors and dignities upon the lawyers who argue their cases well: “Especially towards the Side which obtaineth not; For that upholds, in the *Client*, the Reputation of his *Counsell*, and beats downe, in him, the Conceit of his *Cause*” (56.78-81). Bacon’s advice is particularly respectful towards the advocate who has lost the suit. A judge ought to ensure that the advocate, if he has done his job well, is able to maintain his professional reputation, regardless of the outcome of the case.

In his discussion of the responsibilities that a judge owes to advocates, Bacon inserts a brief consideration of public duty. If an advocate is incompetent, a judge has a public duty to make that incompetency known: “There is likewise due to the *Publique*, a Civill Reprehension of *Advocates*, where there appeareth Cunning Counsel, Grosse Neglect, Slight Information, Indiscreet Pressing, or an Over-bold Defence” (56.81-84). The duty of the judge to maintain a professional environment in the court and to respect the advocates is limited by his duty to

²⁵⁴ “collate, v.” Ibid., April 25, 2011: “To bring together for comparison; to compare carefully and exactly, in order to ascertain points of agreement and difference.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁵⁵ James 4:6.

ensure that the advocates are competent. Censure is required for advocates who are underhanded, negligent, inappropriate in their questioning or behavior in court, or ignorant as regards either their knowledge of the case or their knowledge of the law.

Bacon's final point as concerns a judge's behavior towards the advocates requires a judge to ensure that his ruling is upheld. Therefore, not only must a judge's legal reasoning be sound, but his behavior must also be appropriate:

And let not the *Counsell* at the Barre, chop with the *Judge*, nor winde himselfe into the handling of the *Cause* anew, after the *Judge* hath Declared his Sentence: But on the other side, Let not the *Judge* meet the *Cause* halfe Way; Nor give Occasion to the Partie to say; *His Counsell or Proofes were not heard.* (56.84-90)

In court, a judge is neither an advocate, nor a friend of the advocates. Therefore, the advocates and the judge should not chat or “bandy words,”²⁵⁶ unrelated to the case. At the conclusion of a suit, there should be no grounds on which an advocate can demand a second hearing. If the judge has comported himself in the manner outlined by Bacon—fairly and equitably to both sides—there should be no reason for complaint on the part of the advocates.

In the third case, a judge must be respectful of political and bureaucratic actors—those who make, enact, and enforce the laws. The concerns of clerks and ministers are important to the judicial process: “The Place of *Justice*, is an Hallowed Place; And therefore, not only the Bench, but the Foot-pace, and Precincts, and Purprise thereof, ought to be preserved without Scandall and Corruption” (56.92-95). Justice should be sanctified not only at the seat of the bench, but also at the “raised portion of a floor” upon which the bench sits,²⁵⁷ the area

²⁵⁶ “chop, v.” *OED*, April 25, 2011: “To bandy words, to answer back.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁵⁷ “foot-pace, n.” *Ibid.*: “A raised portion of a floor; a dais or platform; e.g. the step or raised floor on which an altar stands.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

surrounding it,²⁵⁸ and the entire domain.²⁵⁹ Echoing Matthew 7:13, Bacon states, “For certainly, *Grapes*, (as the *Scripture* saith) *will not be gathered of Thornes or Thistles*: Neither can *Justice* yeeld her Fruit with Sweetnesse, amongst the Briars and Brambles, of Catching and Poling *Clerkes* and *Ministers*” (56.95-98). Likening justice to grapes, a particularly fragile fruit, Bacon claims that justice cannot thrive in an inhospitable environment. Clerks and ministers have a duty, according to Bacon, to help cultivate a respectful and honest environment for justice.

Bacon lists four types of clerks and ministers who can negatively influence the court. One type raises frivolous suits that bloat the court and cause the country to suffer: “First, Certain Persons, that are Sowers of Suits; which make the Court swell, and the Country pine” (56.100). The second type engages in arguments that regard legal jurisdiction. People of this sort may present themselves as friends of the court, but are in fact parasites who, for their own “scraps,”²⁶⁰—personal benefits—feed upon the legal system: “The Second Sort is of those, that ingage Courts, in Quarells of Jurisdiction, and are not truly *Amici Curiae*, but *Parasiti Curiae*; in puffing a Court up beyond her Bounds, for their owne Scraps, and Advantage” (56.101-105). Third are those who are “the Left Hands of Courts; Persons that are full of Nimble and Sinister Trickes and Shifts, whereby they pervert the Plaine and Direct Courses of *Courts*, and bring *Justice* into Oblique Lines and Labyrinths” (56.106-109). These men are “the Left Hands of

²⁵⁸ “precincts, n.” Ibid.: “The general area surrounding something, without reference to a specific defined area; the environs or surroundings of a place.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁵⁹ “purprise, n.” Ibid.: “The space enclosed by a given circumference or boundary; a precinct, a circuit. Also in extended use: a domain, a realm.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁶⁰ “scraps, n.” Ibid.: “The remains of a meal; fragments (of food); broken meat. *rare* in *sing.*” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Courts” (56.105), the weaker hands, who are dishonest²⁶¹ and employ trickery to alter the course of the courts and to make justice opaque and unclear. Finally, there is a fourth type:

the Poler and Exacter of Fees; which justifies the Common Resemblance of the *Courts* of *Justice*, to the *Bush*, whereunto while the Sheepe flies for the defence in Wether, hee is sure to loose Part of his Fleece. (56.110-113)

Those who rob and extort money²⁶² are sure to lose some of their coats in the tangle. The court of justice is like the “*Bush*.” There are two interpretations of this passage. During times of trouble, people seek refuge in the court, as sheep seek refuge in the bush. While reprieve can be sought in both the court and the bush, the potential danger that one might lose one’s coat always exists. In the pursuit of legal compensation, one may lose one’s suit and be displeased with the outcome of the court. Second, a bush also refers to a hinterland, a wild and lawless place. A corrupt court of law is akin to a hinterland: without dignity and authority.

While clerks and ministers may be troublesome, they are also helpful and necessary to the court. In contrast to the meddlesome clerk and minister, the competent clerk or minister is indispensable to the operations of the legal system:

On the other side, an *Ancient Clerke*, skilfull in Presidents, Wary in Proceeding, and Understanding in the *Businesse* of the *Court*, is an excellent Finger of a *Court*; And doth many times point the way to the *Judge* himselfe. (56.113-117)

Therefore, the judge must ensure that he does not predetermine the type of clerk or minister with whom he is dealing. A competent clerk or minister can be of benefit to the client, the judge, and the entire legal system.

²⁶¹ “sinister, adj.” Ibid.: “Of actions, practices, etc.: Dishonest, unfair; not straightforward, underhand; dark.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁶² “exacter, n.” Ibid.: “One who enforces payment of (dues); also one who demands more than his due, an extortioner.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Judges also have a responsibility towards the “the *Sovereigne and Estate*” (56.118). As a reminder, Bacon urges judges to recall “the Conclusion of the *Roman Twelve Tables: Salus Populi Suprema Lex*; And to know, that Lawes, except they bee in Order to that End, are but Things Captious, and Oracles not well Inspired” (56.119-122). A judge must remember, as written in the first Roman coda, that the welfare of the people is the highest law. As such, the relationship between the judges and the state is reciprocal:

Therefore it is an Happie Thing in a *State*, when *Kings* and *States* doe often Consult with *Judges*; And againe, when *Judges* doe often Consult with the *King* and the *State*; The one, when there is Matter of Law, intervenient in Businesse of State; The other, when there is some Consideration of State, intervenient in Matter of Law. (56.123-128)

Legal concerns and political concerns are connected: legal outcomes affect and alter political outcomes, while political outcomes affect and alter legal outcomes.²⁶³ Therefore, the state and judges, Bacon avers, must be in consultation for the welfare of the people. Often, concerns brought before a legal tribunal²⁶⁴ appear to “bee *Meum* and *Tuum*” (56.129)—my and thy—when, in fact, they affect the state.²⁶⁵ In a personal interjection, Bacon, in the first person, defines these concerns:

I call Matter of Estate, not onely the parts of *Soveraigntie*, but whatsoever introduceth any Great Alteration, or Dangerous president; Or Concerneth manifestly any great portion of People. And let no man weakly conceive, that Just Laws, and True Policie, have any *Antipathie*. (56.131-135)

²⁶³ “intervenient, adj. and n.” Ibid.: “That intervenes or comes in between; that comes in as something incidental, secondary, or extraneous.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁶⁴ “deduce, v.” Ibid.: “*Law*. To bring before a tribunal.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁶⁵ “trench, v.” Ibid.: “To extend in effect to; to extend so as to affect.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Matters of state, as defined by Bacon, pertain to concerns that, first, may create a change or establish a precedent and, second, may have an effect on a large number of people. In summation, Bacon claims that there is no distinction, nor should there be any contradictions, between “Just Laws, and True Policie” (56.135). Legal concerns and political concerns are inseparable.

Part III: The Perfectly Just Judge

Bacon concludes this essay with two biblical references. The first is to King Solomon, both a sovereign and a judge, who is Bacon’s paradigm of the perfectly just judge:

Let *Judges* also remember, that *Salomons Throne*, was supported by Lions, on both Sides; Let them be Lions, but yet Lions under the Throne; Being circumspect, that they doe not checke, or oppose any Points of *Soveraigntie*. Let not *Judges* also, be so Ignorant of their owne Right, as to thinke, there is not left to them, as a Principall Part of their Office, a Wise Use, and application of Lawes. For they may remember, what the *Apostle* saith, of a Greater *Law*, then theirs: *Nos scimus quia Lex bona est, modo quis ea utatur Legitime*. (56.140-146)

The decorative lions that support Solomon’s throne, according to Bacon, are indicative of the proper relationship between a judge and the state. A judge, similar to the lions that uphold Solomon’s throne, is neither subject to the state—that is, below the throne—nor superior to the state—that is, above the throne. Rather, judges support the state—that is, they flank the state. Therefore, Bacon reiterates the advice that he presents at the beginning of the essay: “*Judges* ought to remember, that their Office is *Jus dicere*, and not *Jus dare*; *To Interpret Law*, and not to *Make Law*, or *Give Law*” (56.3-5). Judges should work for the benefit of the state, yet remember that they have their knowledge of the law and its application at their disposal. As a final reminder to judges that “Integritie is their Portion, and Proper Vertue” (56.11), Bacon closes this

essay with a quotation from Timothy I: we know that the law is good, if a man uses it lawfully (56.145).²⁶⁶

The relationship between this essay and its mirror, essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” and the mirrored pair of essay fifty-five and essay four is clear when we consider these four essays in conjunction. First, Bacon begins “Of Judicature” with a comparison of the court to “the Authority, claimed by the *Church of Rome*” (56.5). In essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” Bacon delineates the potential dangers that the Church presents to social organization, particularly since the Church in his day was such a powerful force in the lives of so many people. In this essay, Bacon warns against a court’s attempt to usurp powers, as has the Church, that are not within its purview. The Church can avoid sectarian strife and internal disputes by not attempting to revise scripture. Similarly, it is not the place of the judge to create law.

When the pair “Of Unity in Religion” and “Of Judicature” are considered in light of the pair “Of Revenge” and “Of Honor and Reputation,” Bacon’s ideas begin to take shape. Since “Of Revenge” follows “Of Unity in Religion,” we can appreciate the need for wild justice as a result of the Church’s inability to fulfill all of our needs for justice. “Of Honor and Reputation” stands as an explanation for the deficit. Our sense of our self-worth in this life is unrecognized by the Church. The solution to this tension, according to Bacon, is provided by judicature. Man-made law is our source of justice in this life: it pre-emptively satisfies our desires for wild justice and usurps the power of the Church and divine law.

ESSAY FIFTY-SEVEN, “OF ANGER”: MASTERY AND MODERATION

Good laws that are appropriately used neither completely remove the possibility of error, nor ensure all parties will be pleased with each outcome. For these reasons, men become upset

²⁶⁶ I Timothy 1:8.

and angry. In essay fifty-seven, Bacon turns to the human passion of anger. He begins with an inescapable fact about anger: “To seeke to extinguish *Anger* utterly, is but a Bravery of the *Stoickes*. We have better Oracles: *Be Angry, but Sinne not. Let not the Sunne goe downe upon your Anger*” (57.5). It is impossible to expunge anger completely from our psyches. In “Of Death,” essay fifty-seven’s mirror, Bacon accuses the stoics of having “bestowed too much cost upon *Death*, and by their great preparations, made it appeare more fearefull” (2.46-48). In essay fifty-seven, he accuses the stoics, who attempted to expunge anger, of mere boastfulness. As a reply to those who suggest that anger can be utterly extinguished, Bacon directs us to Ephesians 4:26, wherein the Christian oracle explains that although anger cannot be extinguished, it should not be a passion upon which one dwells. To the advice of the biblical oracle, Bacon adds, “*Anger* must be limited, and confined, both in Race, and in Time” (57.5). Since anger is inevitable, one must learn to control one’s anger: it must be bound in onset and duration.

As is his practice, Bacon outlines the topics that he addresses in this essay. Essay fifty-seven is divided into three parts:

We will first speake, How the Naturall Inclination, and Habit, *To be Angry*, may be attemptred, and calmed. Secondly, How the Particular Motions of *Anger*, may be repressed, or at least refrained from doing Mischiefe. Thirdly, How to raise *Anger*, or appease *Anger*, in Another. (57.6-11)

From these introductory statements, Bacon makes clear that anger is a “Naturall Inclination, and Habit” (57.7). In the mirror essay, “Of Death,” death is described as a “Natural Feare” (2.4), albeit in children. Our natural tendency towards anger, as towards death, must “be attemptred, and calmed” (57.8). Bacon’s plan for this essay is, first, to explicate how we can ameliorate our tendency towards anger; second, to describe how we can repress the difficulties that arise as a result of our anger; and third, to draught how we can either induce or reduce anger in others.

Part I: To Ameliorate Anger

Bacon begins with an explication of this passion: “For the first; There is no other Way, but to Meditate and Ruminare well, upon the Effects of *Anger*, how it troubles Mans Life” (57.12-14). Bacon tasks his readers to contemplate the ways in which anger negatively influences our lives. According to Bacon, “There is no other Way” (57.12) to understand our anger than through reflexive consideration of how it actually affects our lives. Moreover, assessment of the effects of our anger is possible only after our anger has passed: “to looke backe upon *Anger*, when the Fitt is throughly over” (57.14). Since anger is described as manifesting itself in a “Fitt” (57.15), one is not rational while overcome by anger. Bacon presents three examples of others’ views regarding anger: first, Seneca serves as his ancient example; second, a quotation from Luke serves as his biblical example; and last, Aesop’s fable “The Bee and Jupiter” serves as his philosophic example.

Paraphrasing Seneca’s “On Anger,” Bacon begins: “*Seneca saith well; That Anger is like Ruine, which breakes it Selfe, upon that it falls*” (57.15-17). In this excerpt, Seneca recognizes that anger causes destruction to the person who is angry: one’s anger breaks one’s self. Here, Bacon fails to say directly that which Seneca emphasizes: “But you have only to behold the aspect of those possessed by anger to know that they are insane.”²⁶⁷ Anger takes hold of one as in a “Fitt” (57.15), since its grasp extinguishes reason and causes one to become crazed. Second, Bacon turns to the Bible: “The Scripture exhorteth us; *To possesse our Soules in Patience*” (57.17). In Luke 21, the biblical antidote for anger is patience. Third, “Whosoever is out of *Patience*, is out of Possession of his *Soule*. Men must not turne *Bees; Animasque in vulnere ponunt*” (57.18-20), who leave their souls in their wounds. In Aesop’s fable “The Bee and

²⁶⁷ Seneca, “To Novatus on Anger,” in *Moral Essays*, trans. John W. Basore (New York, NY: Loeb Classical Library, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1928), 1:107.

Jupiter,” the queen bee comes to Olympus to present Jupiter a gift of honey. Jupiter, thankful for the gift, offers the queen bee anything she desires. She requests the ability to kill any mortal who attempts to take her honey. Jupiter’s displeasure is obvious in his response: “You shall have your request, but it will be at the peril of your own life. For if you use your sting, it shall remain in the wound you make, and then you will die from the loss of it.”²⁶⁸ If we are as the queen bee, our anger and subsequent desire for revenge will be the death of us. From Seneca, we learn that anger makes us irrational and may cause insanity; from the Bible, we learn that we should exercise patience; and from Aesop, we learn that anger can be deadly.

Since anger is potentially a dangerous passion, we must know its characteristics in order to safeguard our souls. According to Bacon, “*Anger* is certainly a kinde of Basenesse: As it appeares well, in the Weaknesse of those Subjects, in whom it reignes: Children, Women, Old Folkes, Sicke Folkes” (57.21-23). Without a doubt, anger is ignobling and enfeebling. In the same way that our fear of the dark is understandable in children (2.4), anger is understandable and present in the base and weak. Bacon avers that men who are noble and strong have no need of anger. Therefore, Bacon claims, “Onely Men must beware, that they carry their *Anger*, rather with Scorne, then with Feare: So that they may seeme rather, to be above the Injury, then below it” (57.23-26). While Bacon does not expect men not to become angry, he does recommend that they control the manner in which they bear their anger: if one carries one’s anger with contempt, one will appear less weak than one who carries it with fear. If a man is able to master himself—“give Law to himselfe” (57.27)—it should be easy for him to carry his anger with disdain and thus appear to be above the injury that he has suffered. This advice echoes the discussion in essay four, “Of Revenge,” wherein Bacon recommends that “in passing it [the offense] over, he

²⁶⁸ Aesop, “The Bee and Jupiter,” in *The Fables of Aesop*, trans. William Caxton and re-ed. Joseph Jacobs (London, UK: David Nutt in the Strand, 1889).

is Superiour” (4.8). When one suffers an offense, one must ensure that one does not descend into the realm of “Wilde Justice” (4.3). Bacon argues that if we “Meditate and Ruminare well, upon the Effects of Anger” (57.12), recognize it as “a kinde of Basenesse” (57.21), and attempt to “carry...*Anger*, rather with Scorne, then with Feare” (57.24), our “Naturall Inclination, and Habit, *To be Angry*, may be attempred, and calmed” (57.7).

Part II: To Repress Anger

Bacon now turns to his second point. When he first outlines the content in this essay, he words the point thus: “How the Particular Motions of *Anger*, may be repressed, or at least refrained from doing Mischiefe” (57.8-10). Now, however, he describes his task differently: “For the Second Point; The *Causes* and *Motives* of *Anger*, are chiefly three” (57.28). His explication of this section adheres to his second construction, a discussion of three “*Causes* and *Motives* of *Anger*” (57.28):

First, to be too *Sensible* of *Hurt*: For no Man is *Angry*, that *Feeles* not himselfe Hurt: And therefore Tender and Delicate Persons, must needs be oft *Angry*: They have so many Things to trouble them; Which more Robust Natures have little Sense of. (57.29-33)

In the same way that no man tells a lie “for the *Lies* sake” (1.18) and “no man, doth a wrong, for the wrongs sake” (4.14), no man becomes angry, simply for the sake of becoming angry. Men become angry for a reason. Anger is based on a perceived affront. Therefore, those who are more sensitive are likely to become angry more often than those who have stronger natures.²⁶⁹

Here, Bacon distinguishes between “Tender and Delicate Persons” (57.31) and those who suffer from “Basenesse” (57.21) or “Weaknesse” (57.22). In this context, an actual hurt has been suffered. At issue is the extent to which a man is aware of the injury; some natures are more

²⁶⁹ “robust, adj. and n.” *OED*, February 25, 2011: “Strong and hardy; strongly and solidly built, sturdy; healthy; of the body or its parts, constitution, disposition.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

aware of harms than are other natures. Bacon's first cause reveals that different natures are affected by anger to different degrees: some men are more susceptible to become angry than are others.

The second cause of anger has to do less with a man's nature and more with a man's perception:

The next is, the Apprehension and Construction, of the Injury offered, to be, in the Circumstances thereof, full of *Contempt*. For *Contempt* is that which putteth an Edge upon *Anger*, as much, or more, then the *Hurt* it selfe. And therefore, when Men are Ingenious, in picking out Circumstances of *Contempt*, they doe kindle their *Anger* much. (57.33-39)

The manner in which one explains events alters the degree of one's anger. If one disregards the circumstance in which one finds oneself and forgets that one should not "be angry with a Man, for loving himselfe better then mee" (4.16), one is likely to become more angry than would another in a similar situation. Some men, Bacon reminds his readers, want to become angry. Men of this type are able to find circumstances that exacerbate anger. Bacon's second cause of anger contradicts his previous point. In his earlier discussion, Bacon recommends that "Men must beware, that they carry their *Anger*, ...with Scorne" (57.23). Scorn and contempt are relatively synonymous. Therefore, what exactly is Bacon's recommendation? It is better for a man's reputation to "carry ...*Anger*, rather with Scorne, then with Feare" (57.24), since fear is "Basenesse" (57.21) and "Weaknesse" (57.22). At the same time, a man must be careful not to allow his comportment of scorn to "kindle...*Anger* much" (57.38), whereby he becomes angry when there is no need.

Finally, if the source of one's anger is an affront to one's reputation, one's anger will be all the stronger: "Opinion of the Touch of a Mans *Reputation*, doth multiply and sharpen *Anger*" (57.39). We know this tendency from Bacon's presentation in essay fifty-five, "Of Honour and

Reputation.” At this point, although Bacon does not explicitly introduce the next section, his argument begins the transition from causes to remedies. Bacon recommends that we follow the behavior of Gonzolo Fernandez De Cordoba, Duke of Terranova, who died in 1515 CE:

“Wherein the Remedy is, that a Man should have, as *Consalvo* was wont to say, *Telam Honoris crassiorem*” (57.40-42). It is imperative to have a strong web of honor. Our reputations are of indispensable import.²⁷⁰

As outlined, Bacon has explicated the three primary causes of anger: sensitivity (57.29-33), “Apprehension and Construction” (57.33-39), and affronts to reputation (57.39-46). Yet, he adds a fourth. This additional cause and motive of anger is also, according to Bacon, “the best Remedy” (57.43):

But in all Refrainings of *Anger*, it is the best Remedy to win Time; And to make a Mans Selfe beleieve, that the Opportunity of his Revenge is not yet come: But that he foresees a Time for it; And so to still Himselfe in the meane Time, and reserve it. (57.42-46)

The first three points under Bacon’s second cause of anger pertain to “The *Causes* and *Motives* of *Anger*” (57.28). This fourth point addresses the original second point of his outline—“How the Particular Motions of *Anger*, may be repressed, or at least refrained from doing Mischiefe” (57.8). The best way to refrain from acting in anger is to wait. The most effective way to mitigate one’s feelings of anger and avoid the resultant dangers of anger is to bide one’s time and await the opportunity to avenge the wrong that has caused one’s anger. With this extra curb on anger, Bacon makes the relationship between anger and revenge explicit. However, this advice contradicts the advice that Bacon provides in “Of Revenge.” In essay four, Bacon states, “This is certaine; That a Man that studieth *Revenge*, keepes his owne Wounds greene, which otherwise

²⁷⁰ It is unclear why Bacon cites Consalvo as the example. Consalvo is recognized as the father of trench warfare.

would heale” (4.36). Therefore, while a man must be careful not to act in a fit of anger, he must also take care not to fixate upon his anger.

From this point to the end of this essay, Bacon speaks to his readers in the second person. His more personal tone helps him to draw people into his discussion. Anger is an intensely personal passion. In order to know how best “to containe *Anger* from *Mischiefe*” (57.47) and to undertake the effective “*Raising and Appeasing* [of] *Anger* in Another” (57.56), one must understand one’s own nature and the nature of other men. His employment of second person is a reminder of the influence of one’s particular nature on anger.

Bacon now turns to the repression and refrainment of anger (57.9). If a man is unable to control his anger and overcome by it, there are two actions that must be avoided (57.47) in order “To containe *Anger* from *Mischiefe*” (57.47). First, a man must guard his words while in a “Fitt” (57.15 and 57.54):

The one, of extreme *Bitternesse of Words*; Especially, if they be Aculeate, and Proper; For *Communia Maledicta* are nothing so much: And againe, that in *Anger*, a Man reveale no Secrets: For that makes him not fit for Society. (57.49-53)

A man must strive not to be acrimonious while he is angry: he must not speak spitefully, which echoes the reference to Aesop’s fable “The Bee and Jupiter” (57.19-20), especially if the words that he speaks sting. Further, a man must strive not to be imprudent while he is angry: he must not reveal secrets. Although resentful speech may be a common abuse, a man must attempt to remain “fit for Society” (57.52), despite his anger. In addition to being cautious in speech, a man must not act in haste: “doe not *peremptorily breake off*, in any *Businesse*, in a *Fitt* of *Anger*: But howsoever you *shew* Bitternes, do not *Act* any thing, that is not Revocable” (57.53-55). Bacon’s advice is to avoid premature and permanent actions while one is angry.

In this section of his essay, Bacon presents anger as inevitable: men are bound to feel injured. This sense of injury is understood as an affront to one's well-being; in the previous essay, "Of Honour and Reputation," Bacon presents honor as essential to the character of many men. In this part of the essay, Bacon expertly attempts to reform human nature. He encourages men to repress or at least restrain their natural impulses to become angered. Bacon's consideration of anger reveals his nuanced understanding of human nature and, at the same time, his belief that men are, to varying degrees, malleable.

Part III: Anger in Others

In his final point of this essay, Bacon moves from the relationship between anger and the individual to "*Raising and Appeasing Anger in Another*" (57.56 and 57.10). The first two parts of this essay are reflections on the manner in which anger affects an individual and how one can mitigate the deleterious effects of anger on oneself. Anger can be a powerful tool. As we have seen in the first two parts of this essay, anger has a profound influence on each of us. With this reflexive consideration in mind, Bacon turns to the power that anger may have when incited in others. How, then, can one control the anger that others suffer and use it to one's own advantage? Raising the anger of others "is done chiefly, by *Choosing of Times*, when Men are frowardest and worst disposed, to incense them. Againe, by gathering (as was touched before) all that you can finde out, to aggravate the *Contempt*" (57.56-60). Bacon recommends that we carefully select the times that we elicit anger from others, as anger is a powerful means of controlling other men.

Bacon concludes this essay with advice on appeasement of anger in others, which is done in the opposite way from the inducement or raising of it:

And the two *Remedies* are by the *Contraries*. The Former, to take good Times, when first to relate to a Man, an *Angry* Businesse: For the first Impression is much; And the

other is, to sever, as much as may be, the Construction of the Injury, from the Point of *Contempt*: Imputing it, to Misunderstanding, Feare, Passion, or what you will. (57.60-65)

With respect to the first way to raise or appease anger, Bacon suggests that one must select an appropriate time to present potentially angering information or conduct a potentially angering action. If one wishes to raise anger, one should select a time when one's adversary is most disposed to be angered;²⁷¹ if one wishes to appease anger, one should select a time when another is less disposed to be angered. With respect to the second way to raise or appease anger, Bacon suggests that one needs to understand scorn. If one wishes to raise scorn, one must have knowledge of that which is likely to anger another; if one wishes to appease scorn, one must separate the injury from the potential disrespect. Bacon has already discussed the effect of contempt on anger: "*Contempt* is that which putteth an Edge upon *Anger*" (57.35). Therefore, in order to elicit the response that one desires in another, one must be calculating in one's behavior.

Anger cannot be expunged from the natures of most people. As such, it is necessary to learn to control our anger. If one learns to excite and appease anger in others, one is able to control others. Once mastered, anger can serve as a powerful passion. In essay two, "Of Death," Bacon demonstrates, as has previously been discussed in this chapter, that death is not something to be feared. In the second essay, Bacon discusses death as inevitable. Anger, however, is not mentioned once in the entirety of that essay, yet anger may be the means to overcome one's fear of death.

²⁷¹ "froward, adj., adv., and prep." *OED*, February 25, 2011: "Disposed to go counter to what is demanded or what is reasonable; perverse, difficult to deal with, hard to please; refractory, ungovernable; also, in a wider sense, bad, evilly-disposed, 'naughty' (The opposite of *toward*)."
A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

ESSAY FIFTY-EIGHT, “OF VICISSITUDE OF THINGS”: THE NATURE OF FLUX AND THE PROBLEM WITH TRUTH

Not until his final essay, “Of Vicissitude of Things,” does Bacon provide a more detailed explanation of the possibilities for and limitations of human knowledge. As the title suggests, this essay concerns the “uncertain changing or mutability” of things.²⁷² What those things are, specifically, become clear through the explication of this essay. In this essay’s mirror, essay one, “Of Truth,” Bacon argues that truth “is the Sovereign Good of humane Nature” (1.41) and that no man lies, simply to lie, but rather, man lies for a purpose (1.12-18). Although these two facts may be true, Bacon has yet to explain the reasons for such rampant ignorance about the world in terms of our knowledge of both nature and human concerns. While human ignorance and the Idols of the Tribe are prominent themes in Bacon’s other works, their absence is noticeable in *Essays*. Only after fifty-seven essays does Bacon discuss the practical limitations to our knowledge regarding the world and ourselves.

This section of the dissertation is divided into four parts. In the first part, the introduction of essay one, “Of Truth,” is compared to that of essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things.” The focus of this comparison is the relationship between truth and change. In the second part, the practical danger of sectarian or religious change is considered. In the third part, war and the relationship between military innovation and upheaval is addressed. In the fourth part, Bacon’s presentation of the progression of learning is discussed, with an emphasis on progress, the Instauration, and innovation.

²⁷² “vicissitude, n.” Ibid., February 12, 2011: “the fact of change or mutation taking place in a particular thing or within a certain sphere; the uncertain changing or mutability of something.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Part I: Truth and Change

Paralleling essay one, essay fifty-eight begins with two examples: one biblical and one Greek. In “Of Truth,” Pilate disingenuously inquires into Christ’s divinity (1.4). In “Of Vicissitude of Things,” “*Salomon saith; There is no New Thing upon the Earth*” (58.4) and “*all Noveltie is but Oblivion*” (58.6). This biblical passage, found in Ecclesiastes 1, discusses the finitude of man in relation to the constancy of the earth: “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever.”²⁷³ As in the first essay, the first biblical example in the final essay contains a warning about truth: “in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.”²⁷⁴ From this passage we learn two things: first, there is nothing new on earth, since everything that we think is new is actually something once known, but forgotten; and second, knowledge does not bring happiness, but, according to Ecclesiastes, brings unhappiness. In “Of Truth,” Pilate is set against Lucian and the skeptics; in “Of Vicissitude of Things,” Solomon is set against Plato, who “had an Imagination; *That all Knowledge was but Remembrance*” (58.5).²⁷⁵ Bacon’s two examples appear to be in agreement: “Whereby you may see, that the River of *Lethe*, runneth as well above Ground, as below” (58.7). Our collective memory is short. Those things that we believe are new are simply

²⁷³ Ecclesiastes 1:4: “I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” Bacon iterates this sentiment in his “Writer’s Prayer.” Bacon, “Writer’s Prayer,” 7:259-60.

²⁷⁴ Ecclesiastes 1:18.

²⁷⁵ Plato, “Phaedo,” in *Plato*, trans. H. N. Fowler (New York, NY: Loeb Classical Library, Macmillian Co., 1912), 72e-78b; Plato, “Meno,” in ‘*Protagoras*’ and ‘*Meno*,’ trans. Robert C. Bartlett (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 81cd.

things that we, as human beings, once knew, but have forgotten and rediscovered, or things that have vanished for a time and reappeared later.²⁷⁶

Throughout this essay, Bacon uses second person four times. As has been discussed previously in this dissertation, Bacon adopts this more informal, personal voice to establish a sense of camaraderie between himself and his readers. His discussion of vicissitude, despite its formal appearance, is extremely personal. Bacon's opening statements reveal to his readers his belief that human history is punctuated by successive, cyclical patterns of knowledge and ignorance, creation and destruction. According to Bacon's analysis, mankind is united by our shared ignorance.

Ignorance about the world is furthered by the fact "that the *Matter*, is in a Perpetuall Flux, and never at a stay" (58.14). On one level, Bacon refers to the material that composes the world; however, on another level, he refers to the ideas and mores that govern a specific time. The material world is in constant motion:²⁷⁷

If it were not, for two things, that are Constant; (The one is, that the Fixed Starres ever stand at like distance, one from another, and never come nearer together, nor goe further asunder; The other, that the Diurnall Motion perpetually keepeth Time:) No Individuall would last one Moment. (58.9-14)

Channeling an "abstruse Astrologer" (58.9), perhaps Telesius,²⁷⁸ Bacon claims that there are only two natural constants that prevent the destruction of man: the heavenly order and the consistency of the days. In this context, destruction does not refer to death, but rather to psychological devastation. In "Of Truth," Bacon states:

²⁷⁶ Contrary to the argument in this dissertation, Faulkner states that this essay reads as "a succession of clipped, enigmatic, separate observations." Faulkner, *Progress*, 28.

²⁷⁷ E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1959), 101-9.

²⁷⁸ Kiernan, commentary, 312.

if there were taken out of Mens Mindes, Vaine Opinions, Flattering Hopes, False valuations, Imaginations as one would, and the like; but it would leave the Mindes, of a Number of Men, poore shrunken Things; full of Melancholy, and Indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves. (1.26-30)

Since human things are unpredictable, we are able to find constancy only in the natural world.

One can only imagine how unstable life would be if the heavens moved at a perceptible pace or the days fluctuated unpredictably. Without these two constants—the fixed stars and the diurnal motion—the world would be too uncertain, and man would be destroyed by anxiety and doubt.

Before returning to this brief interlude into material physics, Bacon posits that our collective memory is faulty. As evidence, he catalogues the natural destructions—the “Points of *Nature*” (58.70)—that can befall man and result in our oblivion:

The great Winding-Sheets, that burie all Things in Oblivion, are two; *Deluges*, and *Earth-quakes*. As for *Conflagrations*, and great *Droughts*, they doe not merely dispeople, and destroy. *Phaetons* Carre went but a day. And the *Three yeares Drought*, in the time of *Elias*, was but Particular, and left People Alive. As for the great *Burnings by Lightnings*, which are often in the *West Indies*, they are but narrow. But in the other two Destructions, by *Deluge*, and *Earth-quake*, it is further to be noted that the Remnant of People, which hap to be reserved, are commonly Ignorant and Mountanous People, that can give no Account, of the Time past: So that the Oblivion is all one, as if none had beene left. (58. 15-27)

As history has shown, man is vulnerable to the inhospitalities of our environment: earthquakes, deluges, fire, and draught all cause human loss. Fires and droughts, while destructive, do not result in our collective forgetting. Bacon believes that deluges and earthquakes are the most devastating of the natural forces. This theme of destruction is present in Bacon’s other texts. In *New Atlantis*, for example, Bacon discusses the cyclical patterns of destruction.²⁷⁹ In the aftermath of such ruin, the record of human knowledge is lost for two reasons: first, those who survive are typically less educated, although heartier; and second, those who survive are preoccupied with subsistence, rather than with recollection of the past.

²⁷⁹ Bacon, *Atlantis*, 51-52.

Bacon turns, rather abruptly, to Machiavelli. In contrast to Bacon's account of "the Observation, that *Macciavel* hath, that the *Jelousie* of *Sects*, doth much extinguish the Memory of Things" (58.40-42), in *Discourses*, Machiavelli argues that a sect's "first concern is to extinguish the old to give itself reputation."²⁸⁰ Machiavelli also describes the "causes that come from heaven" that are able to "eliminate the human race and reduce inhabitants of part of the world to a few."²⁸¹ Bacon's argument concerning deluges, as it turns out, has roots in Machiavelli, who also believes that "inundation of water" is the primary cause of lost knowledge.²⁸² Our ignorance about the world and our own history is the result of natural patterns of development, destruction, and forgetfulness.²⁸³ Bacon argues that natural motions, rather than human motions, cause our ignorance and forgetfulness. According to Bacon's own research, he "doe[s] not finde, that those Zeales, doe any great Effects, nor last long" (58.44). If Bacon's argument is correct, there is little that human beings can do to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and thus preserve the record of human knowledge. As such, we are subject to the devastation of the natural motions. In his other works, however, he is not as reticent on this topic as he is in *Essays*.

Although Bacon admits, "The *Vicissitude* or *Mutations*, in the *Superiour Globe*, are no fit Matter, for this present Argument" (58.47), he continues to discuss them. Why does he do so? We know, from Bacon and Machiavelli, that the effects of the mutations of the world, as Bacon has stated, are more devastating than those of human things. Bacon seems to remind his readers

²⁸⁰ Niccolo Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), II.5.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid.

that the greatest adversary of mankind is not other men; rather, man's greatest adversary is nature. Bacon does not explain how to overcome nature here. He is silent on the possibility that man may master nature with scientific knowledge and technological helps. Instead, he returns to the vicissitudes of men.

Part II: Vicissitudes of Religion

After the lengthy digression that closes his discussion of natural disasters, Bacon decides “to leave these Points of *Nature*, and to come to *Men*” (58.70). What are the vicissitudes that are caused by men and that affect men? According to Bacon, “The greatest *Vicissitude* of Things amongst *Men*, is the *Vicissitude* of *Sects*, and *Religions*” (58.71), which, when compared to the vicissitude of nature, does not have “any great Effects, nor last long” (58.45). Much like Machiavelli, Bacon believes that sects are the primary impetus to change.²⁸⁴ Religion is changeable since it is one of the “Orbs [that] rule in Mens Minds most” (58.72). Religion has a powerful hold on the human psyche. Bacon distinguishes between the true, Christian religion and all other religions: “The True *Religion* is *built upon the Rocke*; The Rest are tost upon the Waves of Time” (58.73). Paraphrasing Matthew 16:18, Bacon issues a warning about understanding one's times: man must be able to discern the signs of the times and the signs from heaven.²⁸⁵

Bacon explains the conditions that facilitate the rise of new sects: his aim is to discuss “the *Causes* of New *Sects*; And to give some *Counsell* concerning them; As farre, as the Weaknesse of Humane Judgement, can give stay to so great Revolutions” (58.75-77). According to Bacon, three preconditions facilitate the emergence of a new sect: first, “When the *Religion*

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Matthew 16:1.

formerly received, is rent by Discords” (58.78); second, “when the Holinesse of the Professours of *Religion* is decayed, and full of Scandall” (58.79); and third, when “the Times be Stupid, Ignorant, and Barabrous” (58.80). When the pre-existing sects are in a state of decay, themselves plagued by sectarian disagreements, and their leadership is morally corrupt and full of scandal, new sects are likely to arise. The first two conditions echo Bacon’s previous discussion in “Of Unity in Religion.” In essay three, Bacon presents two scandals that “keepe Men out of the Church, and drive Men out of the Church” (3.25): first, “Heresies, and Schismes” (3.20); and second, “Corruption of Manners” (3.22). The former, he declares to be “the greatest Scandals” (3.21). In his final essay, the addition of the third condition—the stupidity, ignorance, and barbarity of the time—explains why men abandon “The True *Religion*” (58.73).

These three conditions are necessary, but insufficient to explain the rise of new sects: the first two conditions create the impetus for new sects; the third condition explains human susceptibility to new sects. The final and essential cause is leadership. Someone must unite the people and create a rival sect: “If then also there should arise, any Extravagant and Strange Spirit, to make himselfe Authour thereof” (58.82-84). Without strong leadership, there is no way for the rival sect to become united. As evidence that these four preconditions precipitate the rise of a new sect, Bacon cites the birth of Islam: “All which Points held, when *Mahomet* published his *Law*” (58.84).

While these four conditions must be met for a sect to rise, they cannot ensure that it will persevere and spread. In order for that to happen, the sect must have two additional properties. First, “The one is, the Supplanting, or the opposing, of Authority established: For Nothing is more popular than that” (58.86-88). To be a danger, a sect must stand in opposition to the regnant order. Second, it must appeal to our hedonistic desires:

The other is, the Giving Licence to Pleasures, and a Voluptuous Life. For as for *Speculative Heresies* (such as were in Ancient Times the *Arrians*, and now the *Arminians*) though they worke mightily upon Mens Wits, yet they doe not produce any great Alterations in States; except it be by the Helpe of Civill Occassions. (58.88-93)

Bacon provides two examples of “*Speculative Heresies*” (58.89): the Arrians and the Arminians.²⁸⁶

New sects, Bacon maintains, are able to supplant the existing order in three ways: “By the Power of *Signes* and *Miracles*: By the *Eloquence and Wisedome* of *Speech* and *Perswasion*: And by the *Sword*” (58.94-96). Supplanting may occur, first, “By the Power of *Signes* and *Miracles*” (58.94), which, in Bacon’s discussion, includes two subcategories: “*Martyrdomes*” (58.96) and “*Superlative and Admirable Holinesse of Life*” (58.99). Bacon explains that he has chosen to include martyrdom and unmatched religiosity in the first category since he “reckon[s] them amongst *Miracles*; Because they seeme to exceed, the Strength of Humane Nature” (58.96). Therefore, the first manner by which new sects supplant existing ones is through superhuman actions—whether they be “*Signes and Miracles*” (58.94), or human acts. Second, supplanting may occur “By the *Eloquence and Wisedome* of *Speech* and *Perswasion*” (58.95). Oratory plays

²⁸⁶ The Arrians gave rise to one of the most significant sectarian disagreements in the history of Christianity. Arius, a North African priest, was prominent in the early fourth century CE. A disagreement between Arius and the bishoprics, regarding the nature of Christ’s divinity, resulted in the Council of Nicaea, the first ecumenical council, called at the request of Emperor Constantine. Arius was condemned and banished by the council in 325 CE, yet he retained many political and theological supporters. The subsequent debate surrounding the Arrian controversy threatened to destroy the Holy Roman Empire. The Arminian controversy began in the late 1590s CE. James Arminius, also known as Jacobus Harmenzoon, was a Dutch university professor who challenged regnant Christian doctrine on five fronts: first, he argued that the fall and original sin did not completely corrupt man; second, he claimed that salvation was based on faith; third, he believed that the death of Christ rendered all men of faith capable of salvation; fourth, he posited that freewill made it possible for man to resist salvations; and fifth, he preached that being a believer does not preclude the possibility of stopping one’s belief and thus losing one’s salvation. Arminius’ teachings formed the basis of the Remonstrants’ movement, which resulted in his banishment and defrocking. Following his death, a synod drafted a response to Arminianism. This controversy would have been fresh in the memories of Bacon’s contemporaries.

an essential role in the development of these sects and is likely the result of an “Extravagant and Strange Spirit, to make himselfe Authour thereof” (58.83). Finally, the third way that new sects rise to power is “by the *Sword*” (58.96).

In order to prevent the development and rise of new sects, the established order may, first, as Bacon suggests in essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” reform abuses within the church:

Surely, there is no better Way, to stop the Rising of *New Sects*, and *Schismes*; then To reforme Abuses; To compound the smaller Differences; To proceed mildly, and not with Sanguinary Persecutions; And rather to take off the principall Authours, by Winning and Advancing them, then to enrage them by Violence and Bitternesse. (58.99-105)

Rather than attack an inchoate sect through “Sanguinary Persecutions” (58.102) and “Violence and Bitternesse” (58.105), the established Church should first begin “To reforme Abuses” (58.101) that have made possible the rising of the new sect. Second, the Church should focus on the smaller doctrinal differences, rather than on the larger ones. Third, the Church should encourage the leaders of the opposition to rejoin the Church, by offering them honors and reputation. Religion is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter of this dissertation.

Part III: Changes in War

Bacon concludes his presentation of “the *Vicissitude* of *Sects*, and *Religions*” (58.71) with a mention of the dangers of religious wars, then turns to the second vicissitude amongst men: “The *Changes* and *Vicissitude* in *Warres*” (58.106). Bacon notes that such changes “are many: But chiefly in three Things; In the *Seats* and *Stages* of the *Warre*; In the *Weapons*; And in the *Manner* of the *Conduct*” (58.106-108). Addressing each one in turn, Bacon begins with war’s “*Seats* and *Stages*” (58.107).

Bacon starts with a history lesson in “the *Seats*” of war (58.107): “*Warres* in ancient Time, seemed more to move from *East* to *West*” (58.108) than, we are left to presume, from west

to east or between north and south.²⁸⁷ Bacon does not elaborate upon the reasons that this directionality argument is essential to our understanding of the vicissitude of war. Turning to the stages of war, Bacon writes, “Upon the *Breaking* and *Shivering* of a great *State* and *Empire*, you may be sure to have *Warres*” (58.126). When states and empires break and splinter, war is a likely outcome.²⁸⁸ Empires and states provide structure and order, which in turn establish stability in a region: “For great Empires, while they stand, doe enervate and destroy the Forces of the Natives, which they have subdued, resting upon their owne Protecting Forces: And then when they faile also, all goes to ruine, and they become a Prey” (58.127-131). The state ensures that any unrest or unruly domestic forces are controlled and maintained. When the state decays, so, too, does the control that it has maintained over the area. As evidence, Bacon cites two examples: first, “the Decay of the *Roman Empire*” (58.131); and second, the decline “in the *Empire* of *Almaigne*, after *Charles* the Great, every Bird taking a Fether” (58.132). Bacon speculates that were Spain to fall, it would be subject to similar fragmentation (58.133). Further, the creation and expansion of states often lead to war: “The great *Accessions* and *Unions* of *Kingdomes*, doe likewise stirre up *Warres*. For when a State growes to an Over-power, it is like a great Floud, that will be sure to overflow” (58.134-137). When a state becomes too powerful

²⁸⁷ As examples of eastern invaders, Bacon cites “the *Persians*, *Assyrians*, *Arabians*, [and] *Tartars*” (58.110). The fifth century BCE involved Persian expansion to the west to attack the Greeks; the Assyrians, between the seventh and ninth centuries BCE, constructed a royal road linking the east to the west; the Arabians expanded towards the west, as did the Tartars. The Gauls are exceptions (58.111). On the other hand, according to Bacon, “*North* and *South* are fixed” (58.116).

²⁸⁸ “shivering, n.” *OED*, February 16, 2011: “The action or an act of shiver, v.; to break or split into small fragments or splinters.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

and large,²⁸⁹ such expansions may result in war. As examples, Bacon cites “*Rome, Turkey, Spaine, and others*” (58.138). The “Danger of Inundations of People” (58.142) occurs when states grow to be large and affluent. When a state or people are poor and “*Barbarous*” (58.139), they “will not marry or generate, except they know meanes to live” (58.140). Marriage and procreation are necessary for survival of a state, yet marriage and excess procreation can hinder survival.²⁹⁰ When a state is small and its people poor, they procreate sufficiently to maintain their needs, but not so much as to overextend their resources. Therefore, “there is no Danger of Inundations of People” (58.142). However, “when there be *great Shoales of People*, which goe on to populate, without foreseeing Meanes of Life and Sustentation, it is of Necessity, that once in an Age or two, they discharge a Portion of their People upon other Nations” (58.143-146). When there is overpopulation, nations send out colonies, “which the ancient *Northern People*, were wont to doe by Lot: Casting Lots, what Part should stay at home, and what should seeke their Fortunes” (58.146). This point is elaborated in chapter three of this dissertation in the discussion of essay twenty-nine, “Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates.” There is a danger that “When a *Warre-like State* growes *Soft* and *Effeminate*, they may be sure of a *Warre*. For commonly such States are growne rich, in the time of their Degenerating; And so the Prey inviteth, and their Decay in Valour encourageth a Warre” (58.149-153). When a state known for

²⁸⁹ “overpower, n.” Ibid.: “A state or condition of being too powerful.” This is the only passage cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁹⁰ Bacon addresses domestic concerns in essay seven, “Of Parents and Children,” and in essay eight, “Of Marriage and Single Life.” Neither of these essays is considered in detail in this dissertation.

war begins to decline and become womanly,²⁹¹ it is vulnerable, as its previous victims seek retribution. From this discussion of war, we learn that politics is cyclical: regimes ebb and flow; they diminish and flourish. The key to a healthy regime, as is discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation, is to understand one's regime—including its strengths and its weaknesses—and one's times. As nature is subject to vicissitudes, so, too, are human things.

When it comes to weapons, there is no established standard for evaluation or estimation. The nature of weapons, their capabilities, man's expectation of them, and the manner in which they are used are all subject to change: "it hardly falleth under Rule and Observation: yet we see, even they have *Returnes* and *Vicissitudes*" (58.154). At issue is the nature of military weapons—guns, gunpowder, and artillery—or "*Ordnance*" (58.156). According to Bacon, the ancient Indians and the Chinese possessed military technologies that had yet to reach Macedonia. Therefore, "that, which the *Macedonians* called Thunder and Lightning, and Magicke" (58.157) was, in fact, weaponry.

Bacon recognizes three "Conditions of *Weapons*, and their Improvement" (58.160) that become the standard or "Rule and Observation" (58.154) by which to judge the technology: what can these weapons do, and how can they be improved? The first criteria is "the Fetching a farre off: For that outruns the Danger: As it is seene in *Ordnance* and *Muskets*" (58.161). What is the range of the weapon? Is it accurately able to hit a distant target?²⁹² Although, Bacon does not elaborate upon the reason this criteria is important, that reason seems clear: the longer the range of a weapon, the lower the risk to the person who wields it. While distance is crucial, if the

²⁹¹ "effeminate, v." *OED*, February 16, 2011: "To make into a woman; to represent as a woman; to make womanish or unmanly; to enervate; to grow weak and languish." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁹² "fetch, v." *Ibid.*: "Hence, To 'have at', reach, strike (a person)." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

weapon is not powerful, it is essentially useless. Therefore, the second criteria is “the Strength of the Percussion; wherein likewise *Ordnance* doe exceed all Arietations, and ancient Inventions” (58.163). How hard is the blow struck by the weapon? In this respect, Bacon claims that modern weapons “exceed all Arietations” (58.164).²⁹³ The final criteria “is, the commodious use of them: As that they may serve in all Wethers; That the Carriage may be Light and Manageable; and the like” (58.165-167). Distance and power are important, but if the weapon is not reliable and portable, it is a military liability, rather than an asset. It must be easy to use in all types of weather and be “Light and Manageable” (58.166), not heavy and cumbersome.

Having concluded his discussion of weapons, Bacon turns to his final point as regards the “*Vicissitude* in Warres” (58.106): “the *Manner* of the *Conduct*” (58.108). Bacon notes that the nature of warfare has changed with time, as has the size and skill of the armies. In the beginning of warfare, “Men rested extremely upon *Number*” (58.168). The force with the greater number of soldiers usually was victorious. Since warfare involved the organization of large numbers of soldiers, it was a formal undertaking:

They did put the Warres likewise upon *Maine Force*, and *Valour*; Pointing Dayes for Pitched Fields, and so trying it out, upon an even Match: And they were more ignorant in *Ranging* and *Arraying* their *Battailes*. After, they grew to rest upon *Number*, rather Competent, then Vast: They grew to *Advantages*, of *Place*, *Cunning Diversions*, and the like: And they grew more skilful in the *Ordering* of their *Battailes*. (58.169-176)

Beyond the selection of a time and place for battle, warfare initially required little skill and organization. As warfare advanced, so too did its execution. The quantity of soldiers was

²⁹³ “arietation, n.” Ibid., February 12, 2011: “The action of butting like a ram; *hence*, the striking with a battering-ram or similar instrument.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as the first example of this usage.

replaced by their quality: soldiers became trained and capable in their art.²⁹⁴ Similarly, warfare became a skill: tacticians were trained to exploit the terrain, time, and weapons of battle.

The demands for increasingly refined weapons, as is discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation, create incentives for innovation. Warfare requires that an army have access to intricate tools. As such, a state that is dedicated to war must also be dedicated to technological developments. Those who can construct the best spear, sword, gun, or chemical weapon are more likely to win the war, even if their army is small. As such, the Instauration is in the interest of those who admire war.

Part IV: Change and Learning

With the tasks that he set himself at the beginning of his discussion of war complete, Bacon concludes this essay and *Essays*: “In the *Youth* of a *State*, *Armes* doe flourish: In the *Middle Age* of a *State*, *Learning*; And then both of them together for a time: In the *Declining Age* of a *State*, *Mechanicall Arts* and *Merchandize*” (58.177-180). A state, in its youth, focuses on weapons and military exploits; in its middle years, a state focuses on learning and education; in its late middle years, it focuses on both weapons and learning; and when a state is in its decline, it focuses on mechanical arts and material well-being. With respect to learning in a state’s early middle years to its declining years, Bacon writes, “*Learning* hath his Infancy, when it is but beginning, and almost Childish: Then his Youth, when it is Luxuriant and Juvenile: Then his Strength of yeares, when it is Solide and Reduced: And lastly, his old Age, when it waxeth Dry and Exhaust” (58.180-184). Once a state is able to meet its basic needs, it turns to learning and education. When a state is in its early middle years, learning is new and inchoate—the state is childlike in its knowledge and childish in its approach. When a state is in its late middle years,

²⁹⁴ “competent, adj.” Ibid., February 16, 2011: “Sufficient but not going beyond this: fair, moderate, reasonable, enough.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

its learning is in a youthful stage, exuberant²⁹⁵ and marked by a lack of responsibility for the knowledge that is obtained and the manner in which it uses that knowledge.²⁹⁶ Learning then becomes stable and is put into writing, as it becomes codified and accepted. Finally, in a state's old age, learning becomes unfertile.

Nevertheless, Bacon claims, "it is not good, to looke too long, upon these turning Wheeles of *Vicissitude*, lest we become Giddy" (58.184-186).²⁹⁷ Bacon concludes this essay and *Essays* as a whole by echoing the "delight in Giddinesse" (1.4) with which he begins the text. In the first essay, our giddiness results from our inability to know; in the final essay, our giddiness results from our contemplations of vicissitude. It is difficult to know anything when the human things are so subject to change. However, curiosity inspires interest, which leads to learning.

At this point, one could potentially conclude that if everything is subject to change, human nature included, it is impossible to know human beings. Bacon, however, does not argue that human nature is subject to vicissitudes. Since Bacon contends that human things are subject to patterns, something must allow for the constant repetition. Man may not be the measure of all things in the universe, but man is the measure of the human things. The particulars of the human things change, but the human itself stays the same: human nature is constant and thus knowable. Still, Bacon claims that "the *Philology* of [vicissitude]...is but a Circle of Tales, and therefore not fit for this Writing" (58.186). As a result, if one is interested in the philological answers, one

²⁹⁵ "luxuriant, adj." Ibid.: "ducing abundantly, prolific." A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

²⁹⁶ "juvenile, adj. and n." Ibid.: "Young, youthful." This passage is cited in the *OED* as the first example of this usage.

²⁹⁷ "wheel, n." Ibid.: "denoting a constituent part or element of something figured as a machine." A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

must look to another writing. What, then, is “fit for this Writing” (58.184)? There is timelessness to Bacon’s argument: men are men, and circumstances are as they are. Bacon’s task, then, is to reveal the perennial truths of human nature and explain how these truths apply in differing circumstances.

SUMMARY: CHIASMUS AND CONTENT

The chiasmic structure of *Essays* is evident from these four pairs of essays: essay one, “Of Truth,” is complemented by essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things”; essay two, “Of Death,” is paralleled by essay fifty-seven, “Of Anger”; essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” is mirrored by essay fifty-six, “Of Judicature”; and essay four, “Of Revenge,” is supplemented by essay fifty-five, “Of Honour and Reputation.” In each of these four pairs, the teaching in the first essay is introductory and is refined by the teaching in its partner essay. Since the experience of reading *Essays* may appear disorganized, why does the chiasmic structure matter substantively?

If the first four essays are read in isolation, as is evidenced by the discussion in this chapter of the dissertation, an incomplete picture of Bacon’s account of truth, death, religion, and justice emerges. In essay one, “Of Truth,” life is presented as a matter of fortitude. One must be sufficiently courageous to accept men as they are and the human estate as it is: most comfortably viewed in the “Candlelights” (1.21). Our greatest adversary is nature, and as we learn in essay two, nature’s greatest weapon is death. If men do not fear death—that is, if death is not the “*wages of sinne*” (2.6)—then the primary hold of religion is eliminated: religion can no longer claim to be the mediator between this life and the next. Essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” begins the critique of religion that is so prominent in *Essays*. Bacon’s attack on religion is discussed in detail in the next chapter of this dissertation. In the fourth essay, “Of Revenge,” Bacon presents his account of justice, understood as revenge or “Wilde Justice” (4.3). Our desire

for justice is tied to our love of self: each individual has a conception of the ways in which he ought to be treated and of what he deserves. Our desire to live in a world that is just, even if that world is one of “Candlelights” (1.21), fuels our need for revenge and our attraction to religion.

In these first essays, Bacon presents a modified account of the Greek cardinal virtues: prudence or wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice are replaced by truth, mortality, religion—in a highly modified form—and revenge. Bacon’s modified account of what is important to men is clearly an asset to the Instauration. Truth “is the Sovereign Good” (1.41), our highest good. It compels men to learn about nature, to probe the secrets of existence, and to innovate. The human condition of mortality is natural and perhaps even conquerable. Our limited time on earth compels us to aspire to greatness in this life, not in the next life. Bacon’s new religion, which is discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation, serves the Instauration. Although it is premature to make this argument based only on essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” the validity of this assertion becomes clear in the next chapter. Last, we are responsible for our own preservation: for justice. In essay four, “Of Revenge,” we learn that there is no higher arbiter. Men are alone.

In the final four essays, Bacon explains that we are capable of achieving greatness and that we can live without a higher power. In essay fifty-five, “Of Honour and Reputation,” we learn that men can achieve greatness in this life. Our desire for acknowledgement and reputation is strong; we are honor loving. We desire recognition for our excellences, whether they are truly excellent or not. This desire for honor can be exploited. In *Essays* the only means to honor is politics: political greatness is the only forum for ambitious men to achieve reputation. In essay fifty-six, “Of Judicature,” we learn that man-made law, while imperfect, if executed prudently is an acceptable proxy for divine law. Human law fulfills our desires for justice, discussed in essay

four, and much of the realm of religion, discussed in essay three. The final ingredient for change—the crucial passion—is anger. In order to create change in this life, men must not only believe that they are deserving of something better, as we learn in essay fifty-five, but they must also be suitably upset and motivated to do something about it. Anger, Bacon contends, is power. Essay fifty-seven, “Of Anger,” teaches us how to use our anger and how to exploit the anger of others, both to beneficial ends.

Not until essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things,” do we learn the reasons that we live in such ignorance and what, potentially, we can do to overcome our estate. Human beings are subject to the vicissitudes of nature, which occur in a continual pattern of development, destruction, and redevelopment. Nature, we learn in the final essay, more so than other human beings, is our greatest enemy. While the essays provide an account of human nature and politics, Bacon believes that the means of conquering both is through science. Human beings are capable of greatness; that is clear from these eight essays. We desire greatness; we desire justice; and we are responsible for our own condition. Bacon argues that we are capable of greatness and justice.

Science is the alternative; science frees us from the human estate, provides an account of truth, may someday free us from death, supplants religion, and provides a framework for justice. Further, science fulfills the human need for honor and reputation: scientists can be rewarded for their excellence. Understanding human nature and politics—“Mens Businessse, and Bosomes” (DL.14)—in the ways that Bacon understands them, subtly recast, makes men receptive to the Instauration and progress.

CHAPTER TWO: BACON'S CRITIQUE OF RELIGION

Human beings, according to Bacon, are both frail and fallible. In the previous chapter, Bacon's accounts of truth, death, religion, and justice—the most fundamental human concerns—have been discussed. However, it is in his consideration of religion that Bacon's understanding of human nature and human beings is brought into context. The problem of “Humane Frailty” (16.83),²⁹⁸ outlined in the previous chapter, is now diagnosed by Bacon in the context of religion, as he considers the nature of charity, the metaphysics of providence, and the need for religious toleration. In the process, he expropriates conventional accounts of charity and providence, modifies their interpretation, and, in the end, despite appearing to accord with prevailing opinion, proposes entirely new, distinctly Baconian definitions and applications of both concepts. That is, Bacon modifies two of the fundamental tenets of Christian religion—charity and providence—adapting the concepts to the needs of his Instauration. Charity, providence, and truth are introduced in essay one, “Of Truth,” as “Heaven upon Earth” (1.59). Therefore, charity, understood by Bacon as “[a]cts or works...to the poor,”²⁹⁹ and providence, defined in the *Advancement* as a subset of divine history,³⁰⁰ are both essential to Bacon's analysis of traditional religion. At the conclusion of this account, Bacon recommends a religion based on toleration, wherein the Church serves the ends of science. In so doing, Bacon emancipates man from the terrors of false belief, prominent in the previous chapter of this dissertation, and the clutches of an unjust Church, so that man can become master of his own

²⁹⁸ In essay sixteen, Bacon states that godlessness, or a disbelief in God, “is in all respects hatefull, so in this, that it depriveth humane Nature, of the Meanes, to exalt it selfe, above Humane Frailty” (16.81-83).

²⁹⁹ “charity, n.” *OED*, April 3, 2013. A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

³⁰⁰ Bacon, *Advancement*, II.i.1-2.

fate. Religion, as Bacon reconstructs it, remains a social convention premised on the principles of political prudence, moral management, manners, and religious toleration.

Religion, Abbot contends, is “the most interesting subject in the politics of”³⁰¹ Bacon’s time. Although Bacon discusses religion throughout the text, his essential teachings are contained in essays one, two, three, four (albeit briefly), thirteen, sixteen, seventeen, thirty-five, and fifty-eight.³⁰² This dissertation chapter focuses on Bacon’s presentation of religion in these nine essays. Since essays one, two, three, four, and fifty-eight have already been carefully explicated, the bulk of this chapter considers essays thirteen, sixteen, seventeen, and thirty-five respectively.

Prior to delving into the chapter, two points of analysis deserve mention. First, as discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, Bacon’s *Essays* serves a distinct purpose in his corpus: to provide a popular and accessible account of the Instauration in order to prepare people for the coming age of science. Reading Bacon’s *Essays* on its own is a different experience from reading Bacon’s *Essays* in light of his larger corpus, as his other works shed light on *Essays*, and *Essays* helps to explain his other works. As a consequence, Bacon’s prose in *Essays* is often rhetorically persuasive; however, the implications of some of Bacon’s arguments and statements in *Essays* can only be explicated in light of his larger corpus. Second, Bacon understands that religion holds a powerful place in the political and emotional lives of many men (16.81; 58.71-73). An outright attack on religion, especially in Bacon’s time, would not only subject him to the anger of both the Church and the Crown, but would likely also alienate some factions of popular

³⁰¹ Abbot, introduction, xx.

³⁰² According to Faulkner, the essential essays concerned with religion are three, sixteen, seventeen, and thirty-five. In these essays, Faulkner claims, Bacon “refute[s] the claims of the...divine.” Faulkner, *Progress*, 94.

opinion, challenge receptiveness to his teachings, compromise his project, and even incur threats to his life. Further, it is unclear whether Bacon actually believes that religion, or at least the religious longings of most men, can, in fact, be excised. If this is true—specifically, that humans, or at least many humans, are hardwired to believe in God—Bacon’s critique of religion serves a twofold purpose: for those men who are capable of living without God, Bacon provides an exacting account of the reasons for and benefits of not believing in God; and for those men who are incapable of living without God, Bacon provides a tempered version of religion that renders its potential dangers benign and its probable benefits serviceable to the Instauration.

This chapter examines Bacon’s account of religion in *Essays* and is divided into six sections. The first section, “Why Religion Matters: The Ruling Orbs,” establishes the foundation of religion in Bacon’s thought. Emphasis is on Bacon’s account of the Idols of the Mind, as presented in *New Organon*, and of the Divines, as presented in *Advancement of Learning*. A discussion of religion in Bacon’s time provides a framework in which to consider the tension between religion and science. In the second section, “Preparing the Path: Religion in the First Four Essays,” as suggested by its title, the first four essays—“Of Truth,” “Of Death,” “Of Unity in Religion,” and “Of Revenge”—are reconsidered with a focus on their religious implications. The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth sections provide detailed exegeses of four essays that explicitly address religion. The third section, “Essay Thirteen, ‘Of Goodnesse and Goodnesse of Nature’: The Errors of Human Nature,” considers Bacon’s new account of charity or goodness, which is based on his analysis of human nature and serves as the foundation for the Instauration. The fourth section, “Essay Sixteen, ‘Of Atheisme’: What the Fool Hath Said,” and the fifth section,

“Essay Seventeen, ‘Of Superstition’: When Wise Men Follow Fools,” form a pair:³⁰³ section four introduces the issue of divine providence within a critique of atheism, and section five elaborates upon the issue of divine providence within a critique of the political implications of superstition. In the final section, “Essay Thirty-five, ‘Of Prophecy’: Idle and Crafty Braines,” the problem of prophecy and foresight is considered.

WHY RELIGION MATTERS: THE RULING ORBS

Religion, Bacon makes clear in the final essay, has a powerful effect on men: “The greatest *Vicissitude* of Things amongst *Men*, is the *Vicissitude* of *Sects*, and *Religions*. For those Orbs rule in Mens Minds most” (58.71-73). Since religion has the most profound influence on the mind and spirit of man, it is the cause of the greatest political changes and uncertainties. In *Essays*, Bacon is concerned with two issues: first, the relationship between psychology and religion—how men affect religion and how religion affects men; and second, the relationship between politics and religion—how politics affects religion and how religion affects politics. There is also a third effect of religion, which is not mentioned in *Essays* but pertains to Bacon’s larger project: the relationship between science and religion. This third concern is the subtext to Bacon’s discussion of religion in *Essays*: the relationship between the Instauration and religion.

This section provides the foundation for the subsequent analysis in this chapter. It begins with an examination of the theoretical tenets of religion, as Bacon understands them. First, as discussed by Bacon in *New Organon*, the Idols of the Mind with a focus on the Idols of the Theatre are presented. Once our susceptibility to ignorance is established, Bacon’s critique of the Divine, as assessed in *Advancement of Learning*, is considered. Second, a practical account of religion during Bacon’s time follows, including considerations of Catholicism, religion and

³⁰³ On this point, I follow Faulkner, who argues that essays sixteen and seventeen “take on Christianity under cover of a skirmish with atheism and superstition.” *Ibid.*, 56, fn. 2 and 69.

science, and sectarianism. This section concludes with four of the scholarly approaches to Bacon's religious teachings.

Part I: Religion and the Idols

In *New Organon*, in the context of his discussion of the Idols of the Mind—Idols of the Tribe, Idols of the Cave, Idols of the Marketplace, and Idols of the Theatre³⁰⁴—Bacon explains how the “*illusions* which block men's minds” are permitted to enter and may be banished.³⁰⁵ While the Idols have been discussed in some detail in the introduction to this dissertation, relevant to religion are those “illusions which have made their homes in men's minds from the various dogmas of different philosophies.”³⁰⁶ Bacon calls these specific illusions the Idols of the Theatre, “for all the philosophies that men have learned or devised are, in our opinion, so many plays produced and performed which have created false and fictitious worlds.”³⁰⁷ As a result, Bacon argues, that which we think true about the world is a product of our desires and our minds. Bacon identifies three different sources of error that result in three types of false philosophy: first, sophistic or rational errors, typified by Aristotle, that result from common notions and predetermined conclusions;³⁰⁸ second, empirical errors that result from insufficient experimental evidence;³⁰⁹ and third, superstitious errors, typified by Pythagoras and Plato, that result from “impressions of fantasy.”³¹⁰ Superstitious errors, Bacon contends, are the most

³⁰⁴ Bacon, *Organon*, 1.39.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 1.44.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 1.63.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 1.64.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 1.65.

seductive and must “be regarded as a disease of the intellect.”³¹¹ Unlike the other Idols, the “*Idols of the theatre* are not innate or stealthily slipped into the understanding; they are openly introduced and accepted on the basis of fairytale theories and mistaken rules of proof.”³¹² This Idol is caused when philosophy and theology are mingled. Bacon’s lesson, then, is “to give to faith only what belongs to faith.”³¹³ Here, Bacon echoes the biblical dictum to “[r]ender therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.”³¹⁴ This task, which requires one to determine that which is and is not due to faith, is neither simple nor straightforward. As a result of our intellectual failures, typified by the Idols of the Tribe, and our emotional requirements, we permit the Idols of the Theatre to take hold of our minds and provide a false account of the world that is pleasant and comforting. The Idols of the Mind are central to Bacon’s teaching; they explain the reasons that we remain ignorant of actual causes and, as a consequence, of the real condition of the world.³¹⁵ In explicating the essays, Bacon’s theory of the Idols, despite not being mentioned once in the entirety of *Essays*, can be used to help explain some of the more complicated passages.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid., 1.61.

³¹³ Ibid., 1.65. As a consequence, Abbot argues that Bacon “accepts human nature and life as they are.” Abbot, introduction, xli.

³¹⁴ Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:17; and Luke 20:25.

³¹⁵ Jerry Weinberger, “Metaphysics and Religion: Francis Bacon’s Critique of the Ancients,” in *Educating the Prince: Essays in Honor of Harvey Mansfield*, ed. Mark Blitz and William Kristol (New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000), 64.

Our ignorance and frailty, coupled with our desires for pleasantness and comfort, make us susceptible to “the zeal and jealousy of Divines.”³¹⁶ In essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things,” Bacon identifies religion as a ruling orb (58.71-73). Yet, it is in his critique of the Divines in *Advancement of Learning* that we can see the two pronged influence of religion on both politics and science. In order to retain political control over man, the Divines have conspired to keep mankind ignorant. The Divines, Bacon confides, claim “that the aspiring to overmuch knowledge was the original temptation and sin whereupon ensued the fall of man.”³¹⁷ As a consequence, the Divines “say, that Knowledge is of those things which are to be accepted of with great limitation and caution.”³¹⁸ Knowledge is managed by Divines, who determine both the sanctioned subjects for and the theologically acceptable interpretations of human investigation. Historically, scientific knowledge is controlled by religious doctrine: as the arbiter of truth, the Church has demanded that scientific discoveries conform to religious interpretations and, in so doing, has impeded the progress of knowledge when scientific findings contradict Church doctrine. The Instauration poses a challenge to the Church’s political power, since it promises to reveal the truths about nature—truths which may not necessarily cohere with regnant Church doctrine. Bacon’s proposal to elevate man above his natural condition is, at its very core, a challenge to the Church, during a time of sectarian strife.

³¹⁶ Bacon, *Advancement*, I.i.1. For commentary on this section of *Advancement*, see Weinberger, *Science, Faith, and Politics*, 50-70.

³¹⁷ Bacon, *Advancement*, I.i.2.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

Part II: A Brief History of Religion in Britain

England, during Bacon's time, is in religious tumult.³¹⁹ Between 1534 and 1603 CE, the kings and queens of England vacillate between Catholicism and Protestantism, depending on their particular religious and political beliefs. Consequently, during this time, England's official religion is subject to periodic change. Tudor England is a time of religious upheaval. Until 1534 CE, England is a Catholic country, subject to the Roman Catholic Church. For the greater part of his reign, King Henry VIII, who reigned from 1509 to 1547 CE, is a practicing Catholic who rules England as a Catholic country. However, in 1534 CE, when the Catholic Church refuses to grant Henry VIII a divorce, since divorce is prohibited by Church law, he passes the Act of Supremacy, which legalizes England's autonomy from the Catholic Church and installs Henry as the Supreme Head of the Church of England. In order to secure his position as Head of the new Church of England, Henry VIII enacts the Act of Suppression, which mandates the dissolution of the Catholic Monasteries and the transfer of their holdings, monies, and powers to the monarchy. The Act of Supremacy inaugurates centuries of religious conflict in England. From the time Henry VIII establishes the Church of England until his death in 1547 CE, England, no longer affiliated with the Pope in Rome, remains under the spiritual rule of the King.

Following Henry VIII's death, his son, King Edward VI, who ruled from 1547 to 1553 CE, raised as a Protestant, officially proclaims England a Protestant country, enforces Protestant Church services in English, creates a new prayer book, and mistreats Catholics. Upon his death at the age of fifteen, Edward VI is succeeded, despite his machinations to the contrary, by his

³¹⁹ For detailed considerations of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British religion, see Thomas Keith, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997); John Vidmar, *English Catholic Historians and the English Reformation, 1585-1954* (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2005); and Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular Religion of the English Reformation* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Catholic, older half-sister, Mary. As Edward VI has feared, under the reign of Queen Mary I, who ruled from 1553 to 1558 CE, England is again considered a Catholic country: the Catholic service is mandated in Latin, and hundreds of Protestants are burned at the stake. Mary I, however, unable to undo the Act of Supremacy, loses power to her younger half-sister, Elizabeth, who ruled from 1558 to 1603 CE. Queen Elizabeth I, a staunch Protestant, firmly entrenches the Anglican Church, returns Church services to English, and permits the publication of both English and Latin prayer books. In 1569 CE, following an uprising in the North, Queen Elizabeth I orders the execution of hundreds of Catholics. For the most part, however, Elizabeth I's reign is a time of relative religious toleration. Following Elizabeth I's death, her cousin James I, who had been ruling Scotland as James VI since 1567 CE, ascends the British throne in 1603 CE as the great-great-grandson of Henry VII. His mother, Mary Queen of Scots, is Catholic. James I, however, is Protestant because, at the time of his birth in 1561 CE, England is a Protestant country under Queen Elizabeth I and the spiritual guidance of the newly formed Anglican Church. James I rejects the extremism of the Puritans, but authorizes the King James Version of the Bible. In 1605 CE, Catholics make an attempt on his life, known as the Gunpowder Plot.³²⁰ James I rules both England and Scotland until his death in 1625 CE.

Henry VIII's break with the Church is part of a larger movement in opposition to the Catholic Church. In addition to the Anglicans, this period births the Anabaptists, Baptists, Calvinists, Lutherans, and Presbyterians. The Protestant Reformation begins in 1517 CE when Martin Luther, a German Catholic Monk who lived from 1483 to 1546 CE, protests the sale of Church Indulgences, a practice that allows adherents to purchase good deeds from the Church and thereby secure a place in heaven. The teachings of John Calvin, the French theologian and

³²⁰ Bacon makes reference to this plot in essay three, "Of Unity in Religion" (3.128-129).

founder of Calvinism who lived from 1509 to 1564 CE, have a particular influence on Bacon.³²¹

Calvin believes in predestination and argues for the absolute sovereignty of God in life after death, ideas addressed by Bacon in his work. Bacon's own religious upbringing is directed by his mother, Lady Anne Bacon, a staunch Protestant who lived from 1586 to 1604 CE. By all accounts, Lady Bacon is deeply religious. She supports the religious policies of Elizabeth I and translates from Latin into English the *Apologie of the Church of England*, a statement of faith for the Church written by John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury.³²² Lady Bacon's religious beliefs are also evidenced by her correspondences with her sons.³²³ Raised by his devout Protestant mother during a time of great religious turmoil, Bacon is witness to the conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism.³²⁴ Abbot, in his discussion of Bacon's theology, claims that Bacon is "Weary of the petty ecclesiastical differences that distracted the English Church, he desires nothing better than some general convention to restore concord to the State."³²⁵

The Roman Catholic Church is of particular danger to the Instauration. John Draper, a notable historian of the conflict between religion and science, argues that the Roman Catholic Church, more so than any other organized religious institution, has posed a threat to science: "partly because its adherents compose the majority of Christendom, partly because its demands

³²¹ For example, see Virgil K. Whitaker, "Francis Bacon's Intellectual Millieu," in *Essential Articles For the study of Francis Bacon*, ed. Brian Vickers (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1968), 28-50; Christopher Hill, *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (London, UK: Panther, 1972); and Benjamin Milner, "Francis Bacon: The theological Foundations of Valerius Terminus," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58 (1997): 245-264.

³²² Mathews, *Character Assassination*, 10, 31, 199, 272, 308, 314-315, and 380.

³²³ Steven Matthews, *Theology and Science in the Thought of Francis Bacon* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishers, Inc., 2008), 1-3.

³²⁴ Abbot notes that Bacon's religiousness was insufficient for his mother. Abbot, introduction, cvii.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, xcix.

are the most pretentious, and partly because it has commonly sought to enforce those [the Church's doctrinal and ceremonial] demands by the civil power.”³²⁶ Bacon addresses the relationship between the Church and civil power in essay seventeen, “Of Superstition.”

The doctrinal and political conflicts between the Church and science are connected. From a doctrinal perspective, religion provides an account of the world that is grounded in the revealed truth of scripture and God's laws, while science provides an account of the world that is grounded in experimental evidence and the laws of nature. In the religious account, specifically the Christian account, God is providential and superintends the world: that is, man is subject to divine will, and there are limits to man's power. In the scientific account, man is master of his own fate: that is, man has free will and is capable of overcoming the limitations of the body, inadequacies of the mind, and inhospitalities of the environment. The religious account, which credits God as the creator of both the world and man, demands man's servitude to God's power, while the scientific account supports man's ability to modify or improve his condition in this life. Related to this point, religion promises man a better existence in the next life, while science, through discoveries and innovation, promises man a better existence in this life. At issue, then, is man's place in the universe and, as a corollary, whether or not man has the freedom and ability to overcome the impediments of nature.

When these two accounts of the world—the religious and the scientific—come into irreconcilable conflict, one account must be proven false. In a world in which religion is the dominant worldview and the primary political power, the scientific account must accede to the religious account of the world. Science must acquiesce to the dogma and authority of the prevailing religious power. Conversely, in a world in which science is the dominant worldview

³²⁶ John William Draper, *History of the Conflict Between Science and Religion* (New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1897), x.

and the primary political power, the religious account must accede to the scientific account. This is not to say that religious beliefs have not inspired, or the Church authority not fostered, the pursuit of science. There are, in fact, numerous examples of scientific projects sanctioned by the Church and undertaken by devotees and Church fathers. However, in instances in which the results of science conflict with or contradict scripture, only one account of the world can be true. According to the Roman Catholic Church, the true account is found in scripture.³²⁷ There are many instances of the Church impeding the progress of knowledge: for example, the murder of Hypatia;³²⁸ Justinian's prohibition against philosophy;³²⁹ the Inquisition;³³⁰ the Index of prohibited books;³³¹ the silencing of Nicolaus Copernicus³³² and Galileo Galilei³³³ for proposing a heliocentric account of the universe; and the execution of Giordano Bruno in 1600 CE for positing that the earth is not unique in its ability to support life and that the sun is another star.³³⁴ In the modern world, the scientific worldview is dominant: religious accounts of the

³²⁷ Ibid., 58.

³²⁸ Draper recounts the assault on Hypatia, a fourth-century CE female mathematician and Neoplatonist philosopher, at the instigation of St. Cyril and his angry mob: "As Hypatia repaired to her academy, she was assaulted by Cyril's mob—a mob of many monks. Stripped naked in the street, she was dragged into a church, and there killed by the club of Peter the Reader. The corpse was cut to pieces, the flesh was scraped from the bones with shells, and the remnants cast into the fire. For this frightful crime Cyril was never called to account. It seemed to be admitted that the end sanctified the means." Ibid., 55.

³²⁹ Ibid., 56.

³³⁰ Ibid., xi and 144-151.

³³¹ In 1515 CE, the Lateran Council prohibited the printing and distribution of books that had not been vetted by the ecclesiastical censors. The Index included books that contradicted or did not confirm Church doctrine. Ibid., 293.

³³² A. Wolf, *A History of Science, Technology and Philosophy: In the 16th and 17th Centuries*, 2 vols. (London, UK: Ruskin House, George Allen & Unwin, 1962), 1:35.

³³³ Draper, *History of the Conflict*, 171-172; and Wolf, *History of Science*, 36-37.

³³⁴ Draper, *History of the Conflict*, 177-181.

world must accommodate scientific discoveries. In Bacon's time, the religious worldview is not only dominant, but also in conflict with competing religious accounts: scientific accounts of the world are forced to accommodate the religious worldviews. Herein rests the problem: if science is forced to bend to the will of religion, it is not truly scientific.³³⁵

Since historically the Church is the primary political power, religious wars and sectarian conflicts are the greatest causes of struggle and upheaval (58.71-73). It is precisely this issue, the dangers of sectarian conflict, which Bacon addresses in *Essays*. Bacon employs two recurrent examples: "the Massacre in France, [and] the Powder Treason of England" (3.128). The Massacre in France is a reference to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, on August 24, 1572 CE—which Bacon also references in *New Atlantis*³³⁶—during which event thousands of Huguenots were slaughtered by Parisian mobs at the instigation of Catherine de' Medici, who was French regent on behalf of her son. The Powder Treason of England is a reference to the attempt by Catholic radicals, headed by Guy Fawkes, to blow up King James I and parliament on November 5, 1605 CE. Religion and government are inseparable in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During this historical period, since religion and politics are one and the same, the power of the Church extends to all aspects of human life, including learning and philosophy. Religious disputes, as a result, are not only theological—concerning the construction of the universe and the condition of man's soul—but also political—concerning which sect is to be the ruling political authority.

³³⁵ Paul H. Kocher, *Science and Religion in Elizabethan England* (New York, NY: Octagon Books, 1969), 37.

³³⁶ In *New Atlantis*, at the time of the island's miraculous conversion, the letter that accompanies the contents of the ark is said to have been written by St. Bartholomew. Bacon, *Atlantis*, 49.

Part III: Scholarly Accounts of Bacon and Religion

Political prudence prohibits Bacon, given the nature of his time and his emphasis on careful communication, from either explicitly denying the existence of God or publicly castigating the Church. Prudent speech and careful writing are recurrent themes in Bacon's work.³³⁷ In essay one, "Of Truth," Bacon explains that one need not always speak the truth (1.48-58). Bacon's attack on religion is not straightforward: in some instances, he appears a devout and pious Christian who affirms the divinity of Christ; in other instances, he appears an insincere and impious humanist who denies the divinity of Christ and affirms the superiority of man.³³⁸ The most accurate account of Bacon's religious teaching likely rests between these two extremes. Bacon does make clear, however, that Christianity is essential for the success of science and the Instauration.³³⁹

As a consequence of his subtle rhetoric, Bacon's account of religion and its relationship to his Instauration is subject to varied and largely irreconcilable interpretations. Broadly defined, there are four scholarly interpretations of the relationship between religion and the Instauration.

³³⁷ For example, see Bacon, in *Wisdom*, "Cassandra"; and Bacon, *Advancement*, II.iv.4 and II.xvii.5. For detailed considerations of Bacon's employment of esoteric writing, see Lampert, *Nietzsche in Modern Times*, 21-24; Weinberger, *Science, Faith, and Politics*, 17-39; White, *Peace Among the Willows*, 11-13; and Charles Whitney, "Francis Bacon's Instauration: Dominion of and over Humanity," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50.3 (1989): 372.

³³⁸ One can argue that regardless of how often one affirms one's piety, it is the single example of impiety that is of most import. A single impious statement is sufficient to call one's piety into question.

³³⁹ Weinberger, "Metaphysics and Religion," 69; and Jerry Weinberger, "Francis Bacon and the Unity of Knowledge: Reason and Revelation," in *Francis Bacon and the Refiguring of Early Modern Thought: Essays to Commemorate the Advancement of Learning (1605-2005)*, ed. Julie Robin Solomon and Catherine Gimelli Martin (Vermont, CT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 109. In contradiction to Weinberger, Abbot states that Bacon "attaches no special importance to the Christian faith." Abbot, introduction, xl.

In the first, Bacon is viewed as a devout Christian,³⁴⁰ and some argue a Calvinist,³⁴¹ who believes that Christianity is both the foundation of and purpose for the Instauration. Advocates of this interpretation claim that the Christian account of the world is the reason that man is able to study nature. Bacon, Abbot believes, “offers up earnest prayers to God,” and worries “that scientific light may blind the mind to celestial mysteries.”³⁴² Abbot therefore contends, “The belief in a God...is at the root of Bacon’s philosophy, and is the ground of his confidence in the human power of attaining truth.”³⁴³ According to these scholars, Bacon believes that Christianity contains an imperative to study nature and that God is further glorified through the study of nature. Religion, by this account, is synonymous with the Instauration.³⁴⁴

In the second scholarly group, Bacon is viewed as a devout Christian who believes that Christianity informs the Instauration, yet the respective influences of science and religion must remain separate. Advocates of this interpretation emphasize that Christianity is the foundation for the Instauration, but the Church must not control scientific study, nor scripture be the basis

³⁴⁰ For example, James J. Bono, *The Word of God and the Languages of Man: Interpreting Nature in early Modern Science and Medicine*, vol. 1, *Ficino to Descartes* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995); John C. Briggs, “Bacon’s Science and Religion,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon*, ed. Markku Peltonen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Benjamin Farrington, *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon: An Essay on Its Development from 1603-1609 with New Translations of Fundamental Texts* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1964); Stephen A. McKnight, *The Religious Foundations of Francis Bacon’s Thought* (Columbia, MS: University of Missouri Press, 2006); Whitney, *Bacon and Modernity*; and Perez Zagorin, *Francis Bacon* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

³⁴¹ For example, see Whitaker, “Intellectual Millieu”; Milner, “Theological Foundation”; and Hill, *Intellectual Origins*.

³⁴² Abbot, introduction, xxxix.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, lxxv.

³⁴⁴ For example, see Kocher, *Science and Religion*; Richard S. Westfall, *Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964); Whitney, *Bacon and Modernity*; Whitney, “Bacon’s Instauration”; and Matthews, *Theology and Science*.

for scientific interpretation.³⁴⁵ A number of these scholars acknowledge concerns about Bacon's religiosity, yet conclude that he is, indeed, religious.³⁴⁶ In the third group, Bacon is, in the most important ways, deemed irreverent; by traditional standards, his beliefs are sacrilegious, and, as some scholars argue, his positive comments about religion are disingenuous.³⁴⁷ According to this group of scholars, Bacon believes that religion serves a necessary role in the Instauration, but the exact nature of the Instauration-friendly religion is not clear. What is clear to these scholars, however, is that faith must be moderated by and subjugated to philosophy and government.³⁴⁸ Timothy Paterson succinctly summarizes this position. In an article concerned with *New Atlantis*, Paterson considers Bacon's account of religion:

³⁴⁵ For example, see J. G. Crowther, *Francis Bacon: The First Statesman of Science* (London, UK: The Cresset Press, 1960); Milner argues that the foundations of the Instauration were originally religious, yet, as Bacon matured as a scholar, he modified the grounds of the project to be secular. Milner, "Theological Foundations," 251.

³⁴⁶ For a list of such scholars see Timothy Paterson, "The Politics of Baconian Science: An Analysis of Bacon's *New Atlantis*" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1982), 274, fn.1; Fulton H. Anderson, *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 298; William Leiss, *The Domination of Nature* (Montreal, PQ: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 54; Christopher Hill, *Reformation to Industrial Revolution: the making of modern English society, 1530-1780* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1968), 201; Anthony Quinton, *Francis Bacon* (New York, NY: Hill & Wang, 1980), 10-11; and Jonathan Marwil, *The Trials of Counsel-Francis Bacon in 1621* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1976), 92.

³⁴⁷ For example, see Denise Albanese, *New Science, New World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); James Barry Jr., *Measures of Science: Theological and Technological Impulses in Early Modern Thought* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996); Amy Boesky, "Bacon's New Atlantis and the Laboratory of Prose," in *The Project of Prose in Early Modern Europe and the New Worlds*, ed. Elizabeth Fowler and Roland Greene (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Robert K. Faulkner, "Visions & Powers: Bacon's Two-Fold Politics of Progress," *Polity* 21.1 (autumn 1988): 111-136; Faulkner, *Progress*; Lampert, *Nietzsche in Modern Times*; John E. Leary Jr., *Francis Bacon and the Politics of Science* (Ames, IA: Blackwell, 1994); and Julie Robin Solomon, *Objectivity in the Making: Francis Bacon and the Politics of Inquiry* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1998).

³⁴⁸ For example, see Laurence Lampert, Interpretive Essay to *An Advertisement Touching a Holy War*, by Francis Bacon (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2000), 41-80; Andrew Dickson White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, 2 vols. (New

Bacon was of course not unqualifiedly hostile to the Christian churches as social and political institutions, particularly in the short term. He wished to see Christianity radically reformed to make it less inclined toward sectarian conflict and meddling with natural science, and he believed that if such a reform could be effected, an established church might be socially useful.³⁴⁹

Religion, as Paterson and like-minded scholars argue, serves an important part in the Instauration, especially in the beginning. Yet, the type of Christianity that Bacon advocates is unlike regnant religious practices; rather, it is a type of Christianity that is in accord with the political ends of the regime and the goals of the Instauration. In the fourth group, Bacon is dubbed an atheist who finds no place for religion in the Instauration.³⁵⁰ All of the preceding scholarly considerations, with the exception of Faulkner's analysis, have one important feature in common: none of them is explicitly concerned with *Essays*.

John Henry, in *Knowledge is Power*, argues that, prior to the Enlightenment, Bacon was not considered either an atheist or a deist.³⁵¹ His religious beliefs were not questioned and his piety not maligned. Depictions of Bacon as an atheist, according to Steven Matthews, can likely

York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1910); and Weinberger, who "argue[s] that Bacon broke from the tradition of Christian philosophy that maintained the compatibility of faith and reason...that Bacon was a non-believer, even if he pretended to be otherwise...on rational grounds." Weinberger, "Unity of Knowledge," 111. On this point, Weinberger follows Shaftsbury. Anthony Ashley Cooper (Earl of) Shaftsbury, *Characteristics*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 368.

³⁴⁹ Timothy Paterson, "On the Role of Christianity in the Political Philosophy of Francis Bacon," *Polity* 19.3 (spring 1987): 437. In his doctoral dissertation, Paterson refers to Bacon's religion "as a kind of mutation or new flowering of Christianity." Paterson, "Baconian Science," 8.

³⁵⁰ For example, see Faulkner, "Visions & Powers"; Faulkner, *Progress*; White, *Peace Among the Willows*; and Howard B. White, "Francis Bacon," in *History of Political Thought*, third edition, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

³⁵¹ John Henry, *Knowledge is Power: How Magic, the Government and an Apocalyptic Vision Inspired Francis Bacon to Create Modern Science* (New York, NY: Totem Books, 1999), 83.

be traced to Joseph de Maistre,³⁵² an eighteenth-century CE critic who reprimands Bacon for the Enlightenment.³⁵³ Matthews charges de Maistre with presenting “a radically transformed image of Bacon....The historical Bacon has once more been refashioned in the image of his readers. The Christian philosopher has become the father of atheism.”³⁵⁴ Modern sentiments lean towards a lack of faith and separation of Church and state, as do modern interpretations.

The Instauration provides a framework for a world emancipated from false beliefs and material hardships. Bacon’s consideration of religion provides an account of how to free oneself from superstitious beliefs and still maintain a sense of purpose and worth. In *Essays*, Bacon addresses the dangers of false belief and considers the benefits of membership in a religious group. Proper belief, as Bacon’s account in *Essays* reveals, requires a balance between false or superstitious beliefs and a complete lack of belief. To this end, Bacon enervates religious zealotry and traditional Church power and strengthens religious toleration and politically expedient religion. Through an explication of Bacon’s account of religion in *Essays*, we gain insights into the relationship between the Instauration and religion and also refine our understanding of human psychology, modern science, and the relationship between reason and religion,³⁵⁵ as we endeavor “to give to faith only what belongs to faith.”³⁵⁶

³⁵² Matthews, *Theology and Science*, vii.

³⁵³ de Maistre’s critique of Bacon and Bacon’s irreligious beliefs is particularly scathing. However, de Maistre does not address the political, religious, or moral teachings in *Essays*. de Maistre, *An examination*, 158-171.

³⁵⁴ Matthews, *Theology and Science*, 139.

³⁵⁵ As Weinberger argues, “Bacon was, perhaps more than any other great figure of the modern project, aware of the basic problem of faith, and the possibility of an Enlightenment stumble.” Weinberger, *Unity of Knowledge*, 111; also see Weinberger, “Metaphysics and Religion,” 69.

³⁵⁶ Bacon, *Organon*, 1.65.

PREPARING THE PATH: RELIGION IN THE FIRST FOUR ESSAYS

Religion is a dominant theme throughout the first four essays—"Of Truth," "Of Death," "Of Unity in Religion," and "Of Revenge." Despite the detailed treatment of these essays in the previous chapter of this dissertation, this section systematically considers these four essays in light of Bacon's other works, with an eye towards the overall religious teaching contained in *Essays*. This section begins with "Of Truth" and considers the religious implications in Bacon's discussion of Pilate and Jesus and in the question raised regarding the nature of truth. In this context, the relevant passages in *Advancement of Learning* and in "Of Truth" are compared. In the second essay, "Of Death," Bacon considers eschatology. In the third essay, "Of Unity in Religion," Bacon begins with the benefits of religious unity, the nature of faith, and the different types of disbelievers. He then provides guidelines to obtain unity. This consideration is supported by Bacon's discussion of revenge in essay four, "Of Revenge." Religion, to some extent, satiates our longings for justice and provides an impetus for correct behavior. Our desires for justice are connected to our expectations in this and the next life; religion, as Bacon understands it, provides grounds for just behavior in this life with the promise of otherworldly rewards in the next life. These guidelines, in light of the ideas presented thus far, establish the basis of Bacon's new religious understanding.

Part I: Christ's Divinity

In the first line of the first essay, "Of Truth," Bacon brings religion to the forefront of his readers' minds. As discussed in the previous chapter, Bacon begins *Essays* with an apparently theological question—what is the truth of Christ's divinity? (1.3)—and concludes this first essay with a theological statement—"It being foretold, that when Christ commeth, *He shall not finde Faith upon the Earth*" (1.80). Between the question and the statement, Bacon presents a

theologically grounded justification for seeking the truth (1.42-48 and 1.59-61), as well as an account of the centrality that charity, providence, and truth play in the pursuit of social stability, individual contentment, and bliss.³⁵⁷

From the first line of *Essays*, Bacon reminds his readers of both the central position that religion holds in their lives and the dangers resulting from variant theological accounts of the world. The question that Bacon ascribes to the “jesting Pilate” has animated all theological discussion and caused considerable political strife since the advent of Christianity: what is the nature of Christ’s divinity? Jesus has been arrested by the Sanhedrin, the ruling court of ancient Israel, on the charge that he claims to be the Son of God.³⁵⁸ While in Sanhedrin custody, Jesus is questioned, mocked, and beaten. Despite his reticence and refusal to answer directly the accusation of whether or not he claims to be the Son of God, Jesus, for his presumed blasphemy, is delivered to Pontius Pilate, the Prefect of Judea under the Roman Emperor Tiberius. As recounted in John, Pilate asks Jesus four questions. First, Pilate asks if Jesus is “The King of the Jews?”³⁵⁹ Jesus responds with a question: “Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?”³⁶⁰ Pilate answers that he is not the source of the charges; rather, the Jews and the Sanhedrin have brought Jesus to him. Second, Pilate asks, “[W]hat hast thou [Jesus] done?”³⁶¹

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.³⁶²

³⁵⁷ “heaven, n.” See footnote 132.

³⁵⁸ See Matthew 26 and 27; Mark 15; Luke 22; and John 18.

³⁵⁹ John 18:33.

³⁶⁰ Ibid. 18:34.

³⁶¹ Ibid. 18:35.

³⁶² Ibid. 18:36.

In response to Pilate, Jesus makes two claims regarding his nature: his empire is neither of this world nor of this time. Since Jesus has twice mentioned his empire, Pilate asks his third question: “Art thou [Jesus] a king?”³⁶³ Here, Pilate poses a political, not a theological question; Pilate asks about the kingdom, the political kingdom, which Jesus claims is his. Jesus’ answer to Pilate’s third question highlights this misunderstanding:

Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.³⁶⁴

As a result of his birth, Jesus identifies himself as a “witness unto the truth.”³⁶⁵ The kingdom to which Jesus belongs is spiritual and under the sovereignty of God and Christ.³⁶⁶ At this point in their conversation, Pilate asks the question with which Bacon begins *Essays*: “What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.”³⁶⁷ Pilate’s question is rhetorical. He does not expect Jesus to provide him with an account of “the truth” that Jesus claims to have been sent to witness. Although Pilate finds Jesus not guilty, he releases him to the Jewish crowd to pass judgment. On Passover, according to

³⁶³ Ibid. 18:37.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ “kingdom, n.” *OED*, November 23, 2011: “The spiritual sovereignty of God or Christ, or the sphere over which this extends, in heaven or on earth; the spiritual state of which God is the head.” This biblical passage is listed in the *OED* as an example of this usage: “Certainly, it is Heaven upon earth, to have a Mans Minde Move in Charitie, rest in Providence, and Turne upon the Poles of *Truth*” (1.59-61).

³⁶⁷ John 18:39.

ancient Jewish custom, one criminal, selected by the crowd, is released. The crowd chooses to release a robber, and Jesus is crucified.³⁶⁸

Truth, Bacon has articulated, is “the Sovereign Good of humane Nature” (1.41), and man has an imperative to seek the truth. Beginning in this way, Bacon draws attention to the undisclosed truth that Jesus has been sent to “bear witness unto,”³⁶⁹ and that Pilate does not care to discover. Bacon provides a biblical justification to seek the truth:

The first Creature of God, in the workes of the Dayes, was the Light of the Sense; The last, was the Light of Reason; And his Sabbath Worke, ever since, is the Illumination of his Spirit. First he breathed Light, upon the Face, of the Matter or Chaos; Then he breathed Light, into the Face of Man; and still he breatheth and inspireth Light, into the Face of his Chosen. (1.42-48)

Light, in Bacon’s writings, is synonymous with truth, knowledge, or wisdom. Truth—of both our senses and our reason—has been given to us by God. Through the act of creation, God’s truth imposes order in both nature and man. In response to the Divines’ prohibition against knowledge, Bacon grounds the pursuit of truth in Genesis.³⁷⁰

In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon elaborates upon the significance of biblical creation and interprets scripture in a way that is beneficial to the Instauration: “in the work of creation we see a double emanation of Virtue from God; the one referring more properly to power, the other to Wisdom.”³⁷¹ God exercises his power by creating matter from the chaos, and his wisdom by imposing order and form on the matter. According to Bacon, “the first Form that was created

³⁶⁸ Ibid. 18:39-40.

³⁶⁹ Ibid. 18:37.

³⁷⁰ Genesis 1.

³⁷¹ Bacon, *Advancement*, I.vi.1.

was *Light*.”³⁷² From here, Bacon’s argument in *Advancement of Learning* diverges from and elaborates upon his discussion in “Of Truth”: “After the creation was finished, it is set down unto us that man was placed in the garden to work therein; which work, so appointed to him, could be no other than work of Contemplation.”³⁷³ The imperative for truth, according to Bacon, is biblical. When “he [God] breathe[s] Light, into the Face of Man” (1.46), he endows man with reason and an imperative to seek knowledge.³⁷⁴ Contrary to the teaching of the Divines, Bacon argues that man serves God by contemplating nature. This argument is one of the grounds for the Instauration. According to Bacon’s account, when Pilate disingenuously asks Jesus, “What is Truth,” his refusal to hear the answer violates God’s imperative. The type of kingdom that Christ would command is one, Bacon evinces, wherein we honor our sovereign good: “Certainly, it is Heaven upon earth, to have a Mans Minde Move in Charitie, Rest in Providence, and Turne upon the Poles of *Truth*” (1.59-61). Here, in the first essay, Bacon introduces charity, providence, and truth as three components of bringing about heaven on earth.

Before we get too excited about the prospect of heaven on earth, Bacon concludes this essay with a verse from the parable of the unjust judge: “It being foretold, that when Christ commeth, *He shall not finde Faith upon the Earth*” (1.80).³⁷⁵ The argument in Luke 18:1-8 compares the unjust judge to God. The parable recounts the persistence of a widow who demands justice and, who, as a result of her hope, is able to convince an unjust judge to help

³⁷² Ibid., I.vi.4.

³⁷³ Ibid., I.vi.6.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Luke 18:8.

her.³⁷⁶ With reference to this parable, Bacon reminds his readers of the importance of hope.

The Instauration promises to provide mankind, including the weak and disenfranchised, with a uniquely modern “Heaven upon earth” (1.59). In essay twenty, “Of Counsell,” Bacon also quotes this passage from Luke, albeit in Latin. In the context of his discussion of counselors, Bacon states, “Certainly, *Non inveniet Fidem super terram*, is meant of the Nature of Times, and not of all particular Persons” (20.89-91). When Bacon’s argument from “Of Counsell” is applied to “Of Truth,” Bacon concludes with advice for his time. Bacon asks the people of his time to have faith, for if they can come to understand the relationships amongst charity, providence, and truth, heaven on earth is possible.

Part II: Eschatological Concerns

In the second essay, “Of Death,” Bacon turns to eschatology. He addresses the one facet of existence that all humans have in common and of which we are ignorant: death. As a result of our frailty and fallibility, it is possible for the Divines to capitalize on our ignorance and exploit our fears of our own mortality. As such, our fear of death renders us dependent on the Church powers. In this essay, Bacon undermines the Church’s most powerful hold on man. He questions “*Death*, as the *wages of sinne*, and Passage to another world” (2.5). If death is not a terrifying experience, why should it be feared? In fact, Bacon argues, “It is as Naturall to die, as to be borne” (2.49). Death, then, is the natural conclusion of life; it is neither painful nor frightening. If this is true, then why would one rely on the Church or religious intermediaries to intervene between this life and the next? Bacon suggests, if man can accept that death is not the wages of sin, he can be freed from this hold of religion.

³⁷⁶ In essay eleven, “Of Great Place,” Bacon returns to the importance of being a fair judge. In this latter presentation, Bacon declares that facility “is worse then Bribery. For *Bribes* come but now and then; But if Importunitie, or Idle Respects lead a Man, he shall never be without” (11.88-91). This point is elaborated upon in the next chapter of this dissertation.

Part III: Religious Unity

In the third essay, “Of Unity in Religion,”³⁷⁷ Bacon begins by stating, “*Religion* being the chiefe Band of humane Society, it is a happy thing, when it selfe, is well contained, within the true Band of *Unity*” (3.4-6). Yet, Bacon explains, religion as it has been practiced is not “the true Band” (3.5).³⁷⁸ Theology—the specific content of religion—is not the subject of this essay; rather, Bacon presents religion as policy. In fact, the introductory sentences are added only in the 1625 CE edition.³⁷⁹ In his critique of the 1612 CE iteration of this essay, then titled “Of Religion,” Smeaton argues that while unity is ranked “as one of the cardinal doctrines in religion,” Bacon “dealt more with doctrine than divisions.”³⁸⁰ Religion is a means of social cohesion; it brings people together and wrenches them apart. As a consequence, the manner in which religion is presented and discussed is essential. Religious speech is a powerful means to sway men. Essay three has been explicated in the previous chapter of this dissertation; therefore, in this chapter, the analysis focuses on rhetoric as essential to religious adherence. Since Bacon’s concern is less with unity and more with preventing disunity, he briefly sketches the five benefits or “*the Fruits*” of Church membership: peace, faith, charity, peace of conscience, as well as religious study and treaties (3.48-53). Bacon’s presentation of religion, in this essay, undermines the Church structure and, in doing so, calls belief into question.³⁸¹ As explored in

³⁷⁷ “Of Unity in Religion,” according to Faulkner, is an example of one of the essays designed to “corrod[e]...the most authoritative received pieties.” Faulkner, *Progress*, 29.

³⁷⁸ “band, n.” See footnote 166.

³⁷⁹ Smeaton, introduction, xii.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ I follow Faulkner on this point: according to Faulkner, in this essay, Bacon “plans the demise of Christianity. Bacon shows how faith in God can be civilly undermined by putting civil things first. Unity is indeed the focus in ‘Of Unity in Religion,’ but it is social unity. The essay

the previous chapter, the bulk of the essay is concerned with mitigating the dangers that may befall the Church and those that the Church may cause. In this way, Bacon emphasizes the aspects of the Church that are beneficial and useful to society and simultaneously attenuates those aspects of the Church that are detrimental to society.

Zealous faith, Bacon makes clear, is fundamentally dangerous. The Old Testament God is “*Jealous*”: his worship “will endure no Mixture, nor Partner” (3.12-14). As a consequence, if religion demands monotheistic adherence, there can be only one God; therefore, all other, lesser, false gods must be disavowed and their worshippers either converted or eliminated.³⁸²

Consequences for one who incurs the wrath of God are clearly delineated in the Bible: God will seek revenge;³⁸³ the offspring of the offending party will be punished;³⁸⁴ and the offending party will suffer utter destruction.³⁸⁵ This argument is reconsidered later in this chapter. At this point in our discussion, the scaffolding of Bacon’s argument is in place: religion, when properly exercised and controlled, serves as a unifying force in society; religious extremism is a danger to unity and stability; and religious speeches and religious speakers are influential, theologically and politically.

In order to understand the influence of the Church, it is necessary to distinguish between different types of disbelievers and different degrees of disbelief. Bacon avers that there are as

finesses the question of religious truth and appraises religion according to its fitness as ‘the chief band of human society.’ On such terrain Bacon can measure religion by its civility and attack it in the guise of making it civil.” Faulkner, however, leaves it to his readers to determine how Bacon actually goes about doing this. Faulkner, *Progress*, 96.

³⁸² Here, Bacon alludes to Moses, who, upon witnessing the pagan ritual of the Israelites, destroys the Ten Commandments, thereby forgetting, according to Bacon’s argument, that the Israelites, regardless of whether or not they are Jews, are men.

³⁸³ Nahum 1:2.

³⁸⁴ Exodus 20:5; and Deuteronomy 5:9.

³⁸⁵ Deuteronomy 4:23-27 and 6:15; and Joshua 24:18-20.

many types of heretics as there are Morris dancers (3.41-47). That is, there are as many religious opinions in opposition to the Catholic Church³⁸⁶ as there are types of Morris Dance: heathens (3.7; 3.8; and 3.34), those who believe in false religious opinion; atheists (3.36 and 3.130), those who do not believe in God; and profaners (3.36), those who have contemptuous beliefs as regard God. Each of these types of disbelievers, or incorrect believers according to regnant Church doctrine, is handled in a particular manner.³⁸⁷ Bacon suggests that heretics, who have faith but hold incorrect theological beliefs and practice incorrect rituals, pose the greatest danger to the Church.³⁸⁸

As Bacon begins this section on “*The Fruits of Unity*” (3.17), he declares that “Heresies, and Schismes” (3:20), more so than “Corruption of Manners” (3:22), drive believers from the Church. Theological sectarianism, rather than moral depravity on the part of Church fathers and members, according to Bacon, causes members to quit the Church. Bacon’s concern here is not with atheists: rather, his concern is with those who have faith, choose to leave the Church, and become heretics; or with those who have had faith, choose to leave the Church, and become profane scoffers. In order to maintain unity, religious divisions must be avoided. Bacon claims that there are “two extremes” (3.55) in sectarian disputes: the tendency to aggravate and the tendency to placate.

³⁸⁶ “heretic, n.” *OED*, January 12, 2012: “One who maintains theological or religious opinions at variance with the ‘catholic’ or orthodox doctrine of the Christian Church, or, by extension, that of any church or religious system, considered as orthodox. Also *transf.* with reference to non-Christian religions.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

³⁸⁷ Studer discusses the importance of rank order in Bacon’s thought. Studer, “Political Dangers,” 223; Heidi D. Studer, “‘Strange Fire at the Altar of the Lord’: Francis Bacon on Human Nature,” *The Review of Politics* 65.2 (spring 2003): 209-236.

³⁸⁸ Bacon elaborates upon this point in essay seventeen, “Of Superstition.”

The strong, natural tendency to seek unity, Bacon argues, is one of the Idols of the Tribe.³⁸⁹ As discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation, humans tend towards patterns and understand through patterns. Ignorance (3.101) and false agreement (3.103) cause people to perceive unity where it is not. It is essential, Bacon claims, that one is able to discern “Points Fundamentall and of Substance” (3.68) and “Points not meerely of Faith, but of Opinion, Order, or good Intention” (3.70).

Bacon’s third point “the *Meanes of procuring Unity*” (3.108) highlights the difficulty in obtaining unity. Those who seek religious unity must exercise caution so as not to neglect the rules of charity and humanity (3.108-111). The desire for religious unity, undertaken with a lack of caution, may result in violence. Bacon is clear that the Church has power over mundane human concerns: “Spirituell” influence over religious concerns, “Temporall” influence over political concerns, and the power to propagate wars (3.114-117).³⁹⁰ The source of the Church’s power, as has been discussed in chapter one of this dissertation, is theological and devotional: the Church controls the hearts of men. As the intermediary between man and God, the Church affects man’s condition both in this life and in the next life. Since the Church wields significant power, Bacon warns the Church against abuses and interference in mundane matters, except in cases where the stability of the state is compromised.

³⁸⁹ Bacon, *Organon*, I.45.

³⁹⁰ Bacon’s reference here is to Jihad. In essay twenty-nine, “Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates,” Bacon elaborates upon the benefits of Jihad as a policy to justify war: “The *Turke*, hath at hand, for Cause of Warre, the Propagation of his Law or Sect; A Quarell that he may always Command” (29.228-230). This policy and its benefits are discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation. For a detailed discussion of Bacon’s analysis of Jihad, albeit in the context of *An Advertisement Touching a Holy War*, see Ralph Lerner, “The Jihad of St. Alban,” *The Review of Politics* 64.1 (winter 2002): 5-26.

Bacon addresses a theological concern that is at the source of many sectarian quarrels: blasphemy. As discussed in relation to essay one, “Of Truth,” a great shame is “to be found false, and perfidious” (1.70). In essay three, a great concern is impious or profane speech, not necessarily impious or profane thought. Bacon’s example concerns speech, rather than belief or deed. The “great Blasphemy,” Bacon contends, is “when the Devill said; *I will ascend, and be like the Highest*; But it was greater Blasphemy, to personate God, and bring him in saying; *I will descend, and be like the Prince of Darknesse*” (3.135-138). This verse recounts the proverb that concerns the King of Babylon, who presumes to promote himself to the level of God and to demote God to his own level.³⁹¹ The devil is castigated for what he says, not for what he does. Bacon does not challenge the devil’s presumption to ascend to be like a god; he challenges the fact that the devil dares to speak in the name of God. The importance of prudent speech is a theme throughout all of Bacon’s work and recurs later in this chapter and in the third chapter of this dissertation. Speech is of paramount importance in religious matters, as discussed previously in this dissertation. Therefore, heretics—those who speak ill truths of God—are more dangerous than atheists and profaners.

Since men are swayed by words and the Church speaks as the voice of God on earth, the Divines, Politiques, and Men of Learning have a responsibility to ensure that religion is not used for nefarious purposes.³⁹² A Church that fails to maintain religion with ethics acts in its own interest and against the interests of society.³⁹³ Church power, as Bacon presents it in his third essay, is derived from persuasion and “pressure”: rhetoric is the source of the Church’s power

³⁹¹ Isaiah 14:14-15.

³⁹² Bacon introduces this division between the Divines, Politiques, and Men of Learning in *Advancement of Learning*. Bacon, *Advancement*, I.i.2.

³⁹³ “pressure, n.” See footnote 214.

(3.154-156). By extension, Bacon implies that rhetoric, persuasion, and “pressure” are the sources of all human power. Religious power, as all human power, can be wielded in the interest of either the rulers or those whom they rule.

Religion, when properly used as “the true Band of *Unity*” (3.5), is a moral band. The connection between the third and fourth essays is seen in this respect. In his discussion of unjust actions undertaken in the name of the Church, Bacon states, “Surely in Counsels, Concerning *Religion*, that Counsel of the Apostle would be prefixed; *Ira hominis non implet Justiciam Dei*” (3.150-152). As translated, this line states that the wrath of man does not achieve the justice of God. Bacon suggests, based on this reference to James 1:20, that all human attempts at justice are unequal to divine justice. In essay four, “Of Revenge,” Bacon explicitly addresses our moral longing for justice. In “Of Revenge,” Bacon denies that the Church can fulfill our desires to live in a world that is fair and has purpose. In fact, in “Of Revenge,” justice becomes a matter for men. Accordingly, for all intents and purposes, man is responsible for his own condition.

Religious adherence, according to Bacon’s argument in these first four essays, may be approached in two ways: zealously or tepidly. As discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation, when new, religions require zealous devotion and demand that practitioners be enthusiastic and exacting. As religions become established, they tend to become more liberal, accommodating, and tolerant. Religion, as presented in the previous chapter, must be either homogenous and strict, or heterogeneous and pluralistic.³⁹⁴

³⁹⁴ The American Founders opted for this second option. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, intro. Charles R. Kesler and ed. Clinton Rossitor (New York, NY: Signet Classic, 2003), 10 and 51; and Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans., ed., and intro. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2000), 180-186.

What, precisely, is Bacon's recommendation? Bacon does not advocate a religion that coheres with traditional forms of Christian practice, or a return to the religion of the heathens—because it seems that society requires monotheistic observance.³⁹⁵ Since his account of religion threatens the pre-existing religious power structures, taking his own advice, Bacon undermines the Church prudently and cautiously. He reminds his readers of the dangers of religious zealotry and questions the content of faith. If one truly believes in religious doctrine, one has no choice but to behave according to biblical law. If, however, one does not truly believe in the wages of sin, death is no longer terrifying, and the Church can no longer exact control on those grounds. Men appear to be on their own. Based on Bacon's account, God does not seem to be particularly concerned with the condition of men, yet religion remains the chief band between men. In order to answer this question more completely, we must consider his other religious essays. In essays thirteen, sixteen, seventeen, and thirty-five, Bacon fleshes out his account of religion: in essay thirteen, Bacon explains the role of charity in men's lives; in essays sixteen, seventeen, and thirty-five, Bacon addresses providence; throughout all four essays, Bacon encourages religious moderation and toleration.

ESSAY THIRTEEN, "OF GOODNESSE AND GOODNESSE OF NATURE": THE ERRORS OF HUMAN NATURE

In the first four essays, wherein the fundamental questions regarding human existence are addressed, Bacon not only shows the Church to be a corrupt, self-serving, and deceitful institution (1, 2, and 3), but also discounts "*Death, as the wages of sinne*" (2.5) and, in doing so, challenges the religious grounds of justice (3 and 4). Consequently, Bacon undermines the theological basis of moral behavior and human goodness. One is left to imagine the type of

³⁹⁵ On the essential nature of Christianity "for the true flourishing of reason and natural science," see Weinberger, "Metaphysics and Religion," 69.

world this might be if there were no commonly accepted impetus for just behavior. At the same time, however, Bacon introduces charity, providence, and truth (1) as foundational for moral behavior and essential to a good life. In essay thirteen, “Of Goodnesse and Goodnesse of Nature,” Bacon tackles the issue of human goodness from three directions: in one line of argument, Bacon reconsiders the Aristotelian account of habit and action; in another line of argument, Bacon appropriates the Christian account of charity; and in the final line of argument, Bacon addresses Machiavelli’s criticisms of Christianity. Bacon distorts and incorporates aspects of these three teachings into his discussion as he creates a new, entirely human-directed account of goodness. In this essay, Bacon’s argument proceeds in the following manner: first, he defines his terms and, in doing so, redefines charity and goodness;³⁹⁶ second, he explains the benefits of the new charity or new goodness; third, he argues that even one who does not display charity or goodness still has, within one’s nature, an inclination to do so; fourth, he presents the errors in and potential correctives to charity or goodness; fifth, he describes those who suffer a disinclination towards charity or goodness; and sixth, he presents the behaviors indicative of goodness. Each of the aforementioned subjects corresponds to a part of this section.

Part I: Goodness Defined: Habit and Inclination

Bacon begins in the first person and defines his terms: “I take *Goodnesse* in this Sense, the affecting of the Weale of Men, which is that the Grecians Call *Philanthropia*; And the word *Humanitie* (as it is used) is a little too light, to express it” (13.5-8). In his opening statement, Bacon presents two competing accounts of goodness. The Greek definition—*philanthropia*—literally translates as the love of mankind, which has an influence on the well-being of men. The contemporary definition—*humanitie*—Bacon defines in *Advancement of Learning*: “Humanity

³⁹⁶ Faulkner states that Bacon “converts charity into a humanitarian image that can prove useful.” Faulkner, *Progress*, 44.

particular consisteth of the same parts whereof man consisteth; that is, of knowledges which respect the body, and of knowledges that respect the mind.”³⁹⁷ Goodness, according to Bacon’s definition, is more than knowledge of man; it must include love of man. In this context, love must be understood generally, with respect to mankind as a species, rather than particularly, with respect to individual men.³⁹⁸ Bacon favors the literal understanding of goodness. As such, goodness cannot be solely contemplative; it must also be active and benevolent: it must affect the “Welfare, wellbeing, happiness, [and] prosperity” of mankind.³⁹⁹

Bacon further refines his terms: “*Goodnesse* I call the Habit, and *Goodnesse of Nature* the Inclination” (13.8). There is, according to Bacon, a difference between the practice of goodness and the predisposition towards goodness: habit is the action or behavior—it is the practice of behaving in congruence with the love of mankind; inclination is the proclivity—it is a disposition towards the love of mankind. Based on Bacon’s definition, it is the habit of goodness—that is *philanthropia*—that affects men. Therefore, in order to exhibit goodness, one cannot simply have a disposition or propensity towards goodness; rather, one must act on these proclivities. Macaulay, in his essay on Bacon, identifies *philanthropia* as “the great characteristic distinction, the essential spirit of the Baconian philosophy.”⁴⁰⁰ It is this

³⁹⁷ Bacon, *Advancement*, II.ix.1.

³⁹⁸ In essay ten, “Of Love,” Bacon has already discredited particular love as a passion which must be controlled and overcome.

³⁹⁹ “weal, n.” *OED*, November 21, 2011: “Welfare, well-being, happiness, prosperity.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁴⁰⁰ Thomas Babington Macaulay, “Francis Bacon, 1837” <http://www.readbookonline.net/title/41256/> (accessed June 2, 2013), part 6.

“grandiose kind of goodness” that defines Bacon, Abbot posits: “above all in his unique nature, contemptuous of individual interests, and bent on benefiting mankind on a stupendous scale.”⁴⁰¹

Either our goodness, or goodness of nature, elevates us above the other animals and mimics the character of God: “This of all Vertues, and Dignities of the Minde, is the greatest” (13.9). Bacon’s “This” (13.10) has an unclear antecedent. He may be referring to goodness as habit, to goodness as inclination, or to both. However, one of these two dignities is the greatest virtue. It is our goodness or goodness of nature that mimics “the Character of the Deitie” (13.10) and distinguishes us from the other animals: “without it, Man is a Busie, Mischievous, Wretched Thing; No better then a Kinde of Vermine” (13.11).

Goodness, as either a character of soul or a mode of action, is essential to our humanity. The habit of goodness, according to Bacon, “answers to the *Theologicall Vertue Charitie*” (13.12). Goodness, understood as a habit, is both *philanthropia*—love of mankind—and Christian charity. In essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” Bacon refers to “the Lawes of Charity, and of humane Society” (3.110). In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon elaborates on the role of charity: “religion and the holy faith doth conduct men unto, by imprinting upon their souls charity, which is excellently called the bond of perfection, because it comprehendeth and fasteneth all virtues together.”⁴⁰² Charity, Bacon states, perfects and unites all the other virtues. According to Bacon, charity pertains to the relationships between men. In Colossians 3:14, however, charity is understood as God’s love of man. In three steps, Bacon has expropriated Christian charity—God’s love of man—and replaced it with *philanthropia*—man’s love of mankind. He has borrowed the literal Greek definition of *philanthropia*, incorporated a

⁴⁰¹ Abbot, introduction, lxiii.

⁴⁰² Bacon, *Advancement*, II.xxii.15.

distinction between habit and knowledge reminiscent of Aristotle, and merged this account with his account of Christian charity, thereby creating a new category of goodness in the guise of what already exists.

Charity, understood here as Bacon's new charity, "admits no Excess, but Errour" (13.13). That is, one cannot love mankind too much, yet one can love the wrong man in the wrong way, or one can love mankind in the wrong way. Bacon contrasts charity with "The desire for Power...[and] The desire for Knowledge" (13.14). Both these desires, according to Bacon, can admit of excess: the former "caused the Angels to fall" (13.14); the latter "caused Man to fall" (13.15).⁴⁰³ Bacon iterates this argument in *Great Instauration*, as part of his third admonition to his readers regarding the ends of knowledge and the Instauration: to "perfect and govern [the Instauration] in charity."⁴⁰⁴ Charity, as discussed in *Great Instauration*, is essential to Bacon's project. It serves "for the benefit and use of life"⁴⁰⁵ and is contrasted to both power and knowledge: "For it was from lust of power that the angels fell, from lust of knowledge that man fell; but of charity there can be no excess, neither did angel or man ever come in danger by it."⁴⁰⁶ Charity perfects and governs our desires for knowledge and presumably our desires for power. One desires power for oneself for the benefits it can afford. Similarly, one desires knowledge for oneself for the benefits it can afford. However, charity is not desired for oneself; rather, one acts according to the precepts of charity for the benefit of others. Charity, as classified by Bacon, is a disposition towards the world that influences our other desires.

⁴⁰³ Smeaton identifies this passage as an example of Bacon's "reverence for moral principle." Smeaton, introduction, xxi.

⁴⁰⁴ Bacon, *Instauration*, 16.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

Considerations of goodness, habit, and *philanthropia*—understood as magnanimity, or “generosity of spirit”⁴⁰⁷—are reminiscent of Aristotle. In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon accuses Aristotle of negligence, a charge that is elaborated later in this chapter,⁴⁰⁸ and claims that he finds man to be more malleable than does Aristotle. Bacon believes that it is possible to “superinduc[e]...habit.”⁴⁰⁹ Despite Bacon’s protestations to the contrary, Aristotle does not disagree. The *Nicomachean Ethics* is particularly concerned with habit.⁴¹⁰ Aristotle believes, as does Bacon, that it is essential “to be habituated in this way or in that.”⁴¹¹ A detailed consideration of Bacon and Aristotle occurs later in this chapter, in the discussion of teleology and providence.

Part II: The Exception that Proves the Rule

Goodness of nature, Bacon has already made clear, is essential to our humanity: “without it, Man is a Busie, Mischievous, Wretched Thing; No better then a Kinde of Vermine” (13.11). He has established that goodness is our highest virtue (13.9). He has also conceded that goodness can admit of errors (13.14). At this point in his argument, Bacon explains that a lack of apparent goodness does not indicate a lack of goodness of nature: that is, Bacon clarifies that one can be inclined towards, yet not practice, goodness. Bacon attempts to establish that “The

⁴⁰⁷ “magnanimity, n.” *OED*, April 5, 2013: “[Primarily in the Aristotelian sense of *μεγαλοψυχία*, variously translated as ‘greatness of soul’, ‘proper pride’, etc.] Well-founded high regard for oneself manifesting as generosity of spirit and equanimity in the face of trouble, etc. Also: greatness of thought or purpose; grandeur or nobility of designs, ambition, or spirit.”

⁴⁰⁸ Bacon, *Advancement*, II.xxii.8.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ Joe Sachs, introduction to *Nicomachean Ethics*, by Aristotle (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing R. Pullins Company, 2002), xi.

⁴¹¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing R. Pullins Company, 2002), 1103b26.

Inclination to *Goodnesse*, is imprinted deeply in the Nature of Man: In so much, that if it issue not towards Men, it will take unto Other Living Creatures” (13.17-20). His example is based on “the Turks, a Cruell People, who neverthesse, are kinde to Beasts, and give Almes to Dogs and Birds” (13.20-22). The cruelty of the Turks does not, Bacon avers, undermine his argument about goodness. The natural inclination to goodness, regardless of one’s habit, can be evidenced in one’s treatment of animals. Although the Turks mistreat men, their benevolent treatment of animals, Bacon suggests, indicates that they, as a people, have goodness of nature. As evidence of this assertion, Bacon presents an account by Ogier Ghiselin de Busbequ, a sixteenth-century Flemish ambassador to Constantinople, who tells of “A Christian Boy in *Constantinople*, [who] had like to have been stoned, for gagging, in a waggishnesse, a long Billed Fowle” (13.22-24).⁴¹² Bacon’s argument, based on the example of the stoning, suggests that the Turks abhor cruelty to animals, despite being unconcerned with cruelty to people. As such, Bacon claims, the Turks are deeply imprinted with charity.

Part III: Errors and Excesses

Bacon now considers the “Errours...in this vertue of *Goodnesse*, or *Charity*, [that] may be committed” (13.24-26). The imprudent or erroneous application of this virtue results in what Bacon later refers to as “the Scandall, and the Danger” (13.34). Bacon begins with two Italian examples: first, an anonymous saying and, second, a quotation from Niccolo Machiavelli.

According to Bacon, “The *Italians* have an ungracious Proverb; *Tanto buon che val niente*: So

⁴¹² Abbot cites this passage as an example of Bacon’s ambivalence towards animals. Abbot, introduction, xliii.

good, that he is good for nothing” (13.26). Quoting from Machiavelli’s *Discourses on Livy*,

Bacon elaborates:⁴¹³

And one of the Doctors of *Italy*, *Nicholas Macciavel*, had the confidence to put in writing, almost in plaine Termes: *That the Christian Faith, had given up Good Men, in prey, to those, that are Tyrannicall, and unjust.* Which he spake, because indeed there was never Law, or Sect, or Opinion, did so much magnifie *Goodnesse*, as the Christian Religion doth. (13.28-33)

According to Bacon, Machiavelli states that Christianity, more so than any other religion, emphasizes the importance of goodness. As a consequence of this emphasis on goodness, Christian men are left vulnerable to men who do not have a habit of goodness. Bacon applies Machiavelli’s argument to his own analysis of the errors, scandals, and dangers of goodness and concludes that there is an inherent danger in the Christian understanding of goodness or charity: it leaves men vulnerable to being fleeced, a danger that becomes prominent in the next chapter of this dissertation.

In a larger discussion of the differences between ancient religion and Christian religion,⁴¹⁴ Machiavelli, in the *Discourses*, states:

Our religion [Christianity] has glorified humble and contemplative more than active men. It has then placed the highest good in humility, abjectness, and contempt of things human; the other [ancient religion] placed in it greatness of spirit, strength of body, and all other things capable of making men strong. And if our religion asks that you have strength in yourself, it wishes you to be capable more of suffering than of doing something strong.⁴¹⁵

Machiavelli argues that Christianity, by overvaluing humbleness, abasement, and otherworldliness, renders man weak. As a consequence, Machiavelli reasons, “This mode of life

⁴¹³ This is one of four instances in *Essays* where Bacon refers to Machiavelli by name.

⁴¹⁴ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, II.2.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, II.2.2.

thus seems to have rendered the world weak and given it in prey to criminal men.”⁴¹⁶ The cause of this incorrect orientation towards the world, Machiavelli states, “is...without a doubt more from the cowardice of the men who have interpreted our religion according to idleness and not according to virtue.”⁴¹⁷ Although Machiavelli uses the term “humility” and Bacon uses the term “goodness,” both refer to Christian charity. The parallels between Machiavelli’s argument and Bacon’s argument are clear: first, both are concerned with the dangers of Christian charity; second, both argue that charity can make men weak; and third, both discern a problem that must be overcome in the Christian conception of charity. For Machiavelli, religion makes men indifferent to worldly affairs.

Building upon Machiavelli’s argument regarding humility, Bacon extends his predecessor’s teaching in two important ways: first, he attempts to overcome the problem of otherworldliness in Christianity; and second, he attempts to reinterpret charity to mundane ends. In the first case, Christian charity is premised on God’s love of man, man’s love of God, and man’s love of other men.⁴¹⁸ According to Christian doctrine, the impetus to charity is fear of God’s judgment and concern for the next life. Bacon, however, has already undermined “*Death*, as the *wages of sinne*” (2.5). As a consequence, there is no reason to behave with “humility, abjectness, and contempt of things human.”⁴¹⁹ If what happens to us after we die is not a

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ “charity, n.” *OED*, January 27, 2012: “Christian love: a word representing *caritas* of the Vulgate, as a frequent rendering of *ἀγάπη* in N.T. Greek. With various applications: as God's love to man (by early writers often identified with the Holy Spirit.); man's love of God and his neighbor, commanded as the fulfilling of the Law, Matthew 22:37, 39; the Christian love of one's fellow human beings; Christian benignity of disposition expressing itself in Christ-like conduct; or one of the ‘three Christian graces’, fully described by St. Paul, I Corinthians 13.”

⁴¹⁹ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, II.2.2.

reflection of our actions in this life, there is no reason to be concerned with the otherworld. Man should be concerned with only this world. As regards the second point, if God is no longer the arbiter of Christian charity, the only relationships that matter are the relationships between men. Bacon now attempts to appropriate the idea of charity for the ends of the Instauration.

In order to mitigate the potential errors of Christian charity, Bacon provides a number of correctives. First, he recommends that one “Seeke the Good of other Men, but be not in bondage, to their Faces, or Fancies; For that is but Facilitie, or Softnesse; which taketh an honest Minde Prisoner” (13.36-38). One should endeavor to facilitate other men in accomplishing their own good; however, one should be cautious not to be easily led or manipulated by other men.⁴²⁰ Second, Bacon recommends that one bestow gifts and aid on men as they require (13.39-44). In order to do so, one must actually understand the men upon whom one is bestowing gifts. As an example, Bacon reminds his readers of Aesop’s fable of the cock and the stone: “Neither give thou *AEsops* Cocke a Gemme, who would be better pleased, and happier, if he had had a Barly Corne” (13.39-41). Bacon suggests, as did Aesop before him, that there is no reason for the cock to have a precious stone, since he spends his days in the filth of the pasture and requires only food.⁴²¹ One must provide men with that which men require. Money, honor, and virtues should be allocated based on merit: “Common Benefits, are to be communicate with all; But peculiar

⁴²⁰ “facility, n.” *OED*, November 22, 2011: “The quality of being easily led, persuaded, or influenced; tendency or predisposition *to* do something, esp. something bad or undesirable; weakness of character; docileness; acquiescence; compliance; an instance of this.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁴²¹ Aesop, “the cock and the precious stone,” in *The Fables of Aesop*, II.4.

Benefits, with choice” (13.44-46).⁴²² In order to mitigate the concern that this behavior is somehow unchristian, Bacon refers his readers to Matthew 5:45: “*He [God] sendeth his Raine, and maketh his Sunne to shine, upon the Just, and Unjust; but hee doth not raine Wealth, nor shine Honour, and Vertues, upon Men equally*” (13.41-44). Even God is particular in the manner in which He bestows some things on men, and general with respect to others. And Third, Bacon recommends that one avoid the problem inherent in excessive generosity and so escape the fate of the man in the Italian proverb: “*So good, that he is good for nothing*” (13.27). One must not destroy oneself in order to benefit others (13.46). Our self-love is the foundation from which our charitable impulses flow (4.16): “For Divinitie maketh the Love of our Selves the Patterne; The Love of our Neighbours but the Portraiture” (13.47-49). Bacon’s advice for avoiding charitable errors is prudence. One should seek the good of others, as long as one is not harmed in the process.

After this advice to temper one’s charitable inclinations, Bacon returns to the distinction established at the beginning of this essay: “*Goodnesse I call the Habit, and Goodnesse of Nature the Inclination*” (13.8). Bacon now makes explicit that which has been implicit throughout this essay. First, he declares that the “*Habit of Goodnesse, [is] directed by right Reason*” (13.54). In order not to “breake the Patterne” (13.47), our practice of goodness or charity must be directed by prudential concerns. Second, regardless of the practice of goodness, some men have “a Disposition towards it; As on the other side, there is a Naturall malignitie” (13.56). According to nature, then, some individuals have a predisposition towards goodness, while others have a

⁴²² “communicate, v.” *OED*, November 22, 2011: “Senses relating principally to association and sharing; involving the imparting or sharing of information, etc.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

predisposition away from goodness. Some men cannot compel themselves to love other men, yet they can cultivate a habit of goodness based on right reason.

Part IV: A Disinclination Towards Goodness

Malignant men, according to Bacon, much like the men who “doe wrong, meere out of ill nature” (4.17), cannot be other than they are: “it is but like the Thorn, or Bryar, which prick, and scratch, because they can doe no other” (4.17-20). Bacon claims that men who suffer from this malignity, the disinclination towards goodness or charity, are afflicted “in their Nature” (13.57). There are three degrees to which this disinclination manifests itself: “The lighter Sort of Malignitie, turneth but to a Crosnesse, or Frowardnesse, or Aptnesse to oppose, or Difficilnesse, or the like; but the deeper Sort, to Envy, and meere Mischiefe” (13.58-61). A mild case of this malignity appears as contrariness, unreasonableness, or argumentativeness: men of this type are difficult. Yet, in more severe cases, an individual actually acts according to his malignity. Finally, in its most extreme manifestation, this malignity is misanthropy—hatred of mankind (13.65)—the result of which, following the example of Timon, is suicide (13.66).

The example of Timon is pertinent. Bacon posits that men who have a disinclination towards goodness are unable to be any other way. As such, they cannot be held responsible for the discord that they cause others. Yet, Bacon has already argued that “The Inclination to *Goodnesse*, is imprinted deeply in the Nature of Man” (13.17). Timon, then, is not an example of a man who has a natural disinclination towards goodness: he is certainly not a misanthrope by nature.⁴²³ Rather, Timon is an example of a man who is “*So good, that he is good for nothing*” (13.27). According to the second-century CE Greek rhetorician Lucian, Timon is ruined by his

⁴²³ William Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, ed. H. J. Oliver (London, UK: The Arden Shakespeare, 2001).

“kindness and generosity and universal compassion.”⁴²⁴ Timon’s excessive generosity is not “directed by right Reason” (13.55). He gives so much to others that he depletes his wealth. By negligently distributing his wealth, Timon “breakest the Patterne” (13.47). In his time of need, none whom he has helped, agrees to help him. Timon’s misanthropy is not the result of inclination, but the result of experience. As such, Timon’s example serves as a warning to those who have an inclination towards goodness: goodness not “directed by right Reason” (13.55) is a great error that is entirely preventable.

Men who have a natural disinclination towards goodness, according to Bacon, serve a necessary political purpose. In times of political turmoil, as opposed to times of peace, “they are the fittest Timber, to make great Politiques of: Like to knee Timber, that is good for Ships, that are ordained to be tossed; But not for Building houses, that shall stand firme” (13.69-72). Bacon is not likely recommending that misanthropic men become politiques. Rather, he argues that men who have “The lighter Sort of Malignitie” (13.58), or even “the deeper Sort” (13.60), make able and effective political actors. Men of these types make the necessary sacrifices. As Bacon explicitly states in essay thirteen, “Of Goodnesse and Goodnesse of Nature,” it is imprudent to love men too much.

Part V: Signs of Goodness

How, then, does one behave with a habit of goodness? Bacon states, “The Parts and Signes of *Goodnesse* are many” (13.72), and lists four indicators:

If a Man be Gracious, and Curteous to Strangers, it shewes, he is a Citizen of the World; And that his Heart, is no Island, cut off from other Lands; but a Continent, that joynes to them. If he be Compassionate, towards the Afflictions of others, it shewes that his Heart is like the noble Tree, that is wounded it selfe, when it gives the Balme. If he easily Pardons and Remits Offences, it shewes, that his Minde is planted above Injuries; So that

⁴²⁴ Lucian, “Timon the Misanthrope,” in *The Complete Works of Lucian of Samosata*, trans. H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1905), 1:33.

he cannot be shot. If he be Thankfull for small Benefits, it shewes, that he weiges Mens Mindes, and not their Trash. (13.72-82)⁴²⁵

Courtesy, civic engagement, compassion, forgiveness, and gratitude are the signs of goodness.

The most important sign, however, Bacon saves for last: to “have *St. Pauls* Perfection, that he would wish to be an *Anathema* from *Christ*, for the Salvation of his Brethren, it shewes much of a Divine Nature, and a kinde of Conformity with *Christ* himselfe” (13.82-86).⁴²⁶ Bacon

concludes this essay as he begins it, with a reminder of the relationship between Christian charity and Baconian goodness. Goodness, “of all Vertues, and Dignities of the Minde, is the greatest; being the Character of the Deitie” (13.9).

“Of Goodnesse and Goodnesse of Nature” establishes the grounds of Bacon’s charity, which, despite apparent similarities to classical philanthropy and Christian charity, is distinct. Bacon’s account is premised on his understanding of human nature: goodness is imprinted in men (3.17). Most men have a predisposition towards goodness. Those men who do not can still behave according to the precepts of goodness. According to Bacon, goodness is not a moral category; it is prudential behavior. It is action and habit, rooted in human nature. Bacon’s account simultaneously affirms and undermines classical moral virtue and Christian charity. In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon argues that Aristotle espouses “a negligent opinion, that of those things that consist by nature nothing can be changed by custom.”⁴²⁷ Granted, Bacon’s evidentiary support pertains to nature, rather than to man. Yet, he continues: “his [Aristotle’s] conclusion, that all virtues and vices consist in habit, he ought so much more to have taught the

⁴²⁵ John Donne, “Meditations,” in *Sermons on the Psalms and Gospels, with a Selection of Prayers and Meditations*, ed. and intro. Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1963), XVII.

⁴²⁶ Romans 9:3.

⁴²⁷ Bacon, *Advancement*, II.xxii.8.

manner of superinducing that habit.”⁴²⁸ Bacon interprets Aristotle as having underestimated man’s ability to cultivate habit. As a consequence of this interpretation, Bacon believes that human nature can be educated and cultivated, more so than does Aristotle. In doing so, Bacon affirms and strengthens Machiavelli’s account of humility. Based on the exoteric teaching in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, virtue must be chosen for its own sake.⁴²⁹ Similarly, Christian charity must be for its own sake. Goodness, as Bacon understands it, however, is for one’s own sake. That is, the habit of goodness is good for each individual. Charity no longer involves man’s relationship with God; rather, it concerns man’s relationship to other men. Directed by right reason, we behave according to goodness because doing so is prudent. Based on the account in this essay, the Church is no longer responsible for mediating the relationships between men. Moral virtue no longer requires a sacrifice or compromise. Bacon’s account of goodness solves the problem of virtue as self-sacrifice and undermines the potential of goodness as a category of soul.⁴³⁰ Why, then, should we be good? Goodness, according to Bacon, is expedient: we should be good because being good is good for us.

ESSAY SIXTEEN, “OF ATHEISME”: WHAT THE FOOL HATH SAID

Essay sixteen, “Of Atheisme,” and essay seventeen, “Of Superstition,” form a pair. They are preceded by “Of Seditions and Troubles,” in which Bacon recognizes “*Innovation in Religion*” (15.111) as one of the causes of seditions. If one reads the essays in order, Bacon identifies alterations in religion as a possible cause of political unrest and, in doing so, reminds

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, 2 vols., trans. C. I. Litzinger (Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Company, 1964); Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095a, 1098a, 1103a-1190b, and 1105a.

⁴³⁰ In essay fourteen, “Of Nobility,” Bacon discusses nobility as a political category, rather than as a condition of soul.

his readers of the potential political dangers of religious instability. “Of Atheisme” begins with one of the more frequently cited passages in Bacon’s corpus. Speaking in the first person, Bacon states, “I had rather beleieve all the Fables in the *Legend*, and the *Talmud*, and the *Alcoran*, then that this universall Frame, is without a Minde” (16.3-5).⁴³¹ On its face, Bacon seems to endorse faith.⁴³² He appears to argue “that this universall Frame, is [not] without a Minde” (16.4). That is, Bacon appears to endorse divine providence.⁴³³ Essay sixteen is presented in two parts. The first part of the essay, which is divided into four sections, denies providence and insists on the importance of religion and God: first, Bacon begins an endorsement of faith and providence; second, he explains the reasons that some men deny the existence of God; third, he presents the case of Epicurus and the atomists; and fourth, he distinguishes between different types of atheists. The second half of the essay, which is divided into three sections, establishes the political importance of correct religious adherence: first, Bacon considers the causes of atheism; second, he declares the importance of God in the lives of men; and third, he includes a long, Latin quotation from Cicero’s *De Haruspicum Responsis* that concerns the relationship between religion and politics. Essay sixteen is an interpretational challenge: on the one hand, Bacon appears to endorse divine providence, while on the other hand, he appears to deny divine

⁴³¹ Bacon seems to echo Diogenes Laertius: “it would be better to follow the fables about the Gods than to be a slave to the fate of the natural philosopher; for the fables which are told give us a sketch, as if we could avert the wrath of God by paying him honour; but the other presents us with necessity which is inexorable.” Diogenes Laertius, “Life of Epicurus,” in *The Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. C. D. Yonge (London, UK: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1915), 472.

⁴³² Abbot interprets this passage as an example that Bacon “believes in a God...that influences him rather scientifically than morally, strengthening his sanguine trust that all nature is based, by one divine Mind, upon one divinely simple order, which is the highest privilege of man to discover and proclaim.” Abbot, introduction, xl.

⁴³³ “providence, n.” *OED*, February 22, 2012: “In full *providence of God* (also *nature*, etc.), *divine providence*. The foreknowing and protective care of God (or nature, etc.); divine direction, control, or guidance.”

providence; at the same time, Bacon appears to deny the importance of religion to politics, while he affirms the necessity of religion to politics. Only when considered in light of the subsequent discussion in essays seventeen and thirty-five, does Bacon's argument become clear.

Part I: The Problem of Providence

Nature, the very fact of human existence, Bacon claims as evidence of the divine: "God never wrought Miracle, to convince *Atheisme*, because his Ordinary Works convince it" (16.5-7). According to Bacon, miracles—events that are not explicable by human reason⁴³⁴—are not intended to dissuade those who do not believe in God.⁴³⁵ Our human existence and the natural order are sufficient evidence of the divine.⁴³⁶ Bacon elaborates upon this same point in *Advancement of Learning*:⁴³⁷ "there was never miracle wrought by God to convert an atheist, because the light of nature might have led him to confess a God."⁴³⁸ Our knowledge of God, according to *Advancement*, "may be obtained by the contemplation of His creatures."⁴³⁹ Bacon

⁴³⁴ "miracle, n." Ibid., January 30, 2012: "A marvellous event not ascribable to human power or the operation of any natural force and therefore attributed to supernatural, esp. divine, agency; esp. an act (e.g. of healing) demonstrating control over nature and serving as evidence that the agent is either divine or divinely favoured." Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁴³⁵ "atheism, n." Ibid., November 4, 2011: "Disbelief in, or denial of, the existence of a God. Also, Disregard of duty to God, godlessness (*practical* atheism)." A passage from *Advancement* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁴³⁶ This is not the only mention of miracles in the essays. See also 5.5; 9.50-52; 12.31; and 58.93-94. In *New Atlantis*, the inhabitants of Bensalem are witness to a miracle. Bacon, *Atlantis*, 48.

⁴³⁷ For a more detailed discussion of this section of *Advancement*, see Weinberger, "Unity of Knowledge," 119-121; and Weinberger, *Science, Faith, and Politics*, 244-259.

⁴³⁸ Bacon, *Advancement*, II.vi.1.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

calls this knowledge “*divine philosophy* or *natural theology*.”⁴⁴⁰ Yet, this knowledge has limits: “The bounds of this knowledge are, that it sufficeth to convince atheism, but not to inform religion.”⁴⁴¹ Natural theology indicates that there is, indeed, a “universall Frame” (16.4), but not the exact nature of this will.⁴⁴²

Since proof of God’s existence is evidenced in everyday experiences, why do some men deny the existence of God? Bacon suggests that atheism results from an inability to see the chain of causes:

It is true, that a little Philosophy inclineth Mans Minde to *Atheisme*; But depth in Philosophy, bringeth Mens Mindes about to *Religion*: For while the Minde of Man, looketh upon Second Causes Scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and goe no further. (16.7-11)⁴⁴³

Our inability to see this chain, presented in *New Organon*, is “founded in human nature itself and in the very tribe or race of mankind.”⁴⁴⁴ These Idols of the Tribe, as Bacon calls them, are innate; they are unavoidable, yet it is possible to guard against them. Bacon identifies seven of these Idols: first, a “willing[ness to] suppos[e] a greater order and regularity in things than it [the

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² On this point, I follow Weinberger, “Unity of Knowledge,” 119.

⁴⁴³ This point is also in *Advancement*, I.i.3: “it is an assured truth, and conclusion of experience, that a little or superficial knowledge of Philosophy may incline the mind of man to Atheism, but a further proceeding therein doth bring the mind back again to Religion: for in the entrance of Philosophy, when the second causes, which are next unto the senses, do offer themselves to the mind of man, if it dwell and stay there it may induce some oblivion of the highest cause; but when a man passeth on further, and seeth the dependence of causes, and the works of Providence, then, according to the allegory of the poets, he will easily believe that the highest link of nature’s chain must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter’s chair.”

⁴⁴⁴ Bacon, *Organon*, I.41.

intellect] finds,”⁴⁴⁵ originating “in the regularity of the substance of the human spirit,”⁴⁴⁶ which causes humans to “inven[t] parallels and correspondences and non-existent connections”;⁴⁴⁷ second, a tendency to seek corroboratory evidence for our opinions, originating in the prejudices of the human spirit,⁴⁴⁸ which, “Once a man’s understanding has settled on something,” causes our intellect to find corroboration;⁴⁴⁹ third, a preference for easy and obvious understanding, originating in the limitations of the human spirit,⁴⁵⁰ which means that “The human understanding is most affected by things which have the ability to strike and enter the mind all at once and suddenly, and to fill and expand the imagination”;⁴⁵¹ fourth, a restless compulsion to seek further when it is necessary to stop, originating in the restless movement of the human spirit,⁴⁵² which is an important factor in our pursuant discussion;⁴⁵³ fifth, our emotions’ ability to influence our understanding, originating in the influence of our emotions on the human spirit,⁴⁵⁴ which causes “marks and stains [on] the understanding in countless ways which are sometimes impossible to perceive”;⁴⁵⁵ sixth, a weakness in our senses, originating “in the

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., I.45.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., I.52.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., I.45.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., I.52.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., I.46.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., I.52.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., I.47. Bacon has made a similar argument in essay one, “Of Truth.”

⁴⁵² Ibid., I.52.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., I.48.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., I.52.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., I.49.

limited power of the senses,”⁴⁵⁶ which as “the greatest obstacle and distortion, causes us to dismiss those things which cannot be seen;”⁴⁵⁷ and seventh, a proclivity towards abstractions, originating in the mode of impression of the human spirit,⁴⁵⁸ which causes us to “preten[d] that things which are in flux are unchanging.”⁴⁵⁹ The Idols of the Tribe highlight the obstacles that prevent the human intellect from seeing the chain of causes, such that beginners in inquiry tend to rest in second causes “and goe no further” (16.11).

Implicit in Bacon’s Idols of the Tribe is a critique of the ancient accounts of causation and teleology. In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon ascribes this deficiency of learning to “Aristotle and Plato.”⁴⁶⁰ According to Aristotle’s account of causation, there are four causes:⁴⁶¹ the material cause—*that from which* a thing is made; the formal cause—the pattern, shape, or recipe from which a thing is made; the efficient or proximate cause—the source or the precipitating event that brings about the change; and the final cause—*that for the sake of* or the *why of which*, something is made. If a thing is made for the sake of something, it is made with a purpose; if a thing is made with purpose, there must be some type of design; and if there is a design, there must be some type of designer.⁴⁶² Based on the Idols of the Tribe, if man follows the chain of causation through to its final cause, man is led to God: “But when it [the mind of

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., I.52.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., I.50.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., I.52.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., I.51.

⁴⁶⁰ Bacon, *Advancement*, II.vii.7.

⁴⁶¹ Aristotle, *Physics*, in *Complete Works of Aristotle*, 2 vols., trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1:194b15-195b30.

⁴⁶² “teleology, n.” *OED*, February 20, 2012: “The doctrine or study of ends or final causes, esp. as related to the evidences of design or purpose in nature; also *transf.* such design as exhibited in natural objects or phenomena.”

man] beholdeth, the Chaîne of them, Confederate and Linked together, it must needs flie to *Providence*, and *Deitie*” (16.11-13). Aristotle’s account of final cause requires a designer. Hence, the intellect, plagued by the Idols of the Tribe, is moved towards providence and God.

In fact, Bacon argues that even those philosophers “most accused of *Atheisme*, doth most demonstrate *Religion*” (16.14). He specifically names Leucippus, one of the founders of the atomists;⁴⁶³ Democritus, his pupil; and Epicurus.⁴⁶⁴ Here, Bacon posits that the arguments of the atomists are not sufficiently persuasive to prove that “this Order, and Beauty, [is] without a Divine Marshall” (16.20). Bacon does not explain the arguments that he has in mind until later in this essay (16.35-52). At this juncture, Bacon contends that the elemental account of the world—“that foure Mutable Elements, and one Immutable Fift Essence, duly and Eternally placed, need no God” (16.16-18)—is more persuasive than the account of the atomists. The elemental account of the world is synonymous with the Aristotelian account of cause; final cause is associated with the fifth element. As before, Bacon seems to endorse providence, this time at the expense of the atomists. This statement is particularly strange since Bacon often argues that Democritus’ teaching is the most plausible explanation of the nature of things.⁴⁶⁵

What exactly is going on here? While it is premature to reach a conclusion, some preliminary comments should suffice. To this point in *Essays*, Bacon has claimed three times that there is “a Divine Marshall” (16.20; 4-5; and 13). Further, Bacon has reminded his readers

⁴⁶³ Atomists argue that the world is composed of atoms and void. Atoms are indivisible units that are in constant, purposeless motion. Our experience of the world, then, is as connected atoms and matter in motion. While many intellectual traditions contain atomistic accounts of the world, when Bacon discusses the atomists, he is concerned with the Greek tradition, begun in the fifth century BCE by Leucippus and his pupil Democritus.

⁴⁶⁴ In the Latin version of this essay, Bacon quotes Diogenes Laertius, who discusses all three of these atomists. Diogenes, “Life of Leucippus,” “Life of Democritus,” and “Life of Epicurus,” in *Lives*.

⁴⁶⁵ On this point, I follow Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times*, 88.

that the evidence for Providence can be found in the “Ordinary Works” (13.6) and in the “Order, and Beauty” (13.20) of the world. It would appear that Bacon contends there is divine providence. At the same time, Bacon has argued that atheism results from an inability to understand properly the chain of causation (13.11). Despite not being mentioned, the Idol of the Tribe underscores this entire, often confusing, line of argument. If, as Bacon posits, atheism is the result of an inability to understand the chain of causation, why is not Providence, too, the result of an inability to understand the chain of causation?

Many men have claimed to be atheists. As evidence, Bacon expropriates Psalm 14 and Psalm 53:⁴⁶⁶ “The Scripture saith; *The Foole hath said in his Heart, there is no God*” (16.20-22). According to Psalm 14, “The fool denies not God’s existence, but divine governance of the world and attention to mankind.”⁴⁶⁷ The fool rejects divine providence. Yet, Bacon adds to the biblical quotation: “It is not said; *The Foole hath thought in his Heart*” (16.22). Bacon creates a distinction between what the fool has said and what the fool may have thought.⁴⁶⁸ Bacon accuses the fool of memorization without proper understanding:⁴⁶⁹ “So as, he rather saith it by rote to himselfe, as that he would have, then that he can throughly beleeeve it, or be perswaded of it” (16.22-25). Pursuant to Bacon’s interpretation, the fool repeats that there is no God because

⁴⁶⁶ Psalm 14:1: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.” Psalm 53:1: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.”

⁴⁶⁷ *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, 3rd edition*, 785.

⁴⁶⁸ A similar point is made by Plutarch in “Superstition.” Plutarch, “Superstition,” in *Plutarch’s Moralia*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1969), 2:483.

⁴⁶⁹ “rote, n.” *OED*, February 1, 2012: “by rote: in a mechanical or repetitious manner: (*esp.* of learning, etc.) acquired by memorization without proper understanding or reflection; (also) with precision, by heart.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

he wants there to be no God and seeks thereby to convince himself. Bacon clarifies that the only people who “deny there is a *God*, [are] those, for whom it maketh that there were no *God*” (16.25).⁴⁷⁰ A true atheist has no reason to state that there is no God, because a true atheist knows that there is no God. For this reason, Bacon maintains “that *Atheisme* is rather in the *Lip*, then in the *Heart* of Man” (16.27). Returning to the image of the fool who repeats his atheism by rote, Bacon elaborates: “*Atheists* will ever be talking of that their Opinion, as if they fainted in it, within themselves, and would be glad to be strengthened, by the Consent of others” (16.28-30). Atheists, as reported by Bacon, discuss their atheism in order to affirm their opinion. In the process, they “strive to get *Disciples*” (16.31). Most surprising, Bacon claims, are those atheists who are willing to “suffer for *Atheisme*, and not recant; Whereas, if they did truly thinke, that there were no such Thing as *God*, why should they trouble themselves” (16.33-35). The consideration reveals five points regarding the fool’s atheism. First, the fool does not truly believe what he says, but rather speaks by rote (16.20-28). Second, the fool says that there is no God because he seeks affirmation, or acknowledgement, that there is indeed no God (16.28-30). Third, the fool searches for companions and disciples (16.31-32). Fourth, the fool is prepared to martyr himself for his atheism (16.32-35). Yet, if the fool “did truly thinke, that there were no such Thing as *God*” (16.34) and that death were not “the *wages of sinne*” (2.5), there is no reason for him not to recant. Fifth and consequently, atheism is a sect, like other religious sects (16.32).

Thomas Hobbes includes this same biblical reference in *Leviathan*. In chapter fifteen, “Of other Laws of Nature,” Hobbes accuses the fool of having “sayd in his heart, there is no such

⁴⁷⁰ “make, v.” Ibid., March 12, 2012: “To operate in favour of, be favourable to; to confirm (a view, etc.); to tend to the advancement or progress of; to favour, conduce to, further, aid.” This passage is listed in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

thing as Justice.”⁴⁷¹ Hobbes explicitly articulates the relationship between justice and God that is only implicit in *Essays*. Hobbes’ fool “questioneth, whether Injustice, taking away the feare of God, (for the same Foole hath said in his heart there is no God,) may not sometimes stand with that Reason, which dictateth to every man his own good.”⁴⁷² Hobbes’ fool, similarly to Bacon’s fool, denies the existence of God. Unlike Bacon, who explains that the fool does not truly disbelieve—or rather that a true disbeliever is very rare (16.20-28)—Hobbes focuses on the implication of the fool’s comportment to the divine and, by extension, justice: without a divine arbiter, is there a rationale for justice? Unlike the overt discussion of this problem in *Leviathan*, Bacon’s path meanders.

At this point in his argument, Bacon returns to the atomists, who, although “most accused of *Atheisme*, doth most demonstrate *Religion*” (16.14). When he first introduces the atomists, Bacon mentions “*Leucippus*, and *Democritus*, and *Epicurus*” (16.15); now, Bacon focuses on Epicurus. In essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” Bacon argues that Lucretius “would have been seven times more Epicure and Atheist, then he was” (3.129), had he known about the atrocities committed, since his death, in the name of religion. Only now does Bacon explain the precise nature of Epicurus’ atheism. Bacon begins with a charge against Epicurus: “that he did but dissemble, for his credits sake, when he affirmed; There were *Blessed Natures*, but such as enjoyed themselves, without having respect to the Government of the world” (16.36-39). Epicurus, Bacon suggests, should be acknowledged for having pretended or misdirected⁴⁷³

⁴⁷¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 1994), 180.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ For a detailed consideration of dissimulation, see essay six, “Of Simulation and Dissimulation.”

when he corroborated the existence of the blessed natures independent from “the Government of the World” (16.38). Why is this important? Bacon avers that Epicurus, through his dissimulation, adapts to the requirement of his time.⁴⁷⁴ Epicurus’ confirmation of the existence of independent “Blessed Natures” (16.37) obscures his deeper point: “there was no *God*” (16.40).⁴⁷⁵ Following the example of Plato, Epicurus claims that it is not profane to deny the gods of the vulgar, but it is profane to apply the opinions of the vulgar to the gods.⁴⁷⁶ Bacon acknowledges that Epicurus “had the Confidence, to deny the *Administration*, he had not the power to deny the *Nature*” (16.44). The atomists are not alone in this perspective. Bacon presents two additional examples of sects who deny the existence of a single, providential god, but do not deny the existence of divine forces: the western Indians have “their particular *Gods*, though they have no name for God” (16.46); and the Greek heathens have a pantheon, but not a single, highest God in a monotheistic sense (16.47). For what, exactly, should Epicurus be credited? Bacon recognizes Epicurus for denying the government (16.38) or the administration (16.44). Epicurus, according to Bacon, denies divine providence. If there are blessed natures that are not controlled by God—that is, beings whose actions are not ordained by divine design—there is no divine providence. If any being exists outside the design, or is exempt from the design, the entire design is called into question; if the design is called into question, so, too, is the designer.

⁴⁷⁴ “temporize, v.” *OED*, February 10, 2012: “To adopt some course for the time or occasion; hence, to adapt oneself or conform to the time and circumstances.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁴⁷⁵ Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, vol. 19 of *Cicero*, trans. H. Rackman (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1951), 19:59-61 and 19:351-55.

⁴⁷⁶ Translated from essay 16.41-43: “*Non Deos vulgi negare profanum; sed vulgi Opiniones Diis applicare profanum.*”

Having established that the atomists deny providence, as do the western Indians and the classical Greeks, Bacon distinguishes “The Contemplative *Atheist*” (16.52) and “the great *Atheists*” (16.56) from the type of atheist that he has previously been describing. Bacon’s three examples of thoughtful atheists are odd choices: “A *Diagoras*, a *Bion*, a *Lucian* perhaps, and some others” (16.53). Diagoras of Melos, a fifth-century BCE Greek poet, is convicted of atheism and forced to leave Athens. Bion,⁴⁷⁷ Diogenes Laertius writes, is a staunch atheist until the time of his death, at which point he endeavors “to show his repentance for the insults he had offered to the Gods.”⁴⁷⁸ Lucian, about whose life little is known, is a second-century CE poet noted for his atheism and scoffing. Strangely, Diagoras is expelled from Athens for his atheism, while Bion recants his atheism. Bacon’s three examples are not particularly helpful in illuminating the rarity of contemplative atheists (16.52). Bacon has already claimed that a true atheist would not “suffer for *Atheisme*, and not recant” (16.33). Herein rests the problem: “all that Impugne a received *Religion*, or *Superstition*, are by the adverse Part, branded with the Name of *Atheists*” (16.54-56). Believers decry all impugnors as atheists, regardless of the precise content of their disbelief.

Of greater concern, Bacon argues, are those who do not formally attack religion: “the great *Atheists*, indeed, are *Hypocrites*; which are ever Handling Holy Things, but without Feeling” (16.56-58). Serious atheists are dissemblers, “who falsely profess to be...religiously

⁴⁷⁷ Plutarch, in “Superstition,” includes a quotation from Bion. In his discussion of the superstitious man, Plutarch states, “as Bion says, ‘bring whatever chance directs and hand and fasten it on a peg.’” Plutarch, “Superstition,” 2:477.

⁴⁷⁸ Diogenes Laertius, “Life of Bion,” in *Lives*, 175.

inclined.”⁴⁷⁹ Epicurus, according to this understanding, is a great *Atheist*, who ought to be credited for his dissembling (16.36). The great atheists lie about their lack of belief and profess belief. As such, Bacon claims, “they must needs be cauterized in the End” (16.58). The true atheists, according to Bacon, are those who falsely profess religion or deal with religious things, but without emotional attachment. Such men, Bacon argues, must be stopped.⁴⁸⁰ In essay seventeen, Bacon explains the reasons the great, hypocritical atheists must be cauterized.

We are now in a position to make sense of Bacon’s attack on Aristotelian teleology and his praise of Epicurean atomism. At the heart of Bacon’s “Of Atheisme” is the issue of divine providence. The question under consideration is whether or not God superintends the world. The first half of this essay reads as a series of apparent contradictions: on the one hand, Bacon appears to argue that there is divine design; on the other hand, Bacon appears to argue that there is no divine design. What is Bacon’s intent? Bacon attacks Aristotle’s teleological account of causation, because Aristotle’s account of final cause presupposes the *that for the sake of* or the *why of which* a thing is made.⁴⁸¹ If a thing is for the sake of something, there is purpose and perfection in creation; it then follows, that if there is purpose and perfection in creation, there is providence.⁴⁸² Bacon makes this point clear: as a result of the Idols of the Tribe, “when it [the

⁴⁷⁹ “hypocrite, n.” *OED*, January 28, 2012: “One who falsely professes to be virtuously or religiously inclined; one who pretends to have feelings or beliefs of a higher order than his real ones; hence generally, a dissembler, pretender.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁴⁸⁰ Bacon may indeed be one of these great atheists, a true hypocrite.

⁴⁸¹ Aristotle, *Physics*, 194b15-195b30. On this point, I follow Weinberger, introduction to *The Advancement of Learning*, by Francis Bacon (Philadelphia, PA: Paul Dry Books, 2001), xi.

⁴⁸² As Weinberger notes, “It makes no difference, according to Bacon, if such a teleological order is described as natural (as with Aristotle) or as divine (as with Plato and corrupted Christian thought). The former falsely conceives of nature as if it were a God; the latter falsely

human intellect] beholdeth, the Chaîne of them [causes], Confederate and Linked together, it must needs flie to *Providence*, and *Dietie*” (16.11-13). Epicurus and the atomists provide a counter position. Bacon praises Epicurus for his dissembling account of the blessed natures, which “enjoyed themselves, without having respect to the Government of the World” (16.38). If Aristotle is correct and there is final cause and, therefore, providence, no being can operate outside the providential design. As such, the account of the supra-providential blessed natures reveals Epicurus’ hypocritical atheism. Epicurus claims that there is a “Government of the World” (16.38), but that this being does not superintend the world.

While this is the extent of Bacon’s discussion in *Essays*, his other works help to explain the centrality of providence to his teaching. The previous consideration of charity centers on the relationship between men: that is, charity is the result of individual choice and human ingenuity. Providence, according to Bacon’s reinterpretation, also becomes the result of human reason and ingenuity. In his fable “Prometheus, or the State of man,” in his *Of the Wisdom of the Ancients*, Bacon explains: “the human Soul was endued with providence not without the attention and Authority of greater Providence: Truly this was also propounded, that Man is like the Center of the World, as far as final causes.”⁴⁸³ In *Of the Wisdom of the Ancients*, Bacon reduces Divine Providence to human providence, which is, by definition—*providentia*—or foresight, the gift of Prometheus. The order in the universe, insofar as there is a plan, only applies to man and is only created by men. That is, Bacon argues that man is the master of his universe. The supra-providential blessed beings that operate outside providential design (16.38) and that make their own design, are, in fact, human beings.

conceives of nature as a god-like extension of God.” Weinberger, introduction to *Advancement*, xi.

⁴⁸³ Bacon, *Wisdom*, “Prometheus.”

Given the nature of the Idols of the Tribe—which diagnose our intellectual failures⁴⁸⁴—and the Idols of the Theatre—which diagnose our acceptance of dogmas and false philosophies⁴⁸⁵—many men would be lost without a God. As has been discussed, the Idols of the Tribe and the Theatre cannot be excised, but men can be educated to mitigate their influence. Bacon alleges that the human predisposition to believe in causes that do not exist is part of our wiring. Since there is comfort in the “Candlelights” (1.21), most men are unable to accept that they are master of their own fates and alone in the universe. In the second half of this essay, Bacon turns to this precise problem: if men, or at least most men, require some type of divine master, how can religion serve the ends of both politics and science? Bacon affirms the importance of God, yet one who is non-providential, non-threatening, politically salient, and distinctly Baconian. By praising Epicurus and casting doubt upon Aristotelian causation, Bacon is able to question providence, as would “the great *Atheists*” (16.56), without appearing to be an atheist.

Part II: Religion and Politics

At this point, this essay changes tone. Bacon has subtly questioned divine providence and now returns to the importance of God in the lives of men. The second half of this essay is divided into three sections: the first section (16.59-69), which is an interlude, considers the causes of atheism; the second section (16.69-81) professes the importance of God in the lives of men; and the third, concluding section is a long quotation in Latin from Cicero’s *De Haruspicum Responsis* (16.81-92), which introduces a political dimension to the consideration and, in doing so, establishes the relationship between essay sixteen and essay seventeen.

⁴⁸⁴ Bacon, *Organon*, I.51.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., I.54.

Four “*Causes of Atheisme* are” (16.59) outlined by Bacon: first, multiple “*Divisions in Religion*, if they be many” (16.59); second, the “*Scandall of Priests*” (16.62); third, “*Custome of Profane Scoffing in Holy Matters*” (16.65); and fourth, “*Learned Times*, specially with Peace, and Prosperity” (16.67). With reference to the first cause, if there is a single division, partisans on either side of the dispute become increasingly zealous; however, if there are multiple divisions, partisans become diffuse, which gives rise to questions and culminates in disbelief. The first two causes echo Bacon’s previous argument in essay three, “Of Unity in Religion” (3.20-47). In the case of the third cause, mockery of holy things slowly erodes respect towards the Church: it “doth, by little and little, deface the Reverence of Religion” (16.65). And in the fourth cause, education, security, and affluence precipitate atheism. Bacon has already considered the relationship between education and radical questioning: “a little Philosophy, bringeth Mens Mindes to *Atheisme*; But depth in Philosophy, bringeth Mens Mindes about to *Religion*” (16.7-9). In essay five, “Of Adversity,” Bacon argues that peace and prosperity give rise to atheism. One of the promises of the Instauration is an increase in prosperity and a decrease in material wants. However, Bacon admits, “*Prosperity* doth best discover Vice; But *Adversity* doth best discover Vertue” (5.40-42 and 5.23-28). In essay two, “Of Death,” we see the consequence of increased creature comforts. If men no longer rely on the Divines to explain the unknowns in the world, the Divines no longer have a grasp on men’s souls: “For Troubles and Adversities doe more bow Mens Mindes to *Religion*” (16.67-69). The first three causes that Bacon identifies are internal to religion. Divines have control over their own behavior, Church presentation, and the comportment of their adherents. As such, they can strive to mitigate these potential dangers. However, the fourth cause—“*Learned Times*, specially with Peace, and

Prosperity” (16.67)—is external; it is the inevitable result of progress and evidence of the success of the Instauration.

Bacon now returns to the importance of monotheism in the lives of men. Without equivocation, Bacon states, “They that deny a *God*, destroy Mans Nobility” (16.69). Nobility, understood here as human excellence rather than as a political designation,⁴⁸⁶ is related to the belief in a single God. Those who reject the monotheistic God, Bacon avers, suppress the human potential for excellence (16.69; 16.73) and generosity (16.72). Echoing his argument in essay thirteen, “Of Goodnesse and Goodnesse of Nature” (13.9-12; 13.78-86), Bacon claims that “Man is of Kinne to the Beasts, by his Body; And if, he be not of Kinne to *God*, by his Spirit, he is a Base and Ignoble Creature” (16.70-72). Our spirit is akin to God, and our bodies like those of the animals. It is our spirit which elevates us above the “Base and Ignoble Creature[s]” (16.71): without the divine spirit, “Man is a Busie, Mischievous, Wretched Thing; No better then a Kinde of Vermine” (13.11).

Bacon likens dogs and their masters, to men and their God. When a dog is “maintained, by a Man; who to him is in stead of a *God*, or *Melior Natura*” (16.75), he is able to manifest qualities that he otherwise would not be able to develop. Since men are of better natures—*melior natura*—than are dogs, men can teach dogs to be of better natures than they naturally would be, or at least to manifest higher qualities than they would exhibit were they left on their own. Men, however, cultivate these more desirable qualities in their dogs through training. Are we, then, to assume that God trains man to be better than he naturally is? Bacon claims that “Man, when he resteth and assureth himself, upon divine Protection, and Favour, gathereth a Force and Faith, which Humane Nature, in it selfe, could not obtaine” (16.78-81). When a man

⁴⁸⁶ In essay fourteen, “Of Nobility,” Bacon considers nobility as a political designation referring to class, rather than as a condition of soul.

takes respite in the knowledge of divine protection, he is able to increase his power and belief. He is able, Bacon argues, “to exalt...above Humane Frailty” (16.83). Belief in God makes it possible, Bacon claims, for man to rise above the limitation and weakness inherent in our humanity. Faith makes us superior to the other beasts. For this reason, Bacon states that “*Atheisme* is in all respects hatefull” (16.81).

To this point in this essay, Bacon’s consideration of atheism has concerned individuals. He has focused on the effects of faith and God on the individual psyche. However, there is a political dimension to this consideration. Atheism is hateful not only in individuals, but also in nations (16.84). As an example, Bacon mentions Rome, since “Never was there such a *State*, for Magnanimity” (16.84):

Of this *State* heare what *Cicero* saith; *Quam volumus, licet, patres conscripti, nos amemus, tamen nec numero Hispanos, nec robore Gallos, nec calliditate Paenos, nec artibus Graecos, nec denique hoc ipso huius Gentis et Terrae domestico nativoque sensu Italos ipsos et Latinos; sed Pietate, ac Religione, atque hac una Sapientia, quod Deorum Immortalium Numine, omnia regi, gubernarique perspeximus, omnes Gentes Nationesque superavimus.* (16.85-92)

Since he includes this quotation in Latin, Bacon draws his readers’ attention to Cicero’s *De Haruspicum Responsis*, translated as “The Response of the Soothsayers,” a speech delivered before the senate in 56 BCE,⁴⁸⁷ in the spring following Cicero’s exile.⁴⁸⁸ At this time, Rome is

⁴⁸⁷ Cicero, *De Haruspicum Responsis*, in *The Speeches*, trans. N. H. Watts (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1935), 312-40. Anthony Corbiell has a detailed account of this speech. All subsequent information regarding the context of this speech is taken from Corbiell. Other than Cicero’s own account, there is no historical evidence of this speech. Anthony Corbiell, “The Function of Divinely Inspired Text in Cicero’s *De Haruspicum Responsis*,” in *Form and Function in Roman Oratory*, ed. D. H. Berry and Andrew Erskine (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 139-54.

⁴⁸⁸ Cicero, *Haruspicum Responsis*, 313. Cicero is exiled, following the enactment of law by P. Claudius Pulcher, which makes criminal the execution of a Roman citizen without a trial. Cicero is found guilty under the new law for having previously executed members of the Catiline conspiracy without trial.

suffering from political unrest in the north, and there are concerns that “if it were to go unchecked, the plague [or unrest] would break forth, fraught with ruin to the community.”⁴⁸⁹ In response, the Roman senate enlists the Etruscan haruspices, soothsayers who divine from the entrails,⁴⁹⁰ to investigate. P. Claudius Pulcher publicly reads the results of the haruspices’ investigation. *De Haruspicum Responsis* is Cicero’s response to the soothsayers’ report and the commentary by P. Claudius; in many respects, Cicero’s interpretation of the soothsayers’ report disagrees with P. Claudius’ interpretation. The passage quoted in *Essays* occurs originally in a discussion of the existence of God. Cicero prefaces this quotation by asking a series of rhetorical questions:

who is so witless that, when he gazes up into heaven he fails to see that gods exist, and imagines that change is responsible for the creations of an intelligence so transcendent that scarce can the highest artistry do justice to the immutable dispositions of the universe? Or who, once convinced that divinity does exist, can fail at the same time to be convinced that it is by its power that this great empire has been created, extended, or sustained?⁴⁹¹

Cicero’s queries imply that in the acts of creation, evidenced by the heavens, we can see the existence of God. Bacon similarly argues at the beginning of this essay that God is seen in “his Ordinary Works” (16.6). According to Cicero, God is also responsible for the excellence of the growing Roman Empire. It is in this context that Bacon quotes Cicero:

However good be our conceit of ourselves, conscript fathers, we have excelled neither Spain in population, nor Gaul in vigour, nor Carthage in versatility, nor Greece in art, nor indeed Italy and Latium itself in the innate sensibility characteristic of this land and its people; but in piety, in devotion to religion, and in that special wisdom which consists in

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 319.

⁴⁹⁰ “haruspex, n.” *OED*, January 30, 2012: “One of a class of ancient Roman soothsayers, of Etruscan origin, who performed divination by inspection of the entrails of victims, and in other ways.”

⁴⁹¹ Cicero, *Haruspicum Responsis*, 339.

the recognition of the truth that the world is swayed and directed by divine disposal, we have excelled every race and every nation.⁴⁹²

Cicero claims that the excellence of Rome is her piety. At the heart of Roman religiosity, Cicero confirms, is divine providence.

What exactly is Cicero telling us? First, Rome's excellence or greatness is evidenced by her piety. More so than any other people or nation, the Romans acknowledge that divine providence is responsible for Rome's greatness. In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon praises Cicero, along with Xenophon, Seneca, and Plutarch, for their ability "to clothe and adorn the obscurity even of philosophy itself with sensible and plausible elocution."⁴⁹³ In *De Haruspicum Responsis*, Cicero declares that Rome ought to be praised for her piety. He also presents other ways that a nation may achieve excellence: population, vigor, versatility, art, and sensibility. Elsewhere, Bacon identifies Rome and Greece as examples of great states distinguished for their learning,⁴⁹⁴ aided by divine providence.⁴⁹⁵ Based on this quotation from Cicero, Bacon claims that "*Atheisme* is in all respects hatefull, so in this, that it depriveth humane Nature, of the Meanes, to exalt it selfe, above Humane Frailty" (16.81-83).

When considered in context, Cicero's larger point regards divination. Cicero argues that the Romans do not need soothsayers: "Cannot we ourselves be our own soothsayers?"⁴⁹⁶ For two reasons, the Roman people ought not to rely upon Etruscan haruspices. First, there is the particular argument that the soothsayers upon whom Rome depends are foreign, which is a

⁴⁹² Ibid., 341.

⁴⁹³ Bacon, *Advancement*, I.iv.4.

⁴⁹⁴ Bacon, *Organon*, I.83.

⁴⁹⁵ Bacon, *Advancement*, II.ii.6. Bacon returns to this point in essay twenty-nine, "Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates."

⁴⁹⁶ Cicero, *Haruspicum Responsis*, 341.

political reason to disregard the advice of the Etruscan haruspices: the Etruscan motivations may not be equivalent to those of the Romans. Second, there is a general argument that the value of soothsayers is their ability to predict the will and intention of the divine, yet, if the divine is not providential, there is no rational ground for soothsaying. Bacon employs the example of Cicero as a bridge between this essay and the next essay.

If essay sixteen, “Of Atheisme,” is considered alone, Bacon appears to present an argument in favor of divine design: there is a providential God who is concerned with the condition of mankind and directs the universe. However, at the same time, by questioning Aristotelian teleology and praising Epicurean atomism, Bacon suggests that perhaps God is not providential. In either case, Bacon contends that “*Atheisme* is in all respects hatefull” (16.81). The example of the haruspices introduces the political dimension to this consideration and reveals the greater, political danger of superstitious belief. Political concerns undergird Bacon’s discussion of religion throughout the essays, and, in essay seventeen, it is the issue of superstition which Bacon addresses.

ESSAY SEVENTEEN, “OF SUPERSTITION”: WHEN WISE MEN FOLLOW FOOLS

In essay seventeen, “Of Superstition,” Bacon teases out the distinctions between atheism and superstition. In contrast to essay sixteen, Bacon now recommends disbelief or atheism over superstitious belief. The consideration in this section of the dissertation is divided into four parts. In the first part, the contrast between atheism and superstition is considered. In the second part, the political implications of superstition are presented. In the third part, Bacon’s attack on the schoolmen is discussed. And in the final part, the seven causes of superstition are delineated.

Part I: Atheism or Superstition

Bacon begins essay seventeen by stating that, as concerns God, disbelief is superior to contemptuous belief:⁴⁹⁷ “It were better to have no Opinion of *God* at all; then such an Opinion, as is unworthy of him: For the one is Unbeleefe, the other is Contumely” (17.3-5). Superstition, Bacon here argues, is worse than atheism, as it “is the Reproach of the *Deity*” (17.5). Bacon does not fully explain the normative dimension of this assessment, yet he does make clear that it is “better to have no Opinion of *God*” (17.3) than to have a contemptuous opinion of God. In “Of Atheisme,” Bacon alludes to the dangers of superstition when he praises Epicurus for stating that it is not profane to deny the gods of the vulgar, but it is profane to apply the opinions of the vulgar to the gods (16.41-43).⁴⁹⁸ Denying false gods is not impious, since one cannot be irreverent if the god is false, but believing false opinions about the gods is.⁴⁹⁹

As an example, Bacon directs his readers to Plutarch:

Surely (saith he) I had rather, a great deale, Men should say, there was no such Man, at all, as Plutarch; then that they should say, that there was one Plutarch, that would eat his own Children, as soon as they were borne, as the Poets speake of Saturne. (17.7-11)

Based on this quotation, Plutarch likens himself to Saturn, the Roman equivalent of the Greek god Cronos. According to Bacon, Plutarch would prefer that his existence be denied than that men speak of him as the poets speak of Saturn. As a legacy, Plutarch would rather be forgotten than be remembered for something grotesque. Plutarch’s alleged comparison of himself to a god

⁴⁹⁷ “contumely, n.” *OED*, January 22, 2012: “Insolent reproach or abuse; insulting or offensively contemptuous language or treatment; despite; scornful rudeness; now, *esp.* such contemptuous treatment as tends to inflict dishonour and humiliation.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁴⁹⁸ Translated from essay 16.41-43: “*Non Deos vulgi negare profanum; sed vulgi Opiniones Diis applicare profanum.*”

⁴⁹⁹ Of course, we run into the problem of who determines whether a god is or is not false.

is irreverent. Through this reference to Plutarch, Bacon directs his readers to Plutarch's essay, "Superstition," wherein Plutarch argues, as does Bacon after him, that superstition is worse than atheism.⁵⁰⁰ Contrary to the quotation in Bacon's essay, in "Superstition," Plutarch does not compare himself to Saturn.

Plutarch begins his essay by distinguishing between atheism and superstition, both of which, he claims, come from the same source: "Ignorance and blindness in regard to the gods."⁵⁰¹ Men of "hardened characters" become atheists, while men of "tender characters" become superstitious. Of these two comportments towards the divine, Plutarch argues that the more dangerous is superstition, since superstition is rooted in emotion: the atheists "do not see the gods at all, the latter [superstitious] think that they [the gods] do exist and are evil";⁵⁰² consequently, the atheists disregard the gods, while the superstitious fear them. The atheist, according to Plutarch, is on his own in the world:

he directs all his complaints against Fortune and Chance, and exclaims that nothing comes about according to right or as the result of providence, but that the course of all human affairs is confusion and disorder, and that they are all being turned topsy-turvey.⁵⁰³

For the atheist, human things are not purposeful; they are not organized. From this worldview, the atheist believes, Plutarch argues, that fortune and chance, rather than justice or divine design, affect human affairs. Man, then, is responsible for what befalls him, and the atheist is able to accept this condition.

⁵⁰⁰ Plutarch, "Superstition," 2:455-495.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 2:455.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 2:469.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 2:473.

The superstitious man, Plutarch claims to the contrary, cannot accept a purposeless, disorganized worldview. When troubles occur, the superstitious man “loads himself with fears and frights, suspicions and trepidations, and all this he bitterly assails with every sort of lamentation and moaning.”⁵⁰⁴ The superstitious man “puts the responsibility for his lot upon no man nor upon Fortune nor upon occasion nor upon himself”;⁵⁰⁵ rather, he “lays the responsibility for everything upon God.”⁵⁰⁶ All difficulties that befall him are attributable to “‘afflictions of God’ or ‘attacks of an evil spirit.’”⁵⁰⁷

The distinction between the atheist and the superstitious man, as Plutarch presents it, is simple: “The atheist thinks there are no gods; the superstitious man wishes there were none, but believes in them against his will; for he is afraid not to believe.”⁵⁰⁸ Bacon has already made a similar argument in his previous essay. In essay sixteen, during his discussion of the fool, Bacon argues that “*The Foole hath said in his Heart, there is no God; It is not said; The Foole hath thought in his Heart*” (16.21). Plutarch, however, goes farther in his argument than does Bacon: Plutarch suggests that believing in divine providence is, itself, a type of superstition. He identifies Judaism as a type of superstition which, for the sake of religious practice and religious laws, demands that adherents sacrifice themselves.⁵⁰⁹ Yet, he also appears to believe that hardened atheism—that is, believing in nothing—is an equally incorrect belief. The goal, he

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 2:475.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 2:491.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 2:481-83.

tells us, is to find “true religion which lies between” these two extremes.⁵¹⁰ Unfortunately, Plutarch does not reveal the precise mean of these extremes.

In “Superstition,” Plutarch does not liken himself to Cronos. He does, however, claim that the Carthaginians would be better off if their laws did not demand that they sacrifice to Cronos.⁵¹¹ From Plutarch, we learn that belief in divine providence is a type of superstition that results from a desire to believe that there is no God, despite a belief in God. As such, superstitious men, and presumably superstitious polities, suffer from an internal imbalance. With this lesson from Plutarch in mind, we return to Bacon’s seventeenth essay.

Atheism, Bacon argues, in contrast to superstition, is a means to virtue: “*Atheisme* leaves a Man to Sense; to Philosophy; to Naturall Piety; to Lawes; to Reputation; All which may be Guides to an outward Morall vertue, though *Religion* were not” (17.12-15). In this context, Bacon claims that atheism inclines men to philosophy amongst other things, which ultimately bring about outward moral virtue. In contrast to atheism, superstition “erecteth an absolute Monarchy, in the Mindes of Men” (17.16). Superstition makes men recalcitrant to positions other than their own. Atheism—the denial of God or the questioning of God—imbues a man with an understanding of the state of things,⁵¹² with a love of wisdom,⁵¹³ with a devotion to nature and piety, with respect for the laws, and with respect in the community. In contrast,

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 2:495.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 2:493-95.

⁵¹² “sense, n.” *OED*, November 8, 2011: “Mental apprehension, appreciation, or realization of (some truth, fact, state of things). Also comprehension, perception of the meaning of.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵¹³ “philosophy, n.” Ibid.: “The love, study, or pursuit of wisdom, truth, or knowledge.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

superstition degrades all of the benefits that result from atheism (17.16).⁵¹⁴ Unlike religion, Bacon claims, atheism helps show the way to the appearance of morality,⁵¹⁵ which is politically expedient behavior.⁵¹⁶

Part II: The Political Implications of Superstition

“Of Superstition” concerns the political implications of superstitious beliefs; “Of Atheisme” concerns the personal significance of atheistic beliefs. In this context, Bacon addresses the political, public influences of superstition. When considered in conjunction with superstition, atheism is the less politically dangerous option: “*Atheisme* did never perturb *States*; For it makes Men wary of themselves, as looking no further” (17.17). Since true atheists, as discussed in essay sixteen, have no need to “trouble themselves” (16.35)—they do not proselytize, attempt to gain disciples, or martyr themselves for their atheism (16.28-33)—their lack of religious belief does not pose a danger to the state. To the contrary, “*Superstition*, hath beene the Confusion of many States; And bringeth in a new *Primum Mobile*, that ravisheth all the Spheares of Government” (17.20-23). Superstitious belief, however, since it attempts to replace regnant belief with new belief, may cause political upheaval.

Superstitions are most often perpetuated by the people. We learn that “in all *Superstition*, Wise Men follow Fooles; And Arguments are fitted to Practise, in a reversed Order” (17.24). Two problems arise in regard to superstition: first, wise men disregard their own wisdom and

⁵¹⁴ “dismount, v.” Ibid.: “To reduce to an inferior position, degrade, depose (a person).” This passage (17.15) is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵¹⁵ “outward, *adj.*, *n.*, and *adv.*” Ibid.: “Designating things, circumstances, etc., that are external to a person's own personality, character, or efforts; concerning one's relations with other persons and external circumstances; extrinsic; (of a feeling, etc.) directed outside oneself.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵¹⁶ Bacon does not say, however, that atheism is the means to actual moral virtue.

follow those who are less knowledgeable than themselves; and second, practice is justified by rationalization, rather than based on rational arguments. Problematically, then, wise men cannot be relied upon to suppress superstitious tendencies, nor can reason and logic be used to counter superstitious theologies.

Part III: An Attack on the Schoolmen

Again, Bacon appears to attack Aristotelian teleology. As an example, Bacon mentions the prelates' view of the schoolmen's behavior at the Council of Trent:

It was gravely said, by some of the Prelates, in the *Councell of Trent*, where the doctrine of the Schoolemen bare great Sway; *That the Schoolemen were like Astronomers, which did faigne Eccentricks and Epicycles, and such Engines of Orbs, to save the Phenomena; though they knew, there were no such Things*: And, in like manner, that the Schoolmen, had framed a Number of subtile and intricate *Axiomes*, and *Theorems*, to save the practise of the Church. (17.25-33)

At the Council of Trent, which lasted from 1545 to 1563 CE and was precipitated by the events of the Protestant Reformation (17.25-33), the prelates accused the schoolmen of creating arguments to justify Church practice.⁵¹⁷ In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon castigates the schoolmen for being under the dictatorship of Aristotle.⁵¹⁸ As discussed in the context of essay sixteen, "Of Atheisme," the teleological account of final cause espoused by Aristotle, which is perpetuated by the schoolmen, assumes providence, whether in nature or in God. Bacon seems to suggest, as is anticipated through his reference to Plutarch's "Superstition," that this providential account of the world is a type of superstition.

⁵¹⁷ In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon discusses Martin Luther's actions: "Martin Luther, conducted no doubt by a higher providence, but in discourse of reason, finding what providence he has undertaken against the bishop of Rome and the degenerate traditions of the church, and finding his own solitude, being no ways aided by the opinions of his own time, was enforced to awake all antiquity, and to call former times to his succours to make a party against the present time: so that the ancient authors, both in divinity and in humanity, which had long time slept in libraries, began generally to be read and revolved." Bacon, *Advancement* I.iv.2.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., I.iv.5.

Bacon castigates both the schoolmen and the astronomers, whom the prelates liken to the schoolmen. In the context of the Instauration, the attack on the astronomers is important. Bacon accuses the astronomers of falsifying their results to preserve the geocentric account of the world, “*though they knew, there were no such Things*” (17.30). The astronomers, like the schoolmen, use their power to impede intellectual progress and entrench regnant Church doctrine. Therefore, both the schoolmen and the astronomers encourage men to be superstitious.

Part IV: Causes of Superstition

In essay seventeen, Bacon lists seven causes of superstition: first, “Pleasing and sensuall Rites and Ceremonies” (17.34); second, “Excesse of Outward Pharisaicall Holinesse” (17.34); third, “Over-great Reverence of Traditions, which cannot but load the Church” (17.35); fourth, “The Strategems of Prelates for their owne Ambition and Lucre” (17.36); fifth, “The Favouring too much of good Intentions, which openeth the Gate to Conceits and Novelties” (17.37); sixth, “The taking an Aime at divine Matters by Human, which cannot but breed mixture of Imaginations” (17.39);⁵¹⁹ and seventh, “Barbarous Times, Especially joyned with Calamaties and Disasters” (17.41 and 16.45-50). Bacon describes three pairs of extremes that may cause superstition. First, according to Bacon, both hedonistic rituals and observances, similar to the ones described in *New Atlantis*,⁵²⁰ and self-righteous behaviors, such as those of the Pharisees (17.34), give rise to superstition. Therefore, excess pleasure and insufficient pleasure may both result in superstition. Second, an overemphasis on traditions and zealous religiosity, which places undue burden on religious practitioners (17.35), and its opposite, excess novelty, both lead to superstition. Last, Church officials who act in their own interests and Church fathers who

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., I.i.1.

⁵²⁰ For example, the Tirsan Feast and the Adam and Eve Pools. Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 60-64 and 68.

attempt to innovate may both lead to superstition. In the last essay of the text, “Of Vicissitude of Things,” Bacon reiterates the first reason—“Giving Licence to Pleasures, and a Voluptuous Life” (58.88)—the fourth reason—“when the Holinesse of the Professours of *Religion* is decayed, and full of Scandall” (58.79) and “When the *Religion* formerly received, is rent by Discords” (58.78)—and the last reason—“withall the Times be Stupid, Ignorant, and Barbarous” (58.80). In “Of Vicissitude of Things,” Bacon adds the final necessary factor: a charismatic leader, an “Extravagant and Strange Spirit, to make himselfe Authour” of a new sect (58.83), who is willing to “oppos[e], of Authority established” (58.87). The only important difference between the causes of atheism and the causes of superstition is the nature of the times: “*Learned Times*, specially with Peace and Prosperity” (16.67), give rise to atheism, while barbarous times give rise to superstition (17.40. 16.45-50, and 58.80).

Bacon concludes the seventeenth essay with a warning: in an effort to purge superstition, one must be cautious that “the Good be not taken away, with the Bad; which commonly is done, when the People is the Reformer” (17.51). Bacon emphasizes this point with two comparisons. First, superstitious men are akin to apes (17.42-45). As an ape who behaves as a man is grotesque, so, too, is superstition that masquerades as religion. One can always tell that the ape is not a man; however, one cannot always tell that superstition is not religion. The danger is that one may mistake religion for superstition and attempt to eradicate it. Second, Bacon compares religion to “wholesome Meat” (17.45) and superstition “to little Wormes” (17.45). Man must be careful that the wholesome meat of religion is not destroyed by the little worms of superstition: “So good Formes and Orders, corrupt into a Number of petty Observances” (17.46). In fact, Bacon avers that “There is a *Superstition*, in avoiding *Superstition*” (17.47), which means that in

an attempt to avoid false belief, one must ensure that one does not fall into another, equally nefarious, false belief.

Superstition, as concerns both individuals and states, is a worse understanding of the world, according to Bacon, than is true atheism. Having false beliefs about God, Bacon argues, is the worst comportment one can have to the world. Providence, as Bacon has shown, is understood as a type of false belief; it, too, is a type of superstition. Yet, if there is no providence, does God have a will? And how can we know? In essay thirty-five, Bacon addresses this issue.

ESSAY THIRTY-FIVE, “OF PROPHECY”: IDLE AND CRAFTY BRAINES

Bacon’s consideration of prophesy—or revelation—is short, quick, and strange. Throughout this essay, Bacon speaks in the first person. From the beginning, he clarifies that this essay does not address divine prophecy: “I meane not to speake of *Divine Prophecies*; nor of Heathen Oracles; Nor of Naturall Predictions; But only of *Prophecies*, that have beene of certaine Memory, and from Hidden Causes” (35.3-5). The bulk of the essay is composed of a number of so-called prophecies, which Bacon concludes ought to be contemned: “My Judgement is, that they ought all to be *Despised*; And ought to serve, but for Winter Talke, by the Fire side” (35.77-79). Those accounts—“of certaine Memory, and from Hidden Causes” (35.5)—which have historically been regarded as prophecy, Bacon states are no more than tales.

What, then, according to Bacon, constitutes prophecy? Prophecy, as discussed in this context, is not God’s will revealed, a message delivered by an intermediary who speaks on behalf of the gods, or a prediction based on natural or environmental signs that portend the future. In this essay, prophecy has no providential aspects. As such, this essay does not concern the traditionally recognized definition of prophecy: the revealing of the will of the divine through

a human intermediary.⁵²¹ Bacon chooses to omit divine prophecies, heathen oracles, and natural predictions from his account. Instead, he discusses those “*Prophecies*, that have beene of certaine Memory, and from Hidden Causes” (35.4). The content of this essay, then, is the prediction of the future by human beings.

In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon categorizes prophecy as “but Divine History,”⁵²² which, under the heading of ecclesiastical history, “consisteth of two relatives, the prophecy, and the accomplishment.”⁵²³ Our knowledge of prophecy comes from scripture, which is said to be authored by the divine:

every prophecy of the Scripture be sorted with the event fulfilling the same, throughout the ages of the world; both for better confirmation of faith, and for the better illumination of the Church touching those of prophesy which are yet unfulfilled: allowing nevertheless that latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies; being of the nature of their Author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day; and therefore are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages; though the height or fullness of them may refer to some one age.⁵²⁴

In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon does not consider prophecy as other than divine. Yet, in *Essays*, Bacon does not consider prophecy as divine. Why? “Of Prophecies” does not address prophecies as they are traditionally understood. Instead, Bacon lists a series of so-called prophecies that are human accounts of what may happen. Bacon mentions fourteen examples of prophecies. If we consider these examples in relation to Aristotle’s account of causation, these

⁵²¹ “prophecy, n.” *OED*, February 13, 2012: “That which is done or spoken by a prophet; the action or practice of revealing or expressing the will or thought of God or of a god; divinely inspired utterance or discourse; the gift of this, divine inspiration itself.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵²² Bacon, *Advancement*, II.i.1.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, II.iii.2.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*

events are the foreseen conjunction of causes. Human accounts of future occurrences are based on an individual's ability to make connections between events and foresee outcomes.

Bacon lists three reasons (35.84), although he actually discusses four reasons, that explain the popularity of prophecies. First, prophecies are recalled only when they are proven true: "Men marke, when they hit, and never marke, when they misse" (35.85). Only predictions that have been proven accurate are recorded and remembered. Second, "Probable Conjectures, or obscure Traditions, many times, turne themselves into Prophecies" (35.87). Despite not being regarded as such when they are delivered, statements or insights that prove accurate may be remembered as prophecy. Third, many statements that are remembered as prophecy are, in fact, recorded after the fact (35.96-99). Many prophecies are not actual predictions, but rather developed after the event has occurred and history is revised. Bacon contends that those prognostications typically considered prophecy are, in fact, falsely represented.

The fourth reason that Bacon provides, yet does not identify as a reason in itself, but rather as a subset of the second cause, is human nature: "the Nature of Man...coveteth *Divination*" (35.88). There is a desire within human beings to know the future and to have the unknown revealed by supernatural means. In essay one, "Of Truth," Bacon explains that we desire the half-lights (1.19-21). Despite being false, our imaginings provide comfort and ameliorate our feelings of ignorance and helplessness. As a result, we desire divine intervention in mundane matters.

Since he chooses not to address divine prophecies in an essay titled "Of Prophecy," but rather to focus on human prophecies, Bacon suggests that with sufficient knowledge of one's circumstances, one can know what will be. While Bacon does not explicitly state that there is no possibility of divine prophecy, his decision not to discuss it—that is, his decision to consider

prophecy in a manner that omits its most essential element—is suspicious. In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon defines prophecy as “but Divine History; which hath that prerogative over human, as the narration may be before the fact as well as after.”⁵²⁵ If prophecy is a recounting of events,⁵²⁶ then it need not be divinely inspired. In the end, this essay teaches that human prophecy is not particularly reliable and ought not to be trusted. Human foresight and human insight are often misinterpreted as otherworldly or superhuman, when, in fact, they are not.

SUMMARY: CHARITY, PRUDENCE, AND TRUTH

Having explicated essays thirteen, sixteen, seventeen, and thirty-five, we return to the issue of charity, providence, and truth established at the beginning of this chapter. Bacon has sufficiently undermined and expropriated the foundations of Christian religion so as to question regnant belief, but not to such an extent as to appear heretical. Bacon’s misappropriations of Christian doctrine serve as the foundation for his religious account. He has repeatedly reminded his readers of their predisposition towards the half-lights (1.19-21). The accounts of the divine, which provide comfort and security, are in fact false. Christian charity leaves men vulnerable to other men. Baconian goodness, on the other hand, does not enervate men; rather, it is imprinted deep in our natures and provides guidelines for prudential behavior (13.17). That is, man, Bacon confirms, is naturally predisposed to goodness. As the foundation of Bacon’s account, goodness is no longer understood as contingent on God; rather, goodness is entirely internal and based on our relationships with other men. Man, as discussed above, is on his own: there is no divine providence.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., II.i.1.

⁵²⁶ “history, n.” *OED*, February 10, 2012: “A relation of incidents (in early use, either true or imaginary; later only of those professedly true); a narrative, tale, story.”

In order to present this argument, Bacon attacks Aristotelian teleology, since final cause is tantamount to providence (16.11-13), and praises the atomists, since independent blessed natures discredit providence and elevate man (16.37-40). “Of Atheisme” presents a world without providence. Yet, in “Of Superstition,” Bacon confronts the dangers of atheism understood as superstition. The great example of superstition, Bacon argues, is seen in false prophecies. Atheism, when not truly practiced, is, itself, a pernicious type of superstition, and superstition, Bacon argues, is a great danger to political stability. Therefore, a balance must be struck to foster religion as “the chiefe Band of humane Society” (3.4). Like the greatest hypocrites, Bacon “Handl[es] Holy Things, but without Feeling” (16.57). In presenting his case, Bacon has been cautious, respectful, and ultimately ruthless. Like the Divines themselves, Bacon knows that for most men, religion provides comfort and security: “the Nature of Man...coveteth *Divination*” (35.88). It is to this issue, in the pursuit of religious toleration, that Bacon turns in his political essays.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁷ In contrast to the argument in this dissertation, Abbot describes Bacon’s theology as “Perfectly orthodox, definite, and precise”; yet, “It is evident that Bacon has no enthusiasm for formal theology.” Abbot, in response to the confusion as regards Bacon’s religious teachings, suggests that in Bacon’s “anxiety to prove that Religion need not dread any encroachments from Science, he comes near divorcing Faith and reason. Faith cannot be jostled by Reason, he urges, for they move in different spheres. If they do come into collision, Reason must give way.” Abbot, introduction, xcvi-xcix.

CHAPTER THREE: THE PERILS OF POLITICAL RULE

During Bacon's time, "Mens Businessse" (DL.14) is regarded as the forum for ambitious individuals to benefit themselves and be of benefit to their states. Careers in politics, public administration, or government offer opportunities to obtain power, greatness, honor, and reputation. Common opinion often views politics and political service as a vocation indicative of a noble or virtuous nature. That is, many people, especially those involved in politics, appear to believe that those who enter political life are worthy of honor and reputation, regardless of the manner in which they execute their respective offices.

Throughout *Essays*, Bacon systematically undermines politics as the forum for intelligent, capable, ambitious men to acquire strength, achieve prominence, accumulate accolades, and gain notoriety. Political men, Bacon contends, may improve their own positions and the conditions of their state; despite not being regularly acknowledged, it is also possible, perhaps even more likely, that public spirited men may fail in their efforts, suffer personal anguish, and cause political turmoil. As Bacon argues in *Essays*, politics is conducive to neither absolutes nor certainties. Politics may appear to promise greatness, but success is dependent on so many contingencies—one's character, one's time, one's predecessors, one's colleagues, one's neighbors, one's superiors, one's regime, and one's location—that there are never any guarantees. Ambitious men enter political life in hopes of freedom, power, and greatness, yet, as Bacon posits, rule and prominence are accompanied by obligation, disempowerment, and ignobility. This is the political lesson in *Essays*: politics is an undesirable occupation for those of the greatest ambition. The baseness of politics has been identified by Machiavelli, who has not suggested an alternative for men of ambitious natures. Bacon confirms Machiavelli's

diagnosis and, despite no explicit discussion in *Essays*, alludes to a prescriptive alternative: science.

The exegesis in this chapter focuses on three essays: essay eleven, “Of Great Place”; essay nineteen, “Of Empire”; and essay twenty-nine, “Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates,” which is also the first of the central two essays in this text. These three essays form the core of Bacon’s analysis of statesmanship and rule. Essay eleven, “Of Great Place,” and essay nineteen, “Of Empire,” concern men who are in official positions of political power.⁵²⁸ In both essays, Bacon does not pull his punches. His eleventh essay begins with a statement of the actual condition of political men: “Men in *Great Place*, are thrice *Servants*: Servants of the Sovereigne or State; Servants of Fame; and Servants of Businesse” (11.3-5). Contrary to popular opinion, men of place are not free; rather, they are obligated to their state, their reputations, and their careers. In a similar manner, essay nineteen, “Of Empire,” begins with a declaration of the psychological condition of political men: “It is a miserable State of Minde, to have few Things to desire, and many Things to feare: And yet that commonly is the Case of *Kings*” (19.3-5). Those who have reached the apex of political power and have risen to the highest place in a state, far from being happy and content, Bacon avers, are in a “miserable” condition. Since the heights of political power cannot be maintained infinitely, all that remains for such men is a great fall from grace. Political men have much to fear.

Throughout these acutely political essays, the specter of Machiavelli is ever present. While periodic reference to Machiavelli is made within the explications, a summary consideration of the relationship between Bacon’s teachings in these essays and Machiavelli’s contributions to Bacon’s thought occurs at the end of this dissertation.

⁵²⁸ “place, n.” *OED*, April 9, 2012: “As a mass noun: official position, office, *esp.* that of a government minister.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

ESSAY ELEVEN, “OF GREAT PLACE”: STRANGERS TO THEMSELVES

Essay eleven is divided into three sections. In the first section (11.3-31), Bacon considers the conditions of political rule: he focuses on obligation and the character of men of place, particularly their lack of self-knowledge and need for external validation. In the second section (11.31-103), Bacon undermines the supposed benefits of political place and challenges the illusory appeal of public service. In the third section (11.103-114), Bacon suggests that a man of place must behave as if he were another, greater man. Smeaton considers essay eleven as “certainly written out of the fullness of his [Bacon’s] own weary experience.”⁵²⁹ Essay eleven presents political office as an undesirable occupation and an unpleasant way of life.

Part I: Thrice Servants and the Myth of Power

In the first section of this essay, Bacon disregards the popular opinion that political men experience unlimited freedom and comfortable self-sufficiency. Instead, Bacon maintains that political men are actually indentured, ignorant of their natures, and dependent on others for their self-understanding and sense of self-worth. As a result, men of place are restless when not in the political spotlight, lack self-knowledge, and require external validation of their worthiness. In this essay, Bacon explores the intricacies of these paradoxes: the desire for freedom and power in contrast to the reality of obligation and enervation; the appearance of self-knowledge in contrast to the relative ignorance of one’s self; the impression of confidence that belies deep insecurity; the illusion of self-sufficiency as opposed to the dependency on others; and the desire to do good coupled with the ugliness of politics. According to Bacon’s explanation, men of place are ambitious, immoderate, and doomed to lead tragic lives punctuated by danger and disappointment.

⁵²⁹ As an example, Smeaton refers to Bacon’s sentence: “The rising unto place is laborious, and by pains...” (11.8-11). Smeaton, introduction, xiii.

As noted above, essay eleven begins with political indebtedness: “Men in *Great Place*, are thrice *Servants*” (11.3). Men in official positions of political power, who are under the command of others, work for the benefit of others.⁵³⁰ Political men, Bacon notes, are in service to the state, their reputations, and those activities that require their attention. As a result, Bacon insists, men of place “have no Freedome; neither in their Persons; nor in their Actions; nor in their Times” (11.5). While one might expect the opposite to be true—that political men have the greatest liberty of all men, since they have freedom and power over others—Bacon argues that political men are not free; rather, they are responsible for and accountable to three distinct masters. If we flesh out the tripartite structure of Bacon’s argument, we see that political men are in service to their sovereign or state and, therefore, not free in their persons; in service to their own reputations and, therefore, not free in their actions;⁵³¹ and in service to their business and, therefore, not free in their times.⁵³²

Unaware of the counterintuitive condition of place, ambitious men seek political prestige. One might, albeit incorrectly, assume that with power comes the ultimate freedom: freedom to control the conditions, behaviors, and lives of both oneself and one’s subjects. In fact, as Bacon notes, this assumption is incorrect: “It is a strange desire, to seeke Power, and to lose Libertie; Or to seeke Power over others, and to loose Power over a Mans Selfe” (11.6-8). In other words,

⁵³⁰ “servant, n.” *OED*, April 9, 2012: “A person of either sex who is in the service of a master or mistress; one who is under obligation to work for the benefit of a superior, and to obey his (or her) commands.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵³¹ “fame, n.” *Ibid.*: “That which people say or tell; public report, common talk; a particular instance of this, a report, rumour.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵³² “time, n., int., and conj.” *Ibid.*: “The period which is contemporary with the life, rule, activity, dominance, etc., of a specified person or group of people; (a person’s) age, era, or generation.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

men who covet political power believe that such power is accompanied by unlimited freedom, but, in the end, experience its opposite—servitude. If Bacon’s account is correct, why would anyone desire political greatness?

The argument that undergirds the nature of obligation—that one is obligated to those whom one benefits—is found in Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. Chapter ten, “In What Mode the Forces of All Principalities Should be Measured,” ostensibly concerns the defense and maintenance of a kingdom. In particular, Machiavelli addresses the question of “whether a prince has enough of a state that he can rule by himself when he needs to, or whether he is always under the necessity of being defended by others.”⁵³³ In essays nineteen and twenty-nine, Bacon echoes Machiavelli on this point: a proper measure of one’s power, adequate funds, and autonomy in one’s arms are essential to political greatness. In chapter ten, Machiavelli recommends the construction of walls to protect a town. Fortifications serve two purposes: they help to keep one’s enemies outside and one’s people inside the city. Property and people outside the walls are left to the invading forces. In essay twenty-nine, Bacon disapproves of the walled towns as indicators of greatness (29.53-57). The argument relevant to our current consideration of obligation occurs at the end of Machiavelli’s chapter. Once he has expressed the need for strong fortifications and the difficulty of ensuring loyalty during a protracted siege, Machiavelli explains, “the nature of men is to be obligated as much by the benefits they give as by the benefits they receive.”⁵³⁴ That is, when one assists another person, one becomes interested in the future success of that person. In addition to common opinion—that those whom we benefit become indebted to us—Machiavelli and Bacon both recognize that, in fact, we also become

⁵³³ Machiavelli, *Prince*, 10.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

invested in the success of those whom we benefit. As a consequence, then, Bacon rightly argues that a man of place, while of benefit to those whom he serves, is, in fact, further obligated towards them.

Bacon undermines not only the nobility of political greatness, but also the process by which one obtains greatness. Political life is messy, base, and dishonorable in quality: “The Rising unto *Place* is Laborious; And by Paines Men come to greater Paines; And it is sometimes base; And by Indignities, Men come to Dignities” (11.8-11). Political prominence, Bacon recognizes, requires that one make sacrifices, commit ignoble or base deeds, and likely compromise one’s ideals. That is, political men may have to commit indecent acts for decent or beneficial ends.⁵³⁵ Politics, as discussed above, is a realm of paradoxes and uncertainties. Pains and indignities do not guarantee one’s position: “The standing is slippery, and the Regresse, is either a downfall, or at least an Eclipse, which is a Melancholy Thing” (11.11-13). Those who suffer political diminishment experience a decline or an obscuration.⁵³⁶ When one loses one’s position, Bacon posits, one is afflicted with a sense of sadness or melancholy. As Bacon notes, “Cum non sis, qui fueris, non esse, cur velis vivere” (11.13); translated, Bacon says that when you are not who you used to be, why would you want to live?

With this question in mind, Bacon turns to the characteristics manifested by men of place. In this context, Bacon presents the predisposition that plagues men of place: simply put, men of place often lack self-knowledge; as a consequence, they lack self-sufficiency as well; and, therefore, they require external validation of their own worth. Political men suffer from a type of

⁵³⁵ This point recurs in essay nineteen more explicitly. Further, Machiavelli presents a similar argument in *The Prince*, 15.

⁵³⁶ “regress, n.” *OED*, April 9, 2012: “The action of going or coming back; return; re-entry; an instance of this. Also *fig.* and in figurative contexts.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

restlessness, a point that Bacon reiterates in essay nineteen (19.3-32): men of place “are impatient of privatenesse, even in Age, and Sicknesse, which require the Shadow” (11.15-17). Most comfortable in the public eye and used to being active, men of place are hesitant to withdraw from public or official life. Often, men of place cannot retire when they would like to do so, since they are obligated to their state and to their duties; at other times, in order to fulfill their need for public acknowledgement, men of place do not retire when they should do so (11.14). Bacon likens them to the “old Townesmen, that will be still sitting at their Street doore; though thereby they offer Age to Scorne” (11.17). All people, as a result of mortality, a topic discussed in detail in essay two, “Of Death,” reach an expiration point; with age, people often cease to be useful in the way that they were when they were younger. As a consequence, in some cultures—such as Bacon’s and ours—the aged are often considered liabilities. Inevitably, if one lives a long time, one reaches this point.⁵³⁷ Old age coupled with an unwillingness to retire, Bacon suggests, leads one to a position of mockery or derision.⁵³⁸

For political men, the need for external validation prevents retirement from political life. Since they are accustomed to being public figures, political men are conditioned to obtain their self-understanding from others. In many respects, their political successes are proxies of their worthiness:

Certainly Great Persons, had need to borrow other Mens Opinions; to thinke themselves happy; For if they judge by their owne Feeling; they cannot finde it: But if they thinke with themselves, what other men thinke of them, and that other men would faine be as they are, then they are happy, as it were by report; When perhaps they finde the Contrary within. (11.19-25)

⁵³⁷ In the *Wisdom of the Ancients*, in the fifteenth fable, “Tithonus, or Satiety,” Bacon presents the problem of old age. Bacon, *Wisdom*, “Tithonus.”

⁵³⁸ “scorn, n.” *OED*, January 19, 2013: “Mockery, derision, contempt; in mod. use, indignant or passionate contempt.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Contentment, for men of place, requires other men. In politics, careers are built on one's ability to satisfy others and thereby obtain higher offices. Since they lack personal contentment, political men learn to require the validation of others in order to understand themselves as happy. So as to be comfortable with themselves, Bacon posits, political men must see themselves as other men see them.

Bacon argues that since political men lack self-knowledge, they often experience hardship and suffering, yet are ignorant of their own natures: "For they are the first, that finde their owne Griefs; though they be the last, that finde their owne Faults" (11.25-27). Men of place, while keenly aware of the difficulties that they experience, are often unaware of both their personal and professional deficiencies and their own responsibilities for the conditions in which they find themselves. As Bacon explains, "Certainly, Men in Great Fortunes, are strangers to themselves, and while they are in the pusle of busnesse, they have no time to tend their Health, either of Body, or Minde" (11.27-30). Men of place "are strangers to themselves" (11.27), ignorant of who they are or what they truly desire,⁵³⁹ particularly when they are embroiled in the puzzle of business.⁵⁴⁰ Bacon claims that, as a consequence, "*Illi Mors gravis incubat, qui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi*" (11.30), which translates as, death is heavy to him, who, too well known to others, dies ignorant of himself. Since men of place lack self-knowledge

⁵³⁹ Bacon revisits this theme in essay nineteen, "Of Empire."

⁵⁴⁰ "puzzle (pusle), n." *OED*, February 11, 2013: "The state or condition of being puzzled; bewilderment, bafflement, confusion; perplexity as to how to act or decide; an instance of this. Now usually *to be in a puzzle*: to be in a state of bewilderment or confusion." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

and are not self-sufficient, the very notion of death, which has been discussed in detail in this dissertation, is grave for men of this nature.⁵⁴¹

The condition of men of place, as described by Bacon, begs an important question: given the position of political men, for what reasons would any sane man seek political greatness? Bacon posits an answer to this question. He suggests that political office provides an opportunity to be of benefit to one's state:

In *Place*, There is License to doe Good, and Evill, wherof the latter is a Curse; For in Evill, the best condition is, not to will; The Second, not to can. But Power to doe good, is the true and lawfull End of Aspiring. (11.31-34)⁵⁴²

The "Power to doe good" (11.33), Bacon claims, is the correct and honest goal of human longing. Human beings, Bacon contends, ought to direct their behavior towards good acts that benefit their state. Public office provides men of place with power; the manner in which one chooses to execute this political power is contingent on one's nature, one's office, and the unique political conditions of one's time. In essay four, "Of Revenge," Bacon discusses evil and the nature of wrong, reminding his readers that if a wrong is committed "out of ill nature" (4.18), the wrongdoer is mentally ill and ought not be punished. In essay eleven, Bacon furthers this account of behavioral norms and expectations: one who desires evil or wrong ends suffers from a curse and, for practical purposes, is afflicted by a malignancy.

⁵⁴¹ A similar pun on the word "grave" occurs in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. After he mistakes Polonius for the King and stabs him, Hamlet, in conversation with Gertrude discusses the ramifications of his actions: "Indeed this counselor [Polonius]/ Is now most still, most secret, and most grave/ Who was in life a foolish prating knave" (4.3). The word "grave" in this context has a double meaning: it refers to Polonius' death and the grave in which he is soon to rot; it also expresses Hamlet's mental condition and the severity of the path he has set upon. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952), 3.4.

⁵⁴² Smeaton identifies this passage as another an example of Bacon's "reverence for moral principle." Smeaton, introduction, xxi.

As introduced in this essay, political position is certainly not an unambiguously desirable occupation. According to Bacon's account, political men live precarious lives of responsibility and service. Despite both the illusion of freedom and the presumption of power, political men, in fact, are enslaved by and indebted to the state. Since others are dependent on them, political men are obligated to those whom they serve. This lack of freedom is further exacerbated by the dangerous and changeable nature of political life. As a consequence, Bacon suggests, political men suffer from constant fears and perpetual sadness, conditions aggravated by the lack of self-knowledge and self-understanding often exhibited by many men of place. In this first section of essay eleven, Bacon has already begun to undermine the noble basis for political position and present some aspects of the illusion of power.

As has been discussed previously, Bacon believes that action is essential to human knowledge and human aspiring. In his scientific writings, Bacon emphasizes this point repeatedly. In this essay, Bacon reveals the explicit relationship between thought and action in political matters: "For good Thoughts (though God accept them,) yet towards men, are little better then good Dreames; except they be put in Act" (11.34-37). One's intentions or thoughts, Bacon argues, are irrelevant; one's actions are of import. In order to put into actions certain thoughts, one requires "Power, and Place" (11.37). In politics, action is more important than contemplation; men of place must act to accomplish their goals. The purpose of human existence and aspiring, Bacon here contends, is "Merit, and good works" (11.38), which "is the End of Mans Motion" (11.39). Excellence achieved through a positive influence on one's state is the correct purpose of human aspiring and the legitimate goal of human action. If one chooses to obtain place, despite all the potential downfalls, how ought one to execute one's office?

Part II: Practical Advice for Men of Place

In the second part of essay eleven, Bacon provides practical advice to men of place intended to assist them in the proper and effective execution of their offices. In the first section of this essay, Bacon's third-person address establishes a formal tone to his account as he shares the truth about politics with his readers and reveals that he is sensitive to the challenges of office, paradoxes of rule, and insecurities of place. To this point, Bacon presents himself as an impartial, political pundit who unemotionally describes political life. In this second section, he adopts a personal tone, employing second person to address his readers directly, which continues throughout the essay (11.44-110). As such, this portion of the essay feels more like a conversation amongst friends than like a formal public address.⁵⁴³ This more intimate Bacon invites his readers, as one would companions and friends, into his inner circle. As Bacon shares advice on "the Discharge of...*Place*" (11.44), he subtly encourages his readers to become his allies. By offering this invitation, Bacon becomes obligated to present truthful, or at least expedient, information and responsible to his readers for the success of his project; by accepting this invitation, Bacon's readers become complicit in his account and invested in both the truth of his claims and the ultimate success of his project. This section of the essay is divided into two parts: in the first part, Bacon presents four approaches to rule or behaviors that are of benefit to a man of place—the selection of exemplars of rule, the enactment of reform, the understanding of state, and the execution of one's office; in the second part, he presents four approaches to rule or behaviors that ought to be avoided—"Delaies; Corruption; Roughnesse; and Facilitie" (11.69).

⁵⁴³ For detailed consideration of this point, see essay twenty, "Of Counsell"; essay twenty-seven, "Of Friendship"; essay forty-eight, "Of Followers and Friends"; and essay forty-nine, "Of Sutors."

Echoing his predecessor Machiavelli,⁵⁴⁴ Bacon's first approach recommends that one ensure one's exemplars are worthy of emulation: "In the Discharge of thy *Place*, set before thee the best Examples; For Imitation, is a Globe of Precepts" (11.44-46). Since we learn by imitation, it is essential that we ape only those who are worthy. Bacon tells his readers to learn first from "the best Examples.... And after a time, set before thee, thine owne Example" (11.45-47). Here, we see the importance of education, self-knowledge, and self-understanding. Since after a time one is able to use one's own example as a guide, Bacon provides an incentive for learning. Man, with time and presumably effort, is able to be his own exemplar. That is, human beings are capable of learning and self-improvement. First, one emulates one's superiors. Then, as one becomes excellent, one becomes one's own exemplar. Educating one's self includes also studying about those who are infamous or unsuccessful: "Neglect not also the Examples of those, that have carried themselves ill, in the same *Place*...to direct thy selfe, what to avoid" (11.48-51). Yet, one must not become complacent in one's self-assessment. One must, Bacon argues, be reflexive: "examine thy selfe strictly, whether thou didst not best at first" (11.47). This theme of self-knowledge and self-reflection is prevalent throughout *Essays*. In fact, much of Bacon's advice is contingent on understanding one's own character, including one's strengths and one's weaknesses. The goal of this process is to improve one's self-understanding and general knowledge. Improved self-understanding and self-knowledge, Bacon avers, enhance the likelihood of increased power and place.

All men of place must, in one way or another, innovate or reform. Reform, however, should not be undertaken simply for the sake of reform, but rather with respect for tradition and one's predecessors, and with the intention of establishing strong foundations for the future. As

⁵⁴⁴ In Machiavelli's *The Prince*, the prudent selection of exemplars worthy of emulation is a recurrent theme.

such, Bacon recommends his readers to “Reform therefore, without Braverie, or Scandall, of former Times, and Persons; but yet set it downe to thy selfe, as well to create good Presidents, as to follow them” (11.51-54). So as not to alienate those who support regnant practices, one must innovate incrementally without disgracing current practice. Bacon’s rhetorical approach throughout *Essays* illustrates this point: Bacon’s reform is often incremental and subtle. As has been discussed throughout this dissertation, Bacon’s arguments often appear sufficiently similar to regnant opinion so as to seem familiar and acceptable. On careful consideration, they are revolutionary. In this way, under the guise of commentary and minor reform, Bacon is able to upset traditional opinion and practice.

In order to understand which innovations are necessary and which reforms are required, one must understand the ways in which the state operates, as well as what is best for one’s own times: “Reduce things, to the first Institution, and observe, wherein, and how, they have degenerate; but yet aske Counsell of both Times; Of the Ancient Time, what is best; and of the Latter Time, what is fittest” (11.54-57). A man of place must understand the fundamentals of the political system and the needs of his own times. He must consider “law, custom, usage, practice, [and] organization”,⁵⁴⁵ in order to determine where, how, and why they have degenerated. We learn from the ancients what is best and from the moderns what is possible and practical.

Finally, Bacon advocates consistency and moderation in one’s policy and behavior. Moderation is a theme throughout *Essays*, which has been discussed previously in this dissertation. Consistent behavior is essential for a man of place: “Seeke to make thy Course

⁵⁴⁵ “institution, n.” *OED*, April 10, 2012: “An established law, custom, usage, practice, organization, or other element in the political or social life of a people; a regulative principle or convention subservient to the needs of an organized community or the general ends of civilization.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Regular; that Men may know before hand, what they may expect: But be not too positive, and peremptorie; And expresse thy selfe well, when thou digressest from thy Rule” (11.57-60). In approach and behavior, men of place ought to strive for reliability and dependability. Bacon recommends that a man of place establish behaviors and policies that are neither excessively fixed nor overly rigid. Rather, one should strive to enact policies that are explicable, understood,⁵⁴⁶ and consistent.⁵⁴⁷

At the same time, Bacon advises men of place to “Preserve the Right of thy *Place*; but stirre not questions of Jurisdiction: And rather assume thy Right, in Silence, and *de facto*, then voice it, with Claimes, and Challenges” (11.61-63). Although one ought to explain some of one’s policy decisions, one must never explain or justify one’s claim to power and authority. One’s legal right to rule must always go unquestioned. While a man of place is obligated to explain certain behaviors, the fundamental right to rule is not an issue. A man of place must treat that right as a given. In order to ensure that one’s right to rule is not questioned, Bacon recommends that a man of place “Preserve likewise, the Rights of Inferior *Places*; And thinke it more Honour to direct in chiefe, then to be busie in all” (11.63-65). One must not compromise the power and authority of one’s inferiors, unless one is prepared to have one’s own authority and power challenged. So as to mitigate potential interlopers, Bacon suggests that a man of place appear amenable to help and advice (11.65-68).⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁶ “positive, adj., and n.” Ibid.: “Explicitly laid down; expressed without qualification; admitting no question; stated, express, definite, precise; emphatic; objectively certain.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁴⁷ “peremptory, adj., adv., and n.” Ibid.: “Fixed; absolutely determined or settled. Also: absolutely essential; important, vital.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁴⁸ “medler, n.” Ibid.: “A person who meddles or interferes in something; a nuisance, a troublemaker.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Bacon's four recommendations reveal the manner in which he believes a man of place ought to execute his office. Since Bacon has already established that the "Power to doe good, is the true and lawfull End of Aspiring" (11.33), these behaviors are intended to assist a man of place in obtaining his political goals. Bacon lists four related wicked or bad habits of men of place: "The vices of *Authoritie* are chiefly foure: *Delaies*; *Corruption*; *Roughnesse*; and *Facilitie*" (11.68-70). According to Bacon, these four vices impede political success and hasten political turmoil. First, there are delays: "For *Delaies*; Give easie Accessee; Keepe times appointed; Goe through with that which is in hand; And interlace not businesse, but of necessitie" (11.70-72). Postponement or procrastination are vices of political rule. Instead, Bacon recommends four contrary behaviors as rules for men of power: make oneself accessible; maintain one's appointments; complete the tasks at hand; and avoid overcomplicating or combining business, unless doing so is necessary.⁵⁴⁹

The second vice discussed is corruption, or the decay of morals: "For *Corruption*; Doe not onely binde thine owne Hands, or thy Servants hands, from taking; but binde the hands of Sutours also from offring" (11.72-75). Bacon's concern is the taking and offering of bribes.⁵⁵⁰ Against both practices, he recommends a prohibition. It is not sufficient that one refuses bribes; one must also have a reputation for integrity: "For Integritye used doth the one; but Integritye professed, and with a manifest detestation of Bribery, doth the other" (11.75-77). Neither a man of place nor anyone under his purview may be suspected of accepting bribes. One must "avoid not onely the Fault, but the Suspicion" (11.77), since, Bacon argues, "Whosoever is found

⁵⁴⁹ "interlace, v." Ibid.: "To intermix with constant alternation; to alternate; to interweave." Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁵⁰ Bribery is a crime for which Bacon was impeached and banished from court in 1621 CE. Abbot discusses Bacon's steadfast belief that he "*was the justest judge that was in England these fifty years.*" Abbot, introduction, lxiii.

variable, and changeth manifestly, without manifest Cause, giveth Suspicion of *Corruption*” (11.78). While one may be able to control one’s own corruption, one’s subordinates always present a danger. Moreover, it is the responsibility of a man of place to ensure that his office is free of both corruption and the suspicion of corruption. One can detect corrupt individuals based on their behavior: “A Servant, or a Favorite, if hee be inward, and no other apparent Cause of Esteeme, is commonly thought but a By-way, to close *Corruption*” (11.83-85). If the servant is private for no apparent reason, common opinion regards such privacy as a sign of potential corruption. Regardless of the veracity of the charge, once a man or office is suspected of corruption, he or it thereafter will be remembered as dishonest.

Roughness, or unnecessary abrasiveness, severity, or physical violence is the third vice of political rule: “For *Roughnesse*; It is a needlesse cause of *Discontent*; *Severitie* breedeth Feare, but *Roughnesse* breedeth Hate” (11.85-87). According to Bacon, there is no need to be rough. In fact, he claims, roughness results in popular dissatisfaction, which in turn leads to hatred. A man of place who wishes to maintain his power should strive to avoid hatred. In this context, Bacon distinguishes between roughness and severity: severity is “[s]trictness or sternness in dealing with others”;⁵⁵¹ alternately, roughness involves violence.⁵⁵² Bacon suggests that one ought to be solemn and mindful of the weight of one’s office. This advice has a clear connection to chapter seventeen of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, wherein he recommends that one ought to be

⁵⁵¹ “severity, n.” *OED*, April 10, 2012. A passage from Bacon’s *Henry VII* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁵² “roughness, n.” *Ibid.*: “Physical violence or aggression; ungentleness.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

feared, rather than hated.⁵⁵³ A man of place must, therefore, maintain a balance between the demands of the office and the needs of the people. While Bacon does not recommend a moratorium on harshness or violence, he does counsel that force be employed only when necessary and, even then, sparingly. Most importantly, Bacon reminds men of place that they must master the court of public opinion if they are to ensure their political longevity.

In the third vice, Bacon suggests that a man of place ought not be unnecessarily rough; in the fourth vice, he suggests that a man of place ought not be manipulated—a topic which he has considered in essay thirteen, “Of Goodnesse and Goodnesse of Nature.” Facility, “the quality of being easily led, persuaded, or influenced,”⁵⁵⁴ Bacon argues, “is worse then Bribery. For *Bribes* come but now and then; But if Importunitie, or Idle Respects lead a Man, he shall never be without” (11.88-91). Bribery is an action; facility is a quality of character. As such, a man of place who is afflicted with a character deficiency is guided and influenced in all of his behaviors by that deficiency. A man who is easily manipulated may become a pawn of other men and, as a consequence, compromise the well-being of his state and the stability of his political career.⁵⁵⁵

To further highlight this point, Bacon turns to the Bible: “As *Salomon* saith: *To respect Persons, is not good; For such a man will transgresse for a peece of Bread*” (11.91). The passage from Proverbs 28:21 states, “To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of

⁵⁵³ Machiavelli argues, “The prince should nonetheless make himself feared in such a mode that if he does not acquire love, he escapes hatred, because being feared and not being hated can go together very well.” Machiavelli, *Prince*, 17.

⁵⁵⁴ “facility, n.” *OED*, April 10, 2012: “The quality of being easily led, persuaded, or influenced; tendency or predisposition *to* do something, esp. something bad or undesirable; weakness of character, docileness; acquiescence, compliance.” The passage cited in the *OED* is from Bacon’s thirteenth essay, “Of Goodnesse and Goodnesse of Nature”: “That is but Facilitie, or Softnesse; which taketh an honest minde prisoner” (13.37).

⁵⁵⁵ The importance of the just judge has been introduced in the previous chapter of this dissertation in the context of the parable of the widow who demands justice.

bread that man will transgress.” Bacon elaborates on this same reference in *Advancement of Learning*, wherein he relates the biblical passage directly to the issue of bribes: “Here it is noted, that a judge were better be a briber than a respecter of persons; for a corrupt judge offendeth not so lightly as a facile.”⁵⁵⁶ A judge or official who accepts or solicits bribes,⁵⁵⁷ Bacon argues in *Advancement*, is less offensive than one who is too easy in his judgments. In Bacon’s estimation, a judge must not have too much love of humanity, since excessive love causes softness. Thus, it is better for public officials to be corrupt yet remain steadfast in their beliefs, than to be weak and easily influenced.

Since men of place are under constant pressure and continuous scrutiny, the true nature and character of the office holder is often revealed. The ancients, according to Bacon, recognized that greatness exposes the nature of a man—some men are seen to be better than previously believed, while others are seen to be worse. Bacon argues that while the true character or nature of a man is shown by place, this unveiling can include different aspects of both rule and character. As examples, Bacon refers to Tacitus’ presentations of Galba and Vespasian:

It is most true, that was anciently spoken; *A place sheweth the Man*: And it sheweth some to the better, and some to the worse: *Omnium consensu, capax Imperii, nisi imperasset*; saith *Tacitus* of *Galba*: but of *Vespasian* he saith: *Solus Imperantium Vespasianus mutatus in melius*. (11.92-97)

In Book I of his *Histories*, Tacitus, the Roman historian and senator who lived from 56 CE to 117 CE, contrasts the legacies of Galba, who ruled as Roman Emperor for less than a year in 68 and 69 BCE, with those of Vespasian, who ruled as Roman Emperor for ten years between 69

⁵⁵⁶ Bacon, *Advancement*, II.xxiii.6.

⁵⁵⁷ “briber, n.” *OED*, February 11, 2013: “A judge or other official who levies ‘blackmail’ upon those to whom he should administer justice; one who exacts or accepts bribes; a bribee.” This passage from Bacon’s *Advancement* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

and 79 CE after the brief rules by Otho and Vitellius. According to Tacitus, “all would have agreed that he [Galba] was equal to the imperial office,”⁵⁵⁸ although earlier in his work, Tacitus says, “Galba was weak and old.”⁵⁵⁹ Vespasian, he claims, “unlike all his predecessors, was the only emperor who was changed for the better by his office.”⁵⁶⁰ Interpreting Tacitus’ argument, Bacon asserts that the two statements have different meanings: “the one was meant of Sufficiencie, the other of Manners, and Affection” (11.97-99). So, which example represents the man who has the “ability or competence to meet...obligations,”⁵⁶¹ as opposed to the man who has the moral conduct⁵⁶² and state of mind for the office?⁵⁶³ Galba, although sufficiently qualified to be Emperor, is not improved by his power. Vespasian, to the contrary, is improved by his power. That is, in the stress and torture of rule, Vespasian, Bacon contends, proves a more adept leader. The relationship between adversity and excellence is a theme in both Bacon’s political and scientific work. Essay five, “Of Adversitie,” which is not discussed in depth in this dissertation, addresses this specific issue. In that essay, Bacon argues that “The Vertue of *Adversity*, is Fortitude” (5.24). From struggle and hardship comes strength.

At the heart of this consideration of great place is a teaching on the relationships among honor, virtue, ambition, and authority. Bacon has already established that struggle reveals the

⁵⁵⁸ Tacitus, *The Histories*, in *The Annals of Tacitus*, trans. Clifford H. Moore (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1962), 1:49.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., 1:66.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 1:50.

⁵⁶¹ “sufficiency, n.” *OED*, January 28, 2013. Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁶² “manner, n.” Ibid., May 14, 2012: “Conduct in its moral aspect; morality; the moral code of a society.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁶³ “affection, n.” Ibid.: “The state of the mind as regards some specific object; disposition towards something; inclination, bent, penchant.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

true nature of a man. At this point, Bacon turns to the effect that the political struggle has on the intangible nature or element of human beings:⁵⁶⁴

It is an assured Signe, of a worthy and generous Spirit, whom *Honour* amends. For *Honour* is, or should be, the Place of Vertue: And as in Nature, Things move violently to their Place, and calmely in their Place: So Vertue in Ambition is violent, in Authoritie settled and calme. (11.99-103)

According to Bacon, “a worthy and generous Spirit” ought to be rewarded with honor (11.99).

That is, excellence “should be” esteemed (11.100). For this reason, ambition may be a dangerous trait. Ambitious men strive for something that they desire but do not have; since the thing to which they aspire holds value for them, it is reasonable to presume that it is also desired by others. Herein rests the difficulty: the desired goal may not be a shareable good; thus, if one person possesses the contested thing, another must, by definition, lack it, resulting in likely conflict.⁵⁶⁵ As such, there is a restlessness, which Bacon discusses at length in essay nineteen, in men who strive and compete for a particular goal.

Bacon concludes this section of the essay with a reminder of the public benefits of political power. In the first part of this essay, Bacon declares that “Merit, and good Works, is the End of Mans Motion; and Conscience of the same, is the Accomplishment of Mans Rest” (11.38-40). In concluding the second part of this essay, Bacon presents motion as violent ambition and place as comfortable rest (11.103). In essays nineteen and twenty-nine, place is depicted as anything but calm and restful.

⁵⁶⁴ “spirit, n.” Ibid.: “A subtle or intangible element or principle in material things.” A passage from Bacon’s *Sylva Sylvarum* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁶⁵ “ambition, n.” Ibid., February 11, 2013: “A strong or ardent desire of anything considered advantageous, honouring, or creditable; a thing, *to be* or *do* something.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Part III: Another Man, The Demands of Place

In the final section of this essay, Bacon returns to the potential dangers and downfalls in obtaining office. In this short section, Bacon reiterates the arguments he has already made in this essay and, as a means of deterring able individuals from seeking place, reminds his readers of the pains and indignities required to obtain office. At the close of this essay, he first returns to this theme: “All Rising to *Great Place*, is by a winding Staire: And if there be Factions, it is good, to side a Mans selfe, whilst hee is in the Rising; and to ballance Himselfe, when hee is placed” (11.103-106). Second, Bacon reminds men of place that they are part of a political whole, as most men inherit their positions from other men: “Use the Memory of thy Predecessour fairely, and tenderly; For if thou dost not, it is a Debt, will sure be paid, when thou art gone” (11.106-109). Respect for the past encourages respect for one’s own memory. Respect for one’s contemporaries encourages loyalty and support for one’s own policies: “If thou have Colleagues, respect them, and rather call them, when they looke not for it, then exclude them, when they have reason to looke to be called” (11.109-111). Bacon reminds men of place to respect the memory and legacy of their predecessors, which simultaneously reminds men of place that their own rule is fleeting. With time, they, too, inevitably are replaced by other men (whether they are violently overthrown, abdicate gracefully, or die).

Finally, Bacon reminds men of place that they are not free; rather, they are indentured to their state, reputations, and office: “*When he sits in Place, he is another Man*” (11.113). Men of place are, in many respects, playing a part: the role demanded by their office. Political men, as is evident from essay eleven, are not free in the same way as are civilians. With political place comes responsibility, and with responsibility comes obligation. Men of place are responsible to those whom they serve. As a result of their obligation, rather than free, they are beholden to the

demands of their office and to their own expectations as well as those of their superiors and subordinates. For this reason, a man of place must embody something or someone greater than himself when he sits in office. That is, Bacon encourages men of place to comport themselves with virtue and honor (11.99-103) as they dedicate their office to “Merit, and good Works” (11.38).

Essay eleven, “Of Great Place,” concerns men who hold or aspire to public office. As suggested by this essay, political life is undesirable. For those individuals who have yet to accept Bacon’s account of politics and still believe that place is a noble aspiration, Bacon continues his assault in essay nineteen, “Of Empire,” which addresses kingship. The next step for men of place who have reached the heights of their power is the aspiration towards kingship. However, according to Bacon, kingship is in fact less fulfilling and more precarious than is place.

ESSAY NINETEEN, “OF EMPIRE”: THE PERILS AND SHADOWS OF KINGSHIP

As suggested by its title “Of Empire,” essay nineteen concerns imperial or kingly rule. However, Bacon does not address this topic in the way in which one might expect: this essay does not include a rubric for imperial rule, namely an account of specific policy initiatives or a blueprint for government, as has been noted by many scholars; nor does it include an account of “[t]he quality of being worthy or honourable,” or “excellen[t]” as a ruler.⁵⁶⁶ Rather, this essay concerns the psychological condition of the king or, as Bacon frames his argument, the “State of Minde” of the king (19.3). This essay, then, is a lesson in political psychology and the

⁵⁶⁶ “dignity, n.” Ibid., January 18, 2013: “The quality of being worthy or honourable; worthiness, worth, nobleness, excellence.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

“[p]urpose[s] or intention[s]; desire[s] or wish[es]” of the king.⁵⁶⁷ Otherwise stated, this essay contains an account of those ends that kings seek to obtain and the manner in which these longings influence the emotional and psychological condition of those who “rule absolutely as an emperor.”⁵⁶⁸

Threaded throughout this essay is a subtle subtext that concerns desire and aspiration. As Bacon explicates the psychology of the king, he also illuminates the nature of man. In the process, Bacon exposes fundamental truths about the relationship between ambition and longing. Throughout this essay, as in all the essays that we have considered, Bacon almost imperceptibly shifts regnant understanding and opinion. In this essay, he addresses the issue of political rule in a way that is sufficiently familiar, at least on first consideration, to appeal to ambitious political men; on more careful consideration, however, the appearance of familiarity belies the radical nature of Bacon’s argument. The manner in which Bacon presents both empire and imperial rule initially appears relatively benign and thus elicits agreement or popular support; in actuality, his argument threatens the foundation of political life, challenges politics as the vocation of ambitious men, and compromises the traditional means of obtaining earthly greatness.

Continuing the theme established in essay eleven, essay nineteen warns ambitious men against seeking or obtaining kingship. The progression from essay eleven to essay nineteen is clear: essay eleven is concerned with men of place—those who hold political office; essay nineteen addresses the specific conditions of kings. In fact, at the end of this essay, it is unclear why, other than from a sense of duty, one would agree to be a king.

⁵⁶⁷ “mind, n.” Ibid.: “Purpose or intention; desire or wish; *spec.* in the legal context of wills.” The passage cited in the *OED* is from Bacon’s forty-ninth essay, “Of Suitors”: “Manie ill matters are vndertaken, and many good matters with ill minds.”

⁵⁶⁸ “empire, v.” Ibid., January 11, 2013. Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

This essay is divided into four sections: the first section concerns the quality or temper of a king (19.3-32); the second section addresses the quality or temper of a state (19.33-57); the third section recounts many historical examples of the potential perils or dangers that may befall a king (19.58-157); and the fourth section, a closing statement, reminds those who are poised for kingship of the difficulties that may affect them (19.158-163). Essay nineteen contains a complicated and far-reaching history of political intrigue and danger. This essay is, in many respects, a history lesson in the perils of rule. While Bacon focuses on historical examples and lists many political figures, he often provides little or no explanation or interpretation. In this dissertation, explication is provided only for those figures and events for which Bacon explicitly references his sources, or for which the source is evident from the discussion. In this essay, Bacon refers to five sources: the Bible (19.9); a conversation between Apollonius, who was a first-century CE Pythagorean philosopher, and Vespasian, who ruled the Roman Empire between 69 and 79 CE (19.36); sayings by both Tacitus (19.53), a Roman senator and historian who lived from 56 to 110 CE, and Francesco Guicciardini (19.77), an Italian statesman and historian who lived from 1483 to 1540 CE; and his own *The History of the Reign of Henry the Seventh* (19.129), which, according to Bacon's Dedicatory Letter, did "not flatter [Henry VII], but took him to life."⁵⁶⁹ The explication in this dissertation primarily concerns the first, second, and fourth sections of the essay.

Part I: The Quality or Temper of Kings

Essay nineteen, "Of Empire," is anti-imperial and anti-political. This essay does not begin with a discussion of the merits or demerits of empire; rather, it begins with a discussion of the psychological condition of kings:

⁵⁶⁹ Francis Bacon, *The History of the Reign of Henry the Seventh*, ed. Jerry Weinberger (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), "Dedicatory Letter," 25.

It is a miserable State of Minde, to have few Things to desire, and many Things to feare: and yet that commonly is the Case of *Kings*; Who being at the highest, want Matter of desire, which makes their Mindes more Languishing; And have many Representations of Perills and Shadowes, which makes their Mindes the lesse clear. (19.3-8)

Bacon begins with the common “Case of *Kings*” (19.5), opening the essay with a general presentation of the psychology—or the “State of Minde” (19.3)—of kings. Bacon claims that kings have a wretched state of mind; since they are at the apex of potential power, kings experience many concerns and few longings.⁵⁷⁰ As a consequence, their minds become weak, and they see danger and darkness, which, in turn, cloud their judgment. Kings are conditioned to expect the worst from all situations and all people. Yet, as Bacon elaborates throughout the essay, these “Perills, and Shadowes” (19.7) are, in fact, very real. Five points that concern the psychology of kings underlie Bacon’s statement: kings are at the height of human power and, as a consequence, have few desires; since they have few desires and have fulfilled many of the most common human wants, they have many worries—most specifically, threats to their power and position; many of these potential dangers are, in fact, legitimate, since other people are desirous of the position and power of a king; the prevalence of legitimate fears necessarily leads to illegitimate fears; under the stress of constant threats, the mind of a king may weaken and become less clear, thereby compromising his ability to assess genuine danger. Kingship, according to Bacon, is not a position to be desired.

Throughout this essay, Bacon elaborates the psychological condition of the king and explains the “Perills, and Shadowes” (19.7) that may befall a monarch. Yet, he begins with a disclaimer: “*That the Kings Heart is inscrutable*” (19.9). That is, the heart of the king is unknowable; it is a mystery. This passage is from Proverbs:

⁵⁷⁰ “desire, v.” *OED*, June 20, 2012: “To have a strong wish for; to long for, covet, crave.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

These [are] also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out. [It is] the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings [is] to search out a matter. The heaven for the height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings [is] unsearchable.⁵⁷¹

The proverb states that God does not reveal to man the causes of His judgments and actions; it is “the honour of kings...to search out a matter”⁵⁷² that has been concealed by God. Bacon, by extending this biblical passage to include the actions of men, refashions this well-known proverb to suit his own need. In the process, Bacon argues that as God does not reveal everything to man, so a king does not reveal to his subjects the causes of his judgments and actions. Bacon’s employment of this passage is blasphemous: he compares the relationship between a king and God to the relationship between a man and a king, thereby elevating a king to divine status. Further, Bacon’s interpretation of this passage may be treasonous: is he suggesting that it is “the honor of [man]...to search out a matter” that has been concealed by a king?

This is not the only instance in Bacon’s corpus where he discusses the inscrutability of a king’s heart. In *New Atlantis*, the governor-priest of the Strangers’ House describes the most adored king of Bensalem, Solamona, as having “had a *large heart*, inscrutable for good.”⁵⁷³ In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon elaborates:

the honest and just limits of observation in one person upon another extend no further than to understand him sufficiently, so as to give him no offence, or be able to counsel him, or to stand upon reasonable guard and caution with respect to one’s self; but to pry deep into another man, to learn to work, wind, or govern him, proceeds from a double heart, which in friendship is want of integrity, and toward princes or superiors want of duty. The eastern custom which forbids subjects to gaze upon princes, though in the outward ceremony barbarous, has a good moral; for men ought not, by cunning and

⁵⁷¹ Proverbs 25:1-3.

⁵⁷² Ibid. 25:2.

⁵⁷³ Bacon, *Atlantis*, 56.

studied observations, to penetrate and search into the hearts of kings, which the Scripture declares inscrutable.⁵⁷⁴

In *Advancement*, Bacon limits the degree to which an individual can investigate or inquire into the secrets of another person. Prying into the actions or nature of a king, Bacon claims, is acting above one's station. Bacon argues that one must scrutinize in order to understand another person, yet not offend in the process. A balance must be established between one's ability to counsel another and one's need to protect one's self. In *Advancement*, Bacon makes reference to both the Bible, as he does in essay nineteen, and an "eastern custom which forbids subjects to gaze upon princes."⁵⁷⁵ The injunction of the eastern custom is literal: subjects may not physically look at princes and kings. In *Advancement*, Bacon interprets this practice metaphorically: subjects may not scrutinize the desires, motivations, or behaviors of princes. Men ought not delve or attempt to gain access into the hearts of kings. Practically, Bacon suggests that common men ought not attempt to understand the desires and behaviors of their superiors, especially their king.

If Bacon is being genuine, one is encouraged to consider the lesser man's position in critiquing his social and political superior. Although Bacon dedicates few lines to this issue, it merits some additional consideration. Machiavelli, in *The Prince*, includes a Dedicatory Letter to the "Magnificent Lorenzo d'Medici" in which he explains his apparent meddling in the business of a superior.⁵⁷⁶ Machiavelli likens himself to the landscape artist who requires perspective: in order to paint the highlands, the landscape artist must stand in the lowlands; and in order to paint the lowlands, the landscape artist must be in the highlands. The same principle,

⁵⁷⁴ Bacon, *Advancement*, I.iii.7.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ Machiavelli, *Prince*, Dedicatory Letter.

according to Machiavelli, applies to people: in order to understand the people, one must be a prince; and in order to understand a prince, one must be of the people. The implications of Machiavelli's statement are considerable. Machiavelli argues that man cannot understand himself; in order to understand the nature of people, one requires perspective. Yet, there are some distinct differences between rendering a landscape and understanding the nature of people.

Despite his disclaimer that it is impossible to know the heart of a king, Bacon neither apologizes for nor justifies his subsequent analysis. At the outset, he provides two differing accounts of royal inscrutability: the first concerns the nature of desire and the king's desire in particular; the second concerns the king's lack of desire subsequent to his rise to power. While his discussion of desire may appear to be innocuous, particularly when offset by the disclaimer of impossibility, Bacon's revelation is profound. One who has knowledge of someone else's desires truly understands that person. Our desires, those things for which we long and to which we aspire—both privately and publicly—often reveal aspects of our personalities that are hidden from others by our behaviors and words and from ourselves by our lack of self-knowledge and willful ignorance. Therefore, if one knows what another person truly wants, contingent on the degree of desire, one is able to control that other person.⁵⁷⁷ Through his presentation of desire in general and the desires of a king in particular, Bacon reveals the most intimate aspects of human nature and exposes the most obvious way to control another person: understand and then exploit the desires of another man to fulfill one's personal ends.

Bacon begins with the nature of desire and the reason that knowledge of other men's longings is difficult to ascertain. Men, Bacon posits, are often beset by a "Multitude of

⁵⁷⁷ Plato, *Theages*, in *The Roots of Political Philosophy: Ten Forgotten Socratic Dialogues*, ed. Thomas L. Pangle (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 128b.

Jealousies, and Lack of some predominant desire, that should marshall and put in order all the rest” (19.10-12). Men are afflicted by rivalries: they often want many of the things that other men have; and, as a consequence, they fear the loss of many of the things that they have to other men who are able to take them.⁵⁷⁸ Previously in this dissertation chapter, this idea is presented with respect to ambition. Ambitious men are desirous: they covet things that they do not yet have, and they fear that the things that they do have may be taken from them. Those who are desirous are likely in competition with other men. Most people want many things, such that human actions are not often guided by a prevailing desire—a single marshaling desire that establishes a rank ordering of all of our other, lesser desires and organizes all of our actions towards that single unifying purpose. As a consequence, it is often difficult to know our own desires, let alone the desires of another person. Constituted in this way, it “maketh any Mans Heart [especially the hearts of kings], hard to finde, or sound” (19.12). Bacon exposes the nature of human longing. He reminds his readers of their personal desires, the powerful sway that they hold, and the lengths to which one might go to fulfill one’s goals. This reflexive analysis reveals the truth of Bacon’s argument, since each man can consider Bacon’s analysis in light of his own experiences, and indicates how better to understand the desires of others. Bacon presents the motivation to and the incentive for acquiring such understanding: increased knowledge of the desires of others is accompanied by the potential for increased power over others.

As he returns to his consideration of the king, Bacon leaves much concerning the nature of desire and the desires of the king to speculation. Since the king is “at the highest” (19.5), having already achieved the most esteemed political position to which one can aspire, all that

⁵⁷⁸ “jealousy, n.” *OED*, February 24, 2013: “in respect of success or advantage: Fear of losing some good through the rivalry of another; resentment or ill-will towards another on account of advantage or superiority, possible or actual, on his part; envy, grudge.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

remains is to maintain his position. For an observer, the lesser desires of a king are a challenge to identify. Compared to imperial expansion and limitless power, the secondary or lower desires of the king, Bacon suggests, are childish or foolish:

Hence it comes likewise, that *Princes*, many times, make themselves Desires, and set their Hearts upon toys: Sometimes upon a Building; Sometimes upon Erecting of an Order; Sometimes upon the Advancing of a Person; Sometimes upon obtaining Excellency in some Art, or Feat of the Hand. (19.13-18)

Some of the desires that kings pursue, Bacon argues, are frivolous or trivial, at least compared to imperial expansion: construction of buildings, establishment of orders, advancement of people, or development of personal excellency in an art or skill. The principle, according to Bacon, is “*That the Minde of Man is more cheared, and refreshed, by profiting in small things, then by standing at a stay in great*” (19.22-24). The mind of a man is comforted and invigorated when he can advance or benefit in smaller tasks⁵⁷⁹ as opposed to stagnate in larger tasks. Since he has already obtained the kingship, there are few large tasks to complete. Kings are ambitious and desirous. The king must undertake activities that occupy his time: from a personal perspective, these activities must provide sufficient challenge for one who is by nature a conqueror; from a public perspective, these activities ought to be of benefit or use to the state. Since a man cannot cease to desire, a king must create new objects of desire once the empire has been expanded (19.24-28).

Bacon provides four historical examples of infamous Roman Emperors who pursue trifles: Nero, who ruled from 54 to 68 CE, is a harpist; Domitian, who ruled from 81 to 96 CE, is an archer; Commodus, who ruled from 180 to 192 CE, is a fencer; and Caracalla, who ruled from 198 to 217 CE, is a chariot racer. In addition to having obtained “excellency in some Art, or Feat

⁵⁷⁹ “profiting, n.” Ibid., June 20, 2012: “The action of profit,...a benefit, a gain.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

of the Hand” (19.17), what else do these four emperors have in common? First, all these men demand public acknowledgement for their feats of excellence: Nero attempts “To obliterate the memory of all other victors in the games,”⁵⁸⁰ prevents all others from winning in his musical competitions, has all the prizes sent to him, and, as he performs throughout the Roman Empire, decrees that no one is permitted to leave the theater while he is on stage;⁵⁸¹ Domitian is not only a consummate archer, but chooses to exhibit his skill by shooting arrows between the fingers of children;⁵⁸² Commodus competes in his gladiatorial combats in the nude and lives in the gladiatorial barracks;⁵⁸³ and Caracalla races his chariot, demanding gold “like a performer of the lowest class.”⁵⁸⁴ Second, all four of these rulers are renowned for their treachery: Nero attempts to kill his mother, abuses freeborn boys, commits adultery with married women, and castrates a child and marries him;⁵⁸⁵ Domitian’s “savage cruelty [i]s not only excessive, but also cunning and sudden”;⁵⁸⁶ Commodus is “not naturally wicked but, on the contrary, as guileless as any man that ever lived...and then [i]s led on into lustful and cruel habits, which soon bec[o]me second nature”;⁵⁸⁷ and Caracalla murders his brother and 20,000 of his brother’s supporters in

⁵⁸⁰ Suetonius, “Nero,” in *The Lives of the Caesars*, trans. J. C. Rolfe (New York, NY: Loeb Classical Library, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1920), 2:125.

⁵⁸¹ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 9 vols., trans. Earnest Cary (New York, NY: Loeb Classic Library, The Macmillan, 1914), 8:77-81.

⁵⁸² Suetonius, “Domitian,” in *The Lives of the Caesars*, trans. J. C. Rolfe (New York, NY: Loeb Classical Library, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1920), 2:381.

⁵⁸³ Herodian, *Roman History*, 2 vols., trans. C. R. Whittaker (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classic Library, Harvard University Press, 1969), 1:67-123.

⁵⁸⁴ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 9:299.

⁵⁸⁵ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 8:61-71 and 105; and Suetonius, “Nero,” 2:131-35.

⁵⁸⁶ Suetonius, “Domitian,” 2:363.

⁵⁸⁷ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 9:73.

order to become Emperor.⁵⁸⁸ Third and resultantly, all four of these rulers are despised by their people.⁵⁸⁹ Last and most importantly, each of these four rulers is the last of his line. As such, frivolous hobbies in themselves may not be a problem; however, frivolous hobbies coupled with brutality, cruelty, and public hatred may be problematic. This first explanation helps us better understand the desires of a king in two ways: first, Bacon suggests that there is a natural human desire to stay active, a topic addressed in essay twenty-nine, “Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates,” and considered later in this chapter; second, Bacon suggests that these rulers have become so fascinated with their toys that they abuse their power and neglect their kingdoms.

The second explanation is related to the human necessity for action: it is a tendency in kings who have been active in their early rule to become “Superstitious and Melancholy” in their later years (19.28). Bacon provides a second principle of human nature in this respect: “he that is used to goe forward, and findeth a Stop, falleth out of his owne favour, and is not the Thing he was” (19.30-32). Motivated by ambition and success in youth, one suffers in age:

We see also that *Kings*, that have beene fortunate Conquerours in their first yeares; it being not possible for them to goe forward infinitely, but that they must have some Checke or Arrest in their Fortunes; turne in their latter yeares, to be Superstitious and Melancholy. (19.24-28)

With regard to this second psychological deficiency in rulers, Bacon finds that those rulers who do not attach their hearts to toys, or who are not satisfied by toys, become excessively or

⁵⁸⁸ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 9:279-85; and Herodian, *Roman History*, 1:389-97.

⁵⁸⁹ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 9:203-339; Suetonius, “Nero,” 2:167-71; and Suetonius, “Domitian,” 2:369-71.

irrationally religious, sullen,⁵⁹⁰ or unhappy⁵⁹¹ as they age. Bacon provides three historical examples of rulers who embrace religion later in life: Alexander the Great, who is one of the most successful commanders in history, ruled as King of Macedon from 336 to 323 BCE, Pharaoh of Egypt from 332 to 323 BCE, and King of the Persian Empire from 330 to 323 BCE; Diocletian (whom Bacon calls Dioclesian), who was Roman Emperor between 284 and 305 CE; and Charles V of Spain, who was Holy Roman Emperor between 1519 and 1556 CE, when he voluntarily abdicated. Prior to his death, by either fever or poison, Alexander the Great is said to have consulted many priests and soothsayers who sacrifice and purify on his behalf.⁵⁹² Diocletian, prior to his abdication, virulently persecutes Christians. Charles V, following his abdication, lives out his life in a Spanish monastery. Bacon seems to suggest that even great kings are not immune to the appeals of religion and the dangers of depression, especially in instances wherein rulers are exceptionally successful in their youths. However, Bacon also seems to warn against the tendency of rulers to desire or claim divine sanction.

In this section of “Of Empire,” Bacon twice illuminates the fundamental behavior of those who obtain kingly rule: action. Such men are motivated by an innate tendency towards activity. When they cannot aspire to great things—such as imperial expansion—they either advance at frivolous things, or become sullen and desirous of divine acknowledgement. Since it

⁵⁹⁰ “superstition, n.” *OED*, February 10, 2013: “Religious belief or practice considered to be irrational, unfounded, or based on fear or ignorance; excessively credulous belief in and reverence for the supernatural.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁹¹ “melancholy, n.” *Ibid.*: “Ill temper, sullenness, brooding, anger.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁹² Plutarch, “Alexander,” in *Plutarch’s Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1962), 7:369.

is not possible to conquer kingdoms endlessly,⁵⁹³ established kings must experience an obstruction⁵⁹⁴ or stoppage⁵⁹⁵ to imperial expansion and thereafter find other activities or desires to fill their time. Accustomed to a life of power and control, men of this type are predisposed to sadness and torment as they attempt to replace expansion with other, lesser activities. Bacon's two options are "toyes" (19.15) or "Superstiti[on] and Melancholy" (19.28). A man who is used to conquering and progressing, but is no longer able to do so, is no longer the man that he once was: "For he that is used to goe forward, and findeth a Stop, falleth out of his owne favour, and is not the Thing he was" (19.30-32). In the beginning of this essay, Bacon highlights the "miserable State of Minde" of the king (19.3). Based on Bacon's discussion thus far, it does actually appear "*That the Kings Heart is inscrutable*" (19.9). As Bacon has explained, the heart of a king is not only unknowable, but also undesirable.

Part II: The Quality or Temper of Empire

In the second part of this essay, Bacon changes his topic. In the first section, he discusses the psychology of a king, and now, in the second section, he turns to "the true Temper of *Empire*" (19.33). From the outset, Bacon reminds his readers that temper "is a Thing rare, and hard to keep; For both Temper and Distemper consist of Contraries" (19.33-35). What, exactly, does Bacon mean by temper? Temper refers to condition. As Bacon argues, if a tempered state

⁵⁹³ "infinitely, adj." *OED*, June 20, 2012: "Without determinate limit or end; to an indefinite distance or extent; indefinitely." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁹⁴ "check, int, and n." *Ibid.*: "A sudden arrest given to the career or onward course of anything by some obstruction or opposition; a rebuff, repulse, reverse." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁹⁵ "arrest, n." *Ibid.*: "The act of stopping anything in its course; a stop put to anything, stoppage, stay, check." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

is ordered, a distempered state is disordered.⁵⁹⁶ Otherwise articulated, a tempered and distempered state are in opposite conditions. Bacon elaborates, “But it is one thing to mingle Contraries, another to enterchange them” (19.35). Although opposites can be mixed together or combined—insofar as an empire can have elements of stability and instability—one ought not to consider them as the same: that is, there is a difference between a balanced and an unbalanced empire. As in his discussion of the temper of the king, Bacon does not provide an account of the ideal or tempered state. In this context, Bacon suggests that the means of obtaining a tempered state, regardless of the type of state one might like to create, is through maintenance and balance.

As an example of the importance of maintaining balance in a state, Bacon returns to Nero’s harp playing, which when first introduced explains the prince’s need for frivolous distraction, but now is employed in a conversation between the philosopher Apollonius and the Roman Emperor Vespasian:

The Answer of *Apollonius* to *Vespasian*, is full of Excellent Instruction; *Vespasian* asked him; *What was Neroes overthrow?* He answered; *Nero could touch and tune the Harpe well; But in Government, sometimes he used to winde the pins too high, sometimes to let them downe too low.* And certaine it is, that Nothing destroieth Authority so much, as the unequall and untimely Enterchange of Power *Pressed* too farre, and *Relaxed* too much. (19.36-43)

Here, Bacon makes explicit what has been implicit throughout this essay: the frivolous toys of kings detract from political greatness. Nero’s harp playing is dangerous, as it prevents him from maintaining good rule. According to Apollonius’ response to Vespasian’s question, Nero is unable to fine-tune the machinery of state.⁵⁹⁷ The art of rule demands maintenance and balance.

⁵⁹⁶ “distemper, n.” Ibid., June 25, 2012: “A disproportionate mixture of parts; want of a due temper of ingredients; distempered or disordered condition.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁹⁷ “pin, n.” Ibid., January 8, 2013: “A tuning peg of a stringed musical instrument.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Certainly, Bacon claims, “Nothing destroyeth Authority so much as” (19.41) an imbalance between the exercise of power and the provisions of freedom. In practical terms, the maintenance of authority requires a proper balance between the rigor or strictness of rule and the execution of the law.

Preparedness requires that princes not only employ strong policy, but also present their policy decisions in a popular manner. This truth which concerns “*Princes Affaires*” (19.45) has been practiced by the ancients: “the wisdom of all these latter Times in *Princes Affaires*, is rather fine Deliveries, and Shiftings of Dangers and Mischiefs, when they are neare; then solid and grounded Courses to keepe them aloof” (19.44-47). The ancients, Bacon contends, did not have strong political policies designed to prevent political vicissitudes;⁵⁹⁸ rather, the ancients mastered “fine Deliveries” (19.45) and political spin to control the manner in which information was presented to the public. Bacon suggests that the ancients artfully conveyed political information in order to avoid and evade potential harms.⁵⁹⁹ Since Bacon has been adamant that political life is difficult to understand and virtually impossible to master, his next sentence is confusing. Bacon recommends a robust policy constructed upon “strongly founded [or] firmly fixed”⁶⁰⁰ practices designed to defend the present and, in so doing, protect against distant dangers. It is unclear whether Bacon is praising or chastising the ancients, as he supports both “fine Deliveries” (19.45) and “grounded Courses” (19.47). In essay twenty-nine, “Of the true

⁵⁹⁸ “aloof, adv., int., adj., and prep.” Ibid.: “To or at a distance from something; far off; separately, apart. Now usu. with *from*.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁵⁹⁹ “fine, adj., and n.” Ibid., June 25, 2012: “Intellectually subtle, clever, ingenious. In bad sense, cunning, artful.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁶⁰⁰ “grounded, adj.” Ibid.: “Deeply or strongly founded; firmly fixed or established; resting upon a good basis. Chiefly...of immaterial things.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates,” political spin is seen as essential to political power. In this later essay, Bacon recommends a policy based on cunning and artful speech (29.223-254). At this point in his argument, one ought to remember that Bacon not only sponsors the use of artful speech to accomplish one’s ends, but practices that art himself.

Despite knowledge, preparedness, and balance, no king can defeat fortune. Politics, Bacon makes clear, is subject to change. The attempt to prevent or abate potential harms that may befall one, Bacon argues, is “but to try Masteries with Fortune” (19.47).⁶⁰¹ Such an undertaking is foolish and potentially dangerous:

And let men beware, how they neglect, and suffer Matter of Trouble to be prepared: For no Man can forbid the Sparke, nor tell whence it may come. The difficulties in *Princes* Businesse, are many and great; But the greatest difficulty, is often in their owne Minde. (19.48-53).

Princes, Bacon recommends, ought to take care not to focus solely on potential dangers at the expense of dealing with immediate dangers. It is impossible to foresee all contingencies, prevent all potential dangers, or know their sources. Uncertainty is a fact of politics.

In discussing political will, Bacon implies that there is an end to politics. That is, there is a goal to political striving. At this point in this essay, Bacon has not defined that end. Instead, he introduces the idea of a political will, thereby preparing his readers for his account of the end of politics, which he discusses later in this essay and in great detail in essay twenty-nine. Here, Bacon claims that princes often attempt “to will Contradictories” (19.53). Although mentioned in passing, this supposedly common practice of princes reminds Bacon’s readers of the “miserable State of Minde” of princes (19.3). The desire for incompatible things—“to will Contradictories” (19.53)—reveals a deep psychological disunity in princes. No longer able to

⁶⁰¹ “mastery, n.” Ibid.: “A competitive or emulative feat of strength or skill. Esp. in *to try* (also *play, prove*, etc.) *masteries*: to engage in a trial of strength or skill.” This passage is cited in the OED as an example of this usage.

progress in the manner to which they have become accustomed, they are no longer the same type of men as they are prior to or during their advancement: “*Sunt plerumque Regum voluntates vehementes, et inter se contrarie*” (19.54)—the desires of princes are commonly vehement and contradictory one to another. In *Essays*, Bacon attributes this quotation to Tacitus; however, in *Advancement of Learning*, where Bacon includes a similar quotation, he correctly attributes it to the first-century BCE Roman historian Sallust.⁶⁰²

Although Machiavelli is not mentioned by name here, Bacon’s next statement is reminiscent of his predecessor: “For it is the Soloecisme of Power, to thinke to Command the End, and yet not to endure the Meane” (19.55-57).⁶⁰³ There is an incongruity between the desired goal of the king and the actions required to obtain his end.⁶⁰⁴ On this point, Bacon follows Machiavelli who, in *The Prince*, states, “let a prince win and maintain his state: the means will always be judged honorable, and will be praised by everyone.”⁶⁰⁵ Machiavelli argues that a prince must do whatever is necessary to maintain his state; similarly, Bacon recognizes that monarchical power demands ruthlessness on the part of the king.⁶⁰⁶ Both thinkers agree that kingship requires a certain type of character; both also concur that, in some cases, political necessity demands behavior from a king which in other circumstances is deemed unconscionable. However, an important divergence in their respective arguments arises on this

⁶⁰² Bacon, *Advancement*, II.xxii.5.

⁶⁰³ Machiavelli, *Prince*, 18.

⁶⁰⁴ “solecism, n.” *OED*, January 8, 2013: “An error, incongruity, inconsistency, or impropriety of any kind.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁶⁰⁵ Machiavelli, *Prince*, 18.

⁶⁰⁶ Abbot avers that Bacon “was resolved to gain advancement, because advancement was necessary—so he persuaded himself—to secure scientific success: and in the true spirit of the practical spirit he despises those who desire an object and will not work for it.” Abbot, introduction, xxxv.

point: in chapter eighteen of *The Prince*, Machiavelli's discussion concerns the importance of political prudence and political necessity; in this essay, Bacon's analysis concerns the implications that such difficult political decisions have on the psychology of the king. That is, Bacon highlights the ugly implications of actually being a king. In so doing, Bacon challenges the benefits of mundane power. In this regard, Bacon claims, the greatest challenge to kings "is often in their owne Minde" (19.52).

Kingly power, so Bacon notes, is precarious. A king is impotent to prevent many of the potential harms that may befall him and his state. In the second part of this essay, Bacon argues that the greatest danger to the king is the king himself. The frivolous, superstitious, melancholic tendencies of a king threaten his mental well-being, impede his potential for political success, and challenge the prosperity of his state. Although a king cannot control all possible political exigencies, he may learn to master himself and control his mental condition. For the duration of this essay, Bacon outlines some of the external sources that may harm a king and from which a king must learn to protect himself.

Part III: External Dangers to the King

In the third and longest section of this essay, Bacon explicates some of the potential dangers that a king may face. Bacon lists eleven sources of potential danger, which he subdivides into nine groups:

Kings have to deale with their *Neighbours*; their *Wives*; their *Children*; their *Prelates* or *Clergie*; their *Nobles*; their *Second-Nobles* or *Gentlemen*; their *Merchants*; their *Commons*; and their *Men of Warre*; And from all of these arise Dangers, if Care and Circumspection be not used. (19.58-62)

A king may suffer potential harms if he is not cautious and attentive to his conditions.⁶⁰⁷ Many people pose potential danger for a king: first, the king's neighbors, or other states; second, the king's wives; third, the king's children; fourth, the church, including both the clergy and prelates; fifth, the nobles; sixth, the second nobles, including "the lower nobility or gentry";⁶⁰⁸ seventh, the king's merchants; eighth, the people; and ninth, the king's soldiers. Essentially, a king faces potential dangers from any source—foreign and domestic, or public and private—that can challenge his power. This section is composed of a litany of historical examples, all of which lead to the conclusion that a prince is never safe, even amongst those who ought to be most trusted.

The first source of potential danger on Bacon's list is one's neighbors. Since no two states are the same and the conditions and situations that govern each state's relationship with its neighboring states are so diverse, "The Occassions are so variable" (19.64) that Bacon claims, "There can no generall Rule be given" (19.63) except one: princes must guard against the increase in their neighbors' conditions—whether it be in land, commerce, or proximity to one's borders—that make them more able to disturb or disrupt one's empire. Given extant political conditions, only one general rule governs the king's relationship with his neighbors: a prince must remain vigilant that his neighbor states do not increase in size, economy, or relations such that they may have a negative impact on his realm. In essay twenty-nine, "Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates," which we consider later in this chapter, Bacon indicates that "above all, for *Empire* and *Greatnesse*, it importeth most, That a Nation do professe Armes

⁶⁰⁷ "circumspection, n." *OED*, June 25, 2012: "Circumspect action or conduct; attention to circumstances that may affect an action or decision; caution, care, heedfulness, circumspectness." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁶⁰⁸ "second nobles, n." *Ibid.*, January 10, 2013. This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

as their principall Honour, Study, and Occupation” (29.197-199). In order to obtain imperial greatness, a ruler must ensure that his polity is activated by military matters. On the one hand, then, a king must increase his own empire; on the other hand, a king must prevent his neighbors from doing the same.

The goal, then, is to ensure that one’s neighbors do not become sufficiently strong or powerful to compromise or challenge one’s own position. What tools are at a prince’s disposal for the accomplishment of this end? Bacon recommends “the work of Standing Counsels to foresee, and to hinder it” (19.69). Bacon provides two illustrative examples of the delicate balances amongst states: the sixteenth-century CE relationship among Henry VIII of England, Francis I of France, and Emperor Charles V of Spain; and the late-fifteenth-century CE relationship among Ferdinand King of Naples, Lorenzo de’ Medici of Florence, and Ludovicus Sforza of Milan. While Bacon does not explicate in detail these examples of one’s control over one’s neighbors, he explains that, during the reigns of both these triumvirates, “there was such a watch kept, that none of the Three could win a Palme of Ground, but the other two, would straightwaies ballance it, either by Confederation, or, if need were, by a Warre” (19.72-75). These two triumvirates have one important characteristic in common: each leader is constantly vigilant to ensure that the other two leaders do not increase their territory at all;⁶⁰⁹ in the event of a territorial incursion, the other two leaders act immediately by either creating a league against the invader or going to war against the abusing power. Most importantly, the members of these triumvirates “would not, in any wise, take up Peace at Interest” (19.76); that is, they are not afraid to act or compromise immediate peace in order to achieve future benefits and lasting concord.

⁶⁰⁹ “palm, n.” Ibid.: “A measure of length, approximately equal either to the breadth or to the length of the hand.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

In the case of the former triumvirate—King Henry VIII, King Francis I, and Emperor Charles V—Bacon provides no further guidance.⁶¹⁰ In the case of the latter, albeit historically prior triumvirate—Ferdinand King of Naples, Lorenzo de’ Medici, and Ludovicus Sforza—Bacon directs his readers to the Italian historian Francesco Guicciardini. A brief reflection on Italian history illuminates the complexity in Bacon’s interpretation. Around 1490 CE, according to Guicciardini’s *The History of Italy*, Italy enjoys unprecedented prosperity, security, military glory, autonomy, and a flourishing of the arts, all of which result from the tenuous peace amongst King Ferdinand, Lorenzo de’ Medici, and Ludovicus Sforza.⁶¹¹ Of the many factors that contribute to this prosperity, Guicciardini credits Medici, who is “so eminent amongst the ordinary rank of citizens in the city of Florence that the affairs of that republic [a]re governed according to his counsels.”⁶¹² Medici determines that it is in the best interest of Florence to limit the ability of the other Italian powers to expand. Thus, Italy is maintained in a balance. In order to maintain this stability, the peace must be preserved and a diligent watch established—a tenuous peace. Ferdinand of Naples, “a most prudent and highly esteemed prince,” and Sforza of Milan, a “restless and ambitious” usurper of Ferdinand’s son-in-law, join in league.⁶¹³ Despite

⁶¹⁰ According to Raphael Holinshed, following the death of the Roman Emperor Maximus, the French King and the Spanish King “began manifestlie to aspire to the empire.” The French King was desirous “that in the action of the empire, they might follow the example and order of two young louers, who albeit they follow the quest of one ladie, and either one laboureth by his industrie to carie hir; yet they forbere to come to contention.” It is unclear how Bacon intends this example to be interpreted. Francesco Guicciardini, *The History of Italy*, trans. Sidney Alexander (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1969), 312; Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, 6 vols. (London, UK: Printed for J. Johnson; F. C. and J. Rivington; T. Payne; Wilkie and Robinson; Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme; Cadell and Davies; and J. Mawman, 1808), III.637.

⁶¹¹ Guicciardini, *History of Italy*, 4.

⁶¹² Ibid.

⁶¹³ Ibid., 7.

the jealousies and contemptuousness among these three rulers, they share a common enemy: Venice. They need “to create a counterbalance against the power of the Venetians, who [a]re then formidable in all of Italy.”⁶¹⁴ Their alliance is thus doubly purposeful:

The principal aim of that pact [i]s to prevent the Venetians from becoming any more powerful since they [a]re undoubtedly stronger than any of the allies alone, but much weaker than all of them together. The Venetians continu[e] to follow their own policies apart from common counsels, and while waiting for the growth of disunion and conflicts among the others, remai[n] on the alert, prepared to take advantage of every mishap that might open the way for them toward ruling all of Italy.⁶¹⁵

While the alliance does curb the hegemonic expansion of Venice, “it d[oes] not unite the allies in sincere and faithful friendship.”⁶¹⁶ This situation of constant preparedness does not destabilize the region; in fact, it increases the security in the region. However, this alliance is short-lived. In 1492 CE, following the death of Medici, the alliance is disbanded.

Bacon’s reference to King Ferdinand, Lorenzo de’ Medici, and Ludovicus Sforza’s alliance can be understood from two perspectives: that of the members of the alliance and that of Venice. From the perspective of the triumvirate, an alliance with one’s enemies is beneficial if one fears greater enemies; thus, lesser powers can curb the power of a stronger power if they unite and maintain a vigilant watch. However, there is a danger in alliances that are based on mutual benefit rather than on trust: the creation of an alliance based on one individual, such as on Medici, precludes the possibility that the alliance can last. From the perspective of the stronger power—in this case Venice, which is a commercial republic—it is necessary to encourage the animosity between smaller, less powerful states in one’s vicinity. If one can capitalize on hatred to nations other than oneself, one may gain political supremacy. Thus, Bacon contends that the

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

ability to maintain prolonged peace with one's neighbors is highly unlikely. Moreover, larger, commercial, bureaucratic republics have a political advantage. As such, while being a member of an alliance serves a purpose, Bacon's example seems to suggest that it is better to be the state feared by the allies. Hence, it is best in dealing with one's neighbors to be a powerful, commercial republic.

At this point in his argument, Bacon recalls his comment concerning "fine Deliveries" (19.45) and alludes to his more forceful statements on this topic in essay twenty-nine. Bacon, here, prepares his readers to accept justifications for war not based "*upon a precedent Injury, or Provocation*" (19.82). Bacon challenges the legitimate grounds for war with one's neighbors and encourages preemptive assault. There need not be a reason for war, Bacon claims; rather, "a just Feare, of Imminent danger, though there be no Blow given, is a lawfull Cause of a Warre" (19.83-85). Anxiety or concern regarding future harms suffice as lawful justifications for war. That is, when initiating conflict with one's neighbors, there are no rules of justice. War between states is acceptable if it is justifiable. This point is elaborated later in this chapter of the dissertation. Bacon, in these few sentences, imbues a king with unlimited war-making power and unending recourse to military justifications.

In order to focus on the second source of danger, Bacon turns his view from the international scene to the domestic. Wives can pose significant danger to the prince, and, he notes, "There are Cruell Examples of them" (19.86). Bacon provides three examples of murderous wives:

Livia is infamed for the poysoning of her husband; *Roxolana*, *Solymans* Wife, was the destruction of that renowned Prince, *Sultan Mustapha*; And otherwise troubled his House, and Succession: *Edward* the Second of *England*, his Queen, had the principall hand, in the Deposing and Murther of her Husband. (19.86-92)

In this regard, Bacon identifies three historical examples of conniving and homicidal women. A classical example is Livia, who orchestrates the murder of Augustus Caesar.⁶¹⁷ A Middle Eastern example is Roxolana, who persuades her husband, Solyman, to murder his son and heir, Mustapha, in order to advance her own son.⁶¹⁸ A British example is Queen Isabella, who compels her husband, Edward II, to abdicate and then, after numerous failed attempts at poisoning him, has him impaled on a burning rod.⁶¹⁹

Bacon's three examples reveal that the loyalty of wives rests not with their husbands, but with their children. Wives such as the three listed by Bacon "have Plots, for the Raising of their owne Children; or else that they be Advoutresses" (19. 93).⁶²⁰ It is necessary to fear wives of this sort since they may conspire to further their own child, or may commit adultery. The purity of a king's line is crucial in the case of hereditary monarchs. The authority of the king is derived from his lineage. Therefore, a king must be certain that his children are actually his own. Adulterous wives compromise the very line of their husbands. As a result, wives are not to be trusted. In essay eight, "Of Marriage and Single Life," Bacon reveals his disfavor of marriage and children: "He that hath *Wife* and *Children* hath given Hostages to Fortune; for they are Impediments to great Enterprises, either of Vertue or Mischiefe" (8.5-7). Family provides a man with a reason to serve his state, whether in government or in war. That is, if one has heirs, one is likely more concerned about the future welfare of a state than is a man who lacks a legacy. For a king, of course, there is an added tension: in order to maintain his line and thus ensure his

⁶¹⁷ See also Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 7:67-69, wherein Livia is accused of poisoning her husband by means of tainted figs. See also essay two, "Of Death."

⁶¹⁸ Richard Knolles, *The General History of the Turkes* (Ann Arbor, MI: Microfilm, 1683).

⁶¹⁹ Holinshed, *Chronicles*, II.587.

⁶²⁰ "advoutress, n." *OED*, March 27, 2013: "A woman who commits adultery." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

continued power, a king must have legitimate male heirs; yet, Bacon avers, the very heirs who perpetuate the king's line and legacy may hamper the king's ability to live a good life and may threaten his immediate power. The sons of kings are likely ambitious and desirous, much like their fathers. Bacon notes that these ambitious, young princes and their equally aspiring mothers may unseat or even murder the king for their own political benefit.

Since wives and sons are both necessary and dangerous, familial relations may compromise the power and authority of the king. Bacon calls the relationship between kings and their children "Tragedies" (19.95), a word most often used to describe "[a] play or other literary work of a serious or sorrowful character, with a fatal or disastrous conclusion."⁶²¹ Children, Bacon notes, pose considerable danger to their fathers. The tragic nature of these relationships concerns suspicion, a point which Bacon makes explicit: "generally, the Entring of Fathers, into Suspicion of their *Children* hath been ever unfortunate" (19.96-98). Once a father doubts the loyalty of his child, or anyone for that matter, the result is often sorrowful. Therefore, prudent kings must take measured risks in regard to their sons and wives.

In essay thirty-one, "Of Suspicion," Bacon elaborates on this theme. In this later essay, Bacon argues that "*Suspitions* amongst Thoughts, are like Bats amongst Birds, they ever fly by Twilight" (31.3).⁶²² When one believes in "the existence of something evil or wrong without proof,"⁶²³ much like the lie, which Bacon explains in essay one, one functions in the realm of

⁶²¹ "tragedy, n." Ibid., January 11, 2013. Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁶²² Smeaton identifies this passage as an example of Bacon's theoretical "love and respect for justice." Smeaton, introduction, xxi.

⁶²³ "suspitions, n." *OED*, January 14, 2013: "The action of suspecting; the feeling or state of mind of one who suspects; imagination or conjecture of the existence of something evil or wrong

half-lights or “Candlelights” (1.21). Suspicions “dispose Kings to Tyranny, Husbands to Jealousie, Wise Men to Irresolution and Melancholy” (31.8). These “unfortunate” (19.98) consequences are, in fact, “Defects...in the Braine” (31.9). When suspicions are unfounded, they reveal a failure in one’s ability to consider a situation rationally. As Bacon argues previously in this essay (19.52), a king’s ability to differentiate between founded and unfounded dangers is essential to his success. So as to maintain his power, a king is conditioned to fear all possible threats, which necessarily leads to the assumption of dangers that may not be legitimate. As such, a king must learn to differentiate “Perills and Shadowes” from their “Representations” (19.7). A prudent prince must learn to distinguish between actual and imagined threats.

Prelates, nobles, second nobles—specifically “the lower nobility or gentry”,⁶²⁴—merchants, commons, and men of war all threaten the prince’s authority and security. However, in regard to such potential threats, the prince has a predicament: a prince is reliant on others to execute his office and to advance the well-being of his state; yet, those whom he ought to trust and upon whom he must most heavily rely pose the greatest danger. Since a prince cannot prevent or predict all potential threats, he must be prudent in the execution of his office. The advice in essay eleven for men of place becomes all the more important in light of the account in essay nineteen.

Part IV: Execution of the Office

In concluding this essay, Bacon reminds princes of the gravity of their position: “*Princes* are like to *Heavenly Bodies*, which cause good or evill times; And which have much *Veneration*, but no *Rest*” (19.158). Princes, according to Bacon, are likened to “the sun, moon, or a

without proof; apprehension of guilt or fault on slight grounds or without clear evidence.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁶²⁴ “second, adj, and n2.” See footnote 608.

planet.”⁶²⁵ Similarly to celestial bodies, kings are much honored and adored;⁶²⁶ yet, as the celestial bodies must continue in their assigned orbits, so too must a prince. For a king, there can be neither relaxation nor respite from duty. Kings are, as presented in essay eleven, “thrice *Servants*” (11.3), bound to serve others and ignorant of themselves. As such, in many respects the lives of kings are not their own.

Bacon ends essay nineteen with two principles of rule: “All precepts concerning *Kings*, are in effect comprehended, in those two Remembrances: *Memento quod es Homo*; and *Memento quod es Deus*, or *Vice Dei*: The one bridleth their Power and the other their Will” (19.160-163). First, in order to restrain power, a prince must remember that he is a man, not a god. Second, in order to restrain desire, a prince must remember that he is a god, or in the place of God. These two principles increase our understanding of kingship.⁶²⁷ Bacon’s recommendation at the conclusion of this essay echoes the conclusion of essay eleven. In the previous essay, Bacon explains that a man of place must play a part: “*When he sits in Place, he is another Man*” (11.113). In this essay, Bacon explains the type of part a king must play. A king must maintain a balance between being a man and being a god. In his role as a man, the king must not overstep his power; he must not behave as a god who ravages the land, takes whatever he desires with little concern for his subjects, and rules in his own interests rather than those of his people. In

⁶²⁵ “heavenly body n.” Ibid., July 10, 2012: “(originally) the sun, moon, or a planet...any star, comet, asteroid, or other celestial object.” This passage is cited in the OED as an example of this usage.

⁶²⁶ “veneration, n.” Ibid.: “The fact or condition of being venerated.” This passage is cited in the OED as the first example of this usage.

⁶²⁷ “comprehend, v.” Ibid.: “To lay hold of all the points of (any thing) and include them within the compass of a description or expression; to embrace or describe summarily; summarize; sum up.” This passage is cited in the OED as an example of this usage.

his role as a god, the king must exhibit concern, magnanimity, and charity towards his people; he must behave as more than a man and love his people as God loves men.

Shrewd readers of Bacon may see another interpretation. A king's power is limited by the laws of nature and the technological aids at his disposal. Unlike God, the king is neither omnipotent nor omniscient. Might Bacon be arguing that a king's desire should be as a god's? Here, of course, the question concerns the nature of the god who ought to be emulated. Is the god to whom a king ought to liken himself one who cares for humans, or one who is desirous of personal gain? Bacon may be suggesting that the king's power is limited solely by the tools that he has at his disposal and by his will. If this latter interpretation is correct, then with the correct technological helps, a king or any man could become as a god.

ESSAY TWENTY-NINE, "OF THE TRUE GREATNESSE OF KINGDOMES AND ESTATES":

PREPAREDNESS FOR WAR

In the center of *Essays* is Bacon's most overtly political essay: "Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates." As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, the first half of *Essays* is a rhetorically persuasive account of "Mens Businesse, and Bosomes" (DL.14); the second, parallel half of *Essays* contains correctives to many of the more extreme statements or recommendations presented in the first half. Essay twenty-nine and its mirror essay, "Of Regiment of Health," sit as a fulcrum between the two halves of Bacon's *Essays*. In content, essay twenty-nine is imperial. In structure, it is chiasmic: the first half of the essay culminates in Bacon's fifth ordinance, while the second half of the essay solves many of the difficulties established in the essay's first half. In this essay, Bacon's new, proper, "solid foundation" for political life comes into view.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁸ Bacon, *Instauration*, Epistle Dedicatory, 6.

Throughout this essay, Bacon subtly continues to destroy regnant opinion and practice, as well as create new opinion and new practice. Bacon's rhetorical nuance undergirds this essay, as he misemploys traditional examples and misappropriates common references. Further, his keen command of history is also prominent, as he praises and blames notorious figures from the past. Last, despite not mentioning Machiavelli once in its entirety, essay twenty-nine is the most Machiavellian of Bacon's essays.⁶²⁹ On its surface, this essay concerns "worldly greatness."⁶³⁰ It is typically read as a call to arms. Yet, on careful consideration, it is a sustained, ruthless attack against political life, depicted at its most brutal and honest, and a scathing critique of both monarchy and the prevailing practices of Bacon's time.

This essay is divided into four sections: the first section introduces the three types of political men and the purpose of this essay (29.5-37); the second section defines greatness (29.38-55); the third section contains ten maxims for greatness (29.55-318); and the fourth section closes the essay (29.319-327). While this essay "is extraordinarily compressed,"⁶³¹ the bulk of the essay is composed of Bacon's ten "Ordinances, Constitutions, and Customes" (29:324), which are intended to "sow *Greatnesse*, to their [the princes' or estates'] Posteritie, and Succession" (29.325).

As in the case of both essay eleven and essay nineteen, essay twenty-nine proffers a bleak version of political life and the potential for political greatness. In this essay, Bacon provides an account of the goal or end of political life—imperial greatness—and the means of obtaining it—

⁶²⁹ On this point, I follow Faulkner: "Essay 29 is probably the most thoroughly Machiavellian of Bacon's writings, although Machiavelli [sic] is not mentioned by name and his preoccupation with fighting is somewhat modified by commendations of economic growth, defensive war, and naval forces." Faulkner, *Progress*, 184.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., 48.

⁶³¹ Ibid., 183.

war. As discussed by Faulkner, Bacon “prescribes preoccupation with war, as many commentators correctly note, although with small qualifications not so commonly noted. Bacon defends the professing of war more than the fighting of it.”⁶³² In many respects, this essay provides an ideological replacement for religion which, as has been discussed in this dissertation, is enervated by Bacon. This essay is a metaphor for Bacon’s larger project, the Instauration: the conquering of men and states is the precursor to and parallel of the conquering of nature. Further, as is discussed in this section, Bacon does not advocate limitless imperial expansion. The conquering of men, Bacon suggests, is tempered by the ability of a state to sustain its dominion. Ultimately, as is so evident in many of Bacon’s other essays, the maxim of self-knowledge is essential to political greatness. Greatness demands that one understand one’s own forces and the forces of others.

Essay twenty-nine is a practical account of the prescriptions, arrangements, and practices that may enable a state to achieve greatness. Bacon argues that in the past “these Things are commonly not Observed, but left to take their Chance” (29.326). As we have seen in the previous chapters, many of Bacon’s counsels require that one master chance by increasing one’s knowledge and understanding. The mastery of chance involves the methodical consideration of one’s situation—including one’s own abilities and positions, one’s desired outcomes, and the factors involved in obtaining one’s end. This essay concerns “the true *Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates*, and the *Meanes* thereof” (29.31). It is a lesson in practical politics, designed to instruct Bacon’s readers in the best way “to raise and Amplifie an Estate, in Power, Meanes, and Fortune” (29.29). In this essay, we learn how to increase the strength, resources, and prosperity of a state.

⁶³² Ibid., 194.

Bacon finally provides an answer to the question presented in essay nineteen concerning the end of a state. Here, Bacon declares that for a state to achieve greatness, its *raison d'être* must be war. Throughout this essay, Bacon remains silent on science, which, from the rest of his corpus, we know is essential to his project. This omission, of course, raises an interpretational question that pertains to the relationship between *Essays* and Bacon's *Instauration*, which must be kept in mind throughout our analysis: does Bacon believe that a state should organize around the pursuit of war, or the pursuit of science?

Part I: Political Fiddling: Bacon's Themistocles

Essay twenty-nine begins with a speech by Themistocles, the Athenian general and politician who died in the fifth century BCE, noted by Plutarch for his "sagacity"⁶³³ and recognized by Thucydides as one of "the most distinguished Greeks of [his] time."⁶³⁴ In fact, according to Steven Forde, a political theorist and Thucydidian scholar, Themistocles receives "unmatched praise...for foresight and strategic brilliance" from Thucydides.⁶³⁵ Bacon deems Themistocles' speech "Haughtie and Arrogant, in taking so much to Himselfe,...a Grave and Wise Observation and Censure, applied at large to others" (29.5-8). This introduction leads Bacon's readers to accept Themistocles as a serious, intelligent, political authority who is exempt from the censure that he applies to others. As a consequence, Bacon establishes Themistocles as a standard of political knowledge.

⁶³³ Plutarch, "Cimon," in *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1962), 2:417.

⁶³⁴ Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler (New York, NY: Free Press, 2008), 138.6.

⁶³⁵ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 1.138; see also Steven Forde, "Thucydides on Ripeness and Conflict Resolution," *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004): 180.

The specter of Themistocles is present throughout this essay, as he becomes an exemplar of a “Great and Mightie” counselor or governor (29.33). Bacon reintroduces Themistocles by name in his discussion of the ninth ordinance, mastery of the sea (29.270-275). However, not to get ahead of the text, essay twenty-nine begins with Themistocles’ short speech: “Desired at a Feast to touch a Lute, he said; *He could not fiddle, but yet he could make a small Towne, a great Citty*” (29.8-10). Bacon explicates Themistocles’ speech in the first part of the essay: first, Bacon defines the two different types of political leaders—those who fiddle and those who do not (29.10-18)—to whom he later refers as “the worke-men” (29.30); second, Bacon presents some of the ways in which counselors and governors can gain favor with princes (29.19-30); and finally, Bacon clarifies the purpose of this chapter and the type of lessons that ought to be learned from it—namely, how to evaluate a state and how to constitute greatness in a state (29.31-37). Before we consider Bacon’s explication, some further background on Themistocles is required.

Bacon presumes that his readers are familiar with Themistocles. As recorded in Thucydides’ *Peloponnesian War*, Themistocles, who lived from 524 to 459 BCE, is an Athenian politician, archon,⁶³⁶ and military strategist identified by Thucydides as one of “the most famous men of [his] time in Hellas.”⁶³⁷ The fifth century BCE is a time of persistent war: first, from 499 to 449 BCE, a war is waged between the invading Persian forces and the Hellenic League composed of both Sparta and Athens; second, from 431 to 404 BCE, the Peloponnesian War is fought between Athens and the Peloponnesian League led by Sparta. Following Athens’ destruction by the Persians, Themistocles facilitates her reconstruction and strategizes the

⁶³⁶ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 1.93.3.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 1.138.6.

subterfuge that enables the Athenians to rebuild their city wall. Since he understands “the great start which the Athenians would gain in the acquisition of power by becoming a naval people,”⁶³⁸ he persuades his people to erect walls around the Piraeus⁶³⁹ and develop their fleet.⁶⁴⁰ As such, according to Thucydides, Themistocles not only “began to lay the foundations of the [Athenian] empire,” since “he first ventured to tell them [the Athenians] to stick to the sea,”⁶⁴¹ but also masterminded the Athenian naval strategy that is so vital during the Peloponnesian War. Despite Spartan requests to refrain from construction, Themistocles capitalizes on his pre-existing relationship with the Spartans; he exploits “their friendship for him”⁶⁴² and their trust in him. As a consequence, Themistocles incurs the “secret annoyance” of the Spartans,⁶⁴³ which eventually leads to his fall from grace.

Medism is one of the most serious crimes in the ancient world, especially during Themistocles’ time: sympathy for the Persians, or the Medes, is tantamount to treason. In 478 BCE, Pausanias, a Spartan General, Royal Scion, and one-time acting regent, is suspected and acquitted of conspiring with the Persians. Later, Pausanias is accused of orchestrating the escape of high-ranking Persian prisoners from Spartan custody. According to Thucydides, Pausanias begins to dress as and adopt the customs of the Persians. As the Spartans attempt to arrest him in 470 BCE, Pausanias dies, thereby preventing a trial. The Spartan investigation of General

⁶³⁸ Ibid., 1.93.3.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 1.93.3.5.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 1.14.3.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 1.93.4

⁶⁴² Ibid., 1.91.1.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., 1.92.

Pausanias allegedly implicates Themistocles. The Spartans seize the opportunity to exact revenge on Themistocles for his previous subterfuge and demand that he be punished.⁶⁴⁴

Formally accused of Medism, Themistocles appeals to Artaxerxes, the Persian King.⁶⁴⁵ Thucydides argues that in order to obtain sanctuary, Themistocles “falsely pretended” to have colluded with the Persians at the Battle of Salamis in 480 BCE, alleging that he had warned Artaxerxes’ father, Xerxes, to retreat and ensured that the bridges to facilitate his retreat would be passable.⁶⁴⁶ He asks Artaxerxes for sanctuary from the Greeks and “a year’s grace,” after which time he promises to explain himself;⁶⁴⁷ the tacit expectation is that he is then to reveal Athens’ secrets to the Persians, although the value of year-old information is questionable. Themistocles spends the year learning the Persian language and customs⁶⁴⁸ and serving as Governor of Magnesia, Lampasacus, and Myos.⁶⁴⁹ There are two accounts of Themistocles’ death: in the first, an account that Thucydides endorses, Themistocles dies of disease;⁶⁵⁰ in the second, an account that Plutarch supports, Themistocles commits suicide by means of poison, as he is unwilling to fulfill his commitment to tell Artaxerxes everything he knows.⁶⁵¹ Since Bacon does not provide his interpretation of Themistocles’ death, questions arise regarding

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid., 1.135.2. In 472 or 471 BCE, Themistocles “had, as it happened, been *ostracized*,” presumably for his arrogance, and is living in Argos.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., 1.137.3.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid., 1.137.4.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., 1.138.1.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., 1.138.5.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., 1.138.4.

⁶⁵¹ Plutarch, “Themistocles,” in *Plutarch’s Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1962), 2:87.

Bacon's understanding of Themistocles: as a man who intends to betray his country, but dies prematurely? or, as a man who sacrifices his own life to protect his state? In either case, Themistocles is a complicated, historical figure and a controversial exemplar of rule.

This is not the only discussion of Themistocles in *Essays*. In essay twenty-seven, "Of Friendship," Bacon introduces Themistocles' perspectives on speech: "It was well said by *Themistocles to the King of Persia; That speech was like Cloth of Arras, opened, and put abroad; Whereby the Imagery doth appear in Figure; whereas in Thoughts, they lie but as in Packs*" (27.149-152).⁶⁵² As discussed above, after he is granted asylum by Artaxerxes, Themistocles is asked to supply information on the Athenian regime—in other words, to commit treason—the very charge that causes him to flee Athens.⁶⁵³ Although in essay twenty-nine Bacon is silent on Themistocles' alleged treason, in essay twenty-seven he has already reminded his readers of Themistocles' questionable behavior. As such, Bacon's praise of Themistocles in essay twenty-nine is mitigated by his earlier comments. If one reads this essay without having read essay twenty-seven, Bacon's praise of Themistocles is not complicated by his alleged

⁶⁵² Robert Bolt's play *A Man for All Seasons*, which concerns the treasonous downfall of Sir Thomas Moore, begins with the image of "embroidered mouths." The Common Man, who initiates the dialogue, reflects on the nature of speech and the play as an art form:

It is perverse! To start a play made up of Kings and Cardinals in speaking costumes and intellectuals with embroidered mouths, with me. If a King or a Cardinal had done the prologue he'd have had the right materials. And an intellectual would have shown enough majestic meanings, colored propositions, and closely woven liturgical stuff to dress the House of Lords!

Much like Bacon's account of the tapestry of speech (27.149-152), Bolt's presentation of speech as art and ornament reminds one of the rhetorical aspects of speech. Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons: a play in two acts* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1962).

⁶⁵³ This passage is found in Plutarch's *Lives*, in his section on Themistocles: "Themistocles made the answer that the speech of man was like embroidered tapestries, since like them this too had to be extended in order to display its patterns. But when it was rolled up it concealed and distorted them." Plutarch, "Themistocles," 2:79.

treason. Only if we read Bacon's *Essays* as an ordered whole do we grasp the complexity in Bacon's account of Themistocles.⁶⁵⁴

Given his accomplishments, Themistocles is undoubtedly a great tactician. Yet, or perhaps as a result, his actions are often unscrupulous. Themistocles serves Athens to the best of his ability and exploits his relationship with Sparta for the betterment of his city. Then, after Athens charges him with Medism—a charge that Thucydides argues is unfounded—Themistocles appeals to the Persians for sanctuary, thereby appearing to prove his guilt. For this reason, many scholars have recognized the challenge of interpreting Themistocles' actions:

The personality and career of Themistocles are a challenge to integrative narrative. No pigeonhole seems spacious enough. Unscrupulous, ambitious, wise without education; defending his country by abandoning it to the enemy; champion of Hellas who sent secret warnings to Xerxes; exile and turncoat escaping from his situation by suicide—the entirety of the man is difficult to come to terms with.⁶⁵⁵

As a consequence of these interpretive difficulties, we must pay close attention to Bacon's discussion of Themistocles, especially since, for Bacon, Themistocles appears to stand as a model of "Grave and Wise Observation and Censure" (29.7) as concerns the "Businesse of Estate" (29.11).

With Themistocles' biography in mind, we return to Bacon's text and his detailed interpretation of Themistocles' speech: "These Words (holpen a little with a Metaphore) may expresse two differing Abilities, in those that deale in Businesse of Estate" (29.10-12). Political men, Bacon posits, may possess one of two different aptitudes: those with the first type of ability "can make a *Small State Great*, and yet cannot *Fiddle*" (29.14); those with the second type of

⁶⁵⁴ In Plato's *Republic*, Cephalus refers to a saying of Themistocles concerning decency or character. Plato, *Republic*, 329e-330a.

⁶⁵⁵ Alexei V. Zadorojnyi, "Plutarch's Themistocles and the Poets," *The American Journal of Philology* 127.2 (summer 2009): 261.

ability “can *fiddle* very cunningly, but yet are so farre from being able, to make a *Small State Great*” (29.15-17). These two differing types of aptitudes, Bacon contends, are possessed by two different types of men. Although he mentions the first type of ability and notes that it is the rarer sort, Bacon’s consideration focuses on the second, more common type of ability.

Men of the second type, adept fiddlers, have the ability, Bacon confirms, “To bring a Great and Flourishing Estate to Ruine and Decay” (29.18). Their fiddling—their aimless, frivolous tinkering—may cause destruction:

And certainly, those Degenerate Arts and Shifts, whereby many Counsellours and Governours, gaine both *Favour* with their Masters, and Estimation with the Vulgar, deserve no better Name then *Fidling*; Being Things, rather pleasing for the time, and gracefull to themselves onely, then tending to the Weale and Advancement of the State, which they serve. (29.19-24)

Fiddlers, then, are able to gain favor with both their masters and the vulgar.⁶⁵⁶ They command popular opinion. While Bacon does not elaborate, the presumption is that their favor results from their constant busyness and their subsequent appearance of accomplishment, despite the lack of actual improvement to their states. Bacon avers that men of this type act solely in their own immediate interests, rather than in the interests of their states. By way of lasting contribution, men of this type are not able to increase the condition of their states.

To these two types of men—those who can tinker with a state yet cannot make a small state great, and those who can make a small state great yet cannot tinker with a state—Bacon adds a third type:

There are also (no doubt) Counsellours and Governours, which may be held sufficient, (*Negotiis pares*,) Able to mannage Affaires, and to keepe them from *Precipices*, and manifest Inconveniencies; which neverthesse, are farre from the Abilitie, to raise and Amplifie an Estate, in Power, Meanes, and Fortune. (29.25-30)

⁶⁵⁶ Abbot attributes Bacon’s account of fiddling to “the hand-to-mouth policy too common among the Queen’s ministers.” Abbot, introduction, xxxii.

Equals in business—according to the literal translation of *Negotiis pares*—are able to maintain a state in its current condition. In essay fifty-five, “Of Honour and Reputation,” which has been explicated in detail in a previous chapter, Bacon identifies these *Negotiis pares* as having the fourth degree of honor (55.48-57). Men of this sort, Bacon elaborates, “have great Places under Princes, and execute their Places with Sufficiency” (55.56). They are, therefore, competent but not exceptional. The three types of abilities (29.11) that Bacon identifies in this essay—the ability to increase a state but not tinker, the ability to tinker yet not increase a state, and the ability to maintain a state but neither increase nor decrease a state—in fact correspond to three types of political “worke-men” (29.30): first, those men who are able to increase the flourishing of a state; second, those men who decrease the flourishing of a state; and third, those men who neither increase nor decrease the flourishing of a state, but are able to maintain its condition.

Bacon’s discussion of the three types of political men is reminiscent of Machiavelli’s discussion of the three types of brains outlined in chapter twenty-two of *The Prince*. According to Machiavelli, “there are three kinds of brains: one that understands by itself, another that discerns what others understand, the third that understands neither by itself nor through others.”⁶⁵⁷ These types of thinkers, whom Machiavelli ranks, are not all of the same caliber or desirability: the first is the most excellent; the second is the second-most excellent; and the third is useless. Much like the discussion in Bacon’s essay, wherein he explains that it is possible for certain types of fiddlers, through their cunning, undeservedly to “gaine both *Favour* with their Masters, and Estimation with the Vulgar” (29.20), Machiavelli, in chapter twenty-two, discusses the ways in which beguiling ministers may fool or manipulate the prince. As Bacon describes, it is possible to appear effective and busy, and yet accomplish nothing; worse yet, it is possible to

⁶⁵⁷ Machiavelli, *Prince*, 22.

appear effective and busy while bringing a state to ruin. Bacon echoes Machiavelli's sentiment: the secret for men to obtain favor is to appear to act in the interest of the state and one's time, yet behave as "gracefull to themselves onely" (29.23). That is, one may appear to be one way, yet all the while be the exact other.

Machiavelli, however, includes a puzzle with his account of the three types of brains, which compels his readers to think more deeply about the nature of intellection and political savvy. Thinking through the challenge of Machiavelli's three brains helps us better to understand Bacon's account of the three types of political men. The three types of brains, in order of their utility, are those that understand without the need of external assistance, those that understand with the help of external assistance, and those that are incapable of understanding either on their own or with external assistance. While the first type of brain clearly requires no assistance and the third type of brain clearly is useless and beyond repair, the curious point concerns the second type of brain. Although Machiavelli makes this division between types of understanding appear so logical, his actual typology belies a complexity: those individuals who possess the second type of brain must comprehend what others assist them in understanding. Simply put, the second type of brain must be able to adjudicate between the information and opinions that are provided by others. On careful consideration, then, the first and second types of brains are not as different as Machiavelli's typology originally suggests.

In essay twenty-nine, as has been discussed above, Bacon provides a tripartite account of the types of political rulers, under the backdrop of Themistocles' account of his own inability to fiddle but his ability to increase a city or state. The metaphor, which Bacon extends, concerns the relationship between domestic policy, represented by the ability to fiddle, and foreign policy. The tension between the demands of domestic policy and foreign policy is a theme that

undergirds this entire essay: how can a ruler balance the needs of his people and the needs of the state, and what is the appropriate unifying principle for a state that is desirous of greatness? “Of the true Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates” addresses this perennial political puzzle.

With this context in mind, we can return to Bacon’s account of the three types of political men. Bacon’s concern is practical politics. As presented in essay nineteen, the nature or character of a political man necessarily influences both the manner in which he is able to rule and those things which he is able to accomplish. A proficient ruler must understand his own character, including his abilities and limitations, and then adjust his behavior accordingly. Essay twenty-nine is addressed to the first and third types of men—those who can increase a state and those who can maintain a state. The first type of man is Themistoclean: one who is able to “*make a small Towne, a great City*” (29.9). Bacon is not concerned with the second type of man who, as a result of character, is incapable of actually building a great state. The third type of man, the one who is able to maintain a state, must possess some of the qualities of the first type of man: he must be able to maintain a polity so as to ensure that his state does not decline; since excellent rule demands that a king understand whether or not his state is fit for expansion, some rulers, given extant political conditions, may not be able to increase their state or may wisely choose not to do so.

In *Advancement of Learning*, during his discussion of the faults of learned men, Bacon provides a more detailed account of his understanding of Themistocles. Specifically, Bacon highlights the failure of learned men “to observe decency and discretion in their behavior and carriage, and [their tendencies to] commit errors in small and ordinary points of action.”⁶⁵⁸ Men of this type are, as Themistocles’ speech suggests, inept fiddlers. There are two important,

⁶⁵⁸ Bacon, *Advancement*, I.iii.8.

connected points in this passage: first, Bacon presents the distinction between domestic and foreign policy issues, represented by Themistocles' inability to fiddle with domestic policy concerns; second, Bacon reminds his readers of the importance of public opinion for politics and reiterates his arguments concerning "fine Deliveries," as discussed in essay nineteen (19.45).

Where and when is this feast that Themistocles attends, and who desires Themistocles "to touch a Lute" (29.8)?⁶⁵⁹ The story is recounted by Plutarch, but not in his "Life of Themistocles"; rather, the story is found in his "Life of Cimon," where Plutarch notes that Cimon serves as "a foil to the cleverness and daring of Themistocles."⁶⁶⁰ In Plutarch's account, when Themistocles is young, he and Cimon are dinner guests at a feast of Laomedon, a fourth-century general:

over the wine the hero [Cimon] was invited to sing, and did sing very agreeably, and was praised by the guests as a cleverer man than Themistocles. That hero [Themistocles], they said, declared that he has not learned to sing, nor even to play the lyre, but knew how to make a city great and rich.⁶⁶¹

Themistocles, according to Plutarch, is regarded by the dinner guests as less clever than Cimon, since he is unable to sing or play. However, Plutarch's exegesis, which is later reiterated and expanded by Bacon, affirms that the ability of a political man to sing or play an instrument is irrelevant to his ability to increase the greatness of a state. While he is unable to perform musically, Themistocles is versed in the political arts, essential abilities for political men. Plutarch highlights an important political difference between these two men: Cimon's "political policy, which was aristocratic and Laconian"; and that of Themistocles, which was

⁶⁵⁹ Weinberger elaborates upon the distinction between Themistocles and Cimon. Weinberger, *Science, Faith and Politics*, 121-125.

⁶⁶⁰ Plutarch, "Cimon," 2:419.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., 2:431.

democratic.⁶⁶² Cimon represents the concerns of aristocrats; Themistocles, to the contrary, represents the concerns of democrats. Bacon advocates for Themistocles: it is Themistocles whose observation is declared “Grave and Wise” (29.7). Bacon endorses the political perspective of the democrat.

In the *Advancement*, Bacon draws a parallel between Themistocles and Socrates. Referring to Themistocles’ speech—“*He could not fiddle, but he could make a small town a great state*”⁶⁶³—Bacon directs his readers to Plato’s account of Socrates:

to that which Plato said of his master Socrates, whom he compared to the gallipots of apothecaries, which on the outside had apes and owls and antiques but contained within sovereign and precious liquors and confections; acknowledging that to an external report he was not without superficial levities and deformities, but was inwardly replenished with excellent virtues and powers.⁶⁶⁴

Socrates, according to Plato, ought not be judged by external appearances. Socrates, of course, is known for his ugliness, his wisdom, and his critique of Athenian democracy. Athens turned upon both Themistocles and Socrates: Themistocles, as discussed above, is accused of Medism and flees to Persia, where he dies; Socrates is executed for corrupting the youth of Athens, not believing in the Athenian gods, and believing in new gods.⁶⁶⁵ There is, however, another famous account of Plato’s Socrates: the Platonic Socrates made young and beautiful. While it is true that one ought not judge a person, especially his political acumen, solely based on his exterior appearance or public behavior, it is also true that historical and literary accounts of men are not without embellishment. Therefore, as one is left to consider the ways in which Plato has

⁶⁶² Ibid., 2:437.

⁶⁶³ Bacon, *Advancement*, I.iii.8.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁵ Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, in *Four Texts on Socrates*, trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 24b-28b.

enhanced Socrates, similarly one is encouraged to consider whether or not and why Bacon has, in fact, employed a young and beautified version of Themistocles.

In the first section of essay twenty-nine, Bacon reminds his readers that political acumen involves knowledge of one's self. The ideal political man, based on this section of the essay, is Themistocles tempered by Socrates: from Themistocles, a political man learns the arts of action and necessity; from Socrates, a political man learns the importance of wisdom and self-sufficiency; from both exemplars, a political man is reminded of his inescapability from the ugliness and baseness of politics. If these are examples of prudent politiques, Bacon has presented political rule as an untenable condition and political life as precarious, even dangerous.

In the second part of this essay, Bacon turns to "The true *Greatnesse of Kingdomes and Estates*; and the *Meanes* thereof" (29.31), which he claims is "An Argument, fit for Great and Mightie Princes, to have in their hand" (29.32-34).⁶⁶⁶ This advice to princes echoes much of the advice contained in *Essays*, as it recommends knowledge of their own condition: "To the end, that neither by Over-measuring their Forces, they leese themselves in vaine Enterprises; Nor on the other side, by undervaluing them, they descend to Fearefull and Pusillanimous Counsell" (29.34-37). Essential to greatness, Bacon posits, is the ability neither to inflate nor to undervalue one's strength. A true survey of one's means is needed to obtain greatness: one must, therefore, avoid futile endeavors; one must, likewise, avoid timid and cowardly policy. A balance must be struck between these two extremes—between the Scylla and Charybdis of politics.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁶ Bacon's self-understanding of the utility of his argument echoes Machiavelli's argument in "Dedicatory Letter" of *The Prince*. Machiavelli, *Prince*, Dedicatory Letter.

⁶⁶⁷ Bacon, *Wisdom*, "Scylla & Icarus."

Part II: Mustard Seeds and Monarchies: What Constitutes Greatness?

How, then, ought one to measure the greatness of an estate? According to Bacon, the correct evaluation of the strength and power of one's own country and those of foreign countries is the greatest challenge for public policy: "there is not any Thing amongst Civill Affaires, more subject to Errour, then the right valuation, and true Judgement, concerning the Power and Forces of an Estate" (29.42-45). History has proven this fact unquestionably true. A precise account of "the Power and Forces of" (29.45) a kingdom is both the most necessary and most difficult knowledge to obtain accurately. At the outset, Bacon provides a vocabulary with which to discuss greatness. First, Bacon defines his terms: "The *Greatnesse* of an Estate in Bulke and Territorie, doth fall under Measure; and the *Greatnesse* of Finances and Renewal doth fall under Computation" (29.38-40). The quantitative measure of a state is in its territory and volume, although what comprises volume is unclear at this point; the computation of a state is in its finances and material wealth. Bacon continues, "The Population may appeare by Musters: And the Number and Greatnesse of Cities and Townes, by Cards and Maps" (29.40-42). In order to determine the population, cities, and towns, Bacon recommends that a census be taken.⁶⁶⁸ Quantifying the greatness, or lack thereof, of an empire requires an assessment of four factors: territory, or geography; wealth, or economic condition; population, including demographics and dispositions; and urban settlement.

This short, second section of this essay centers around a biblical passage (29.38-55). As an example of the difficulty in assessing the greatness of a kingdom, Bacon refers to Matthew 13:31, Mark 4:31, and Luke 13:19. In his analysis, Bacon likens the mundane state to the kingdom of heaven, described as a mustard seed:

⁶⁶⁸ "musters, n." *OED*, October 11, 2012: "muster-roll. Also: a census report." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

The *Kingdome of Heaven* is compared, not to any great Kernell or Nut, but to a *Graine of Mustard-seed*; which is one of the least Graines, but hath in it a Propertie and Spirit, hastily to get up and spread. (29.45-48)

Bacon's interpretation of the parable of the mustard seed parallels the discussion in all three gospels:⁶⁶⁹ all describe the kingdom of heaven; all compare the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed; all describe the mustard seed as a lesser seed, which when grown, despite its small size, has the potential to become greater—more potent and more profuse—than all other seeds:

Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it grows up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.⁶⁷⁰

This parable compares the mustard seed to the kingdom of God. As Tolman Clarke notes, the parable is used “to represent the birth and development of the Christian faith on the earth and in the heart of every believer.”⁶⁷¹ Bacon, however, employs this parable in his discussion of the greatness of human estates and thus encourages his readers to liken the kingdom of man to the kingdom of God.

According to Bacon, one must not underestimate the power of the kingdom of heaven, in the same way that one must not underestimate the power of the kingdoms of men: “So are there States, great in Territorie, and yet not apt to Enlarge, or Command; And some, that have but a small Dimension of Stemme, and yet apt to be the Foundations of Great Monarchies” (29.48-52). Geographical size is not necessarily an indication of greatness: states with large measure may be

⁶⁶⁹ On this point, I follow Michelle Tolman Clarke, “Uprooting Nebuchadnezzar's Tree: Francis Bacon's Criticism of Machiavellian Imperialism,” *Political Research Quarterly* 61.3 (September 2008): 372.

⁶⁷⁰ Mark 4:30-32.

⁶⁷¹ Tolman Clarke, “Nebuchadnezzar,” 372.

unable to increase their “Bulke and Territorie” (29.38), while states with small measure may grow to greatness. As Faulkner notes, Bacon’s comparison is sacrilegious:

The analogy is blasphemous: the kingdom of heaven that Scripture compares to a mustard seed apt to get up and spread. An empire spreads over the nations not by encouragement of virtue and justice, and not by submission to the Lord. The secret to overcoming chance is the provision of one’s own force and as much as possible.⁶⁷²

Faulkner clearly identifies a recurrent theme in Bacon’s work: the elevation of human power at the expense of divine power. As Bacon refashions this parable, man is no longer subservient to divine authority, contrary to regnant religious practices. If Bacon’s advice is followed, man is capable of overcoming the limitations imposed on him by nature and thereby becoming as powerful as a god. According to Bacon’s worldview, there is no distinction between the mundane and the divine kingdoms.

This section concludes with a warning, which Bacon has iterated throughout these three essays: effective political men must be able to estimate the power and greatness of their own kingdoms and those of other kingdoms. Bacon’s caution concerns the nature of knowledge. If one is desirous of political greatness, one must have accurate knowledge of one’s condition and the conditions of others. Moreover, there is a danger that one may be seduced by false signifiers: “Walled Townes, Stored Arcenalls and Armouries, Goodly Races of Horse, Chariots of Warre, Elephants, Ordnance, Artillery, and the like” (29.53-55)—these, Bacon avers, are “but a Sheep in a Lions Skin” (29.55). They are akin to Matthew’s false prophets.⁶⁷³ Fortified cities, weapons, horses, chariots, elephants, and munitions are not accurate indicators of power. If these are not true indicators of actual greatness, then what are? Bacon turns to this point in the third section of essay twenty-nine.

⁶⁷² Faulkner, *Progress*, 188.

⁶⁷³ Matthew 7:15.

At this point in the essay, Bacon has already provided a framework for consideration. He has introduced Themistocles, modified by the reference to Socrates, as an odd exemplar of political knowledge and understanding, and he has explained those factors that do not indicate greatness. In addition, Bacon has provided a schema by which to assess greatness: territory, wealth, population, and urban settlements. He has also provided a high bar: the kingdoms of man can be compared to the kingdom of heaven. That is, man can create a kingdom equivalent to the kingdom of God. With these three points in mind—the example of Themistocles, the schema for assessment, and the human potential for biblical greatness—we turn to “the *Meanes*” of obtaining greatness (29.32).

Part III: Ten Ordinances for Greatness

The bulk of essay twenty-nine is comprised of ten maxims on expansion, which contain “the *Meanes*” (29.32) to actualize greatness.⁶⁷⁴ As he continues his analysis of the blasphemy in this essay, Faulkner compares these maxims to “a catechism containing the ten maxims of statecraft. Such a conceit, in which ten Baconian counsels replace ten commandments of dutiful righteousness before the Lord, may be fit for more than a simile.”⁶⁷⁵ While Faulkner’s division corresponds to the number of paragraphs in this section of the essay and has a clear rhetorical appeal, Bacon’s maxims, for a number of reasons, are not comparable to a catechism. Bacon, as we have stated previously, rarely operates in absolutes. Rather, Bacon’s approach establishes context, increases knowledge about a specific topic, and provides alternatives for action. As we have discussed, Bacon’s advice is most often based on contingencies: if these conditions exist, this is the correct course of action; if these are the political actors with whom one is dealing, this

⁶⁷⁴ See Faulkner, *Progress*, 183-200.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 185.

is the correct course of action. In the previous two sections of this essay, Bacon has established that, first, “there is not any Thing amongst Civill Affaires, more subject to Errour, then the right valuation, and true Judgement, concerning the Power and Forces of an Estate” (29.42-45). Not all states have the same power and force, and certainly allocation of resources varies. As such, one must rightly evaluate one’s capabilities before one determines the course of action appropriate to the circumstance. In essay nineteen, Bacon presents this point in relation to the ruler; in essay twenty-nine, Bacon extends this argument to the regime as a whole. The ten ordinances that follow are not the maxims of a catechism; they are recommendations that are only possible to enact given certain preconditions in a state.

This section is divided into nine subsections that correspond to each of the ten ordinances for greatness, with the eighth and ninth ordinances combined: first, Bacon recommends the cultivation of a warlike people; second, he discusses the importance of moderate taxation; third, he warns against the dangers of the gentry; fourth, he recommends an immigration policy specific to the needs of one’s regime (although he does propose that it be liberal); fifth, he discusses the importance of production and manufacture; sixth, he argues that arms are essential to the greatness of a state; seventh, he advocates laws that correspond to the ends of the state; eighth, he encourages a state to remain active in its exercise of war; ninth, he endorses nautical strength; and tenth, he counsels a state to bestow honors and accolades on military victors. These ordinances serve as recommendations to enhance a state’s likelihood of greatness.

Ordinance One: Sheep and Asses: Wolves and Lions

Bacon begins with the character of the people: first, through a consideration of Aesop, Virgil, and the Bible, he discusses the relationship between the weak and the strong; second, he examines the defeats of the Persians at Arbela to Alexander and of Tigranes the Armenian to the

Romans as examples of triumphs of smaller forces over larger ones; third, he turns to Machiavelli; and fourth, he emphasizes that a ruler must not rely on mercenaries, despite a state's need for a warlike people. This first ordinance is clear: in order to obtain greatness, a state must cultivate a militaristic population.

It is essential, Bacon argues, that “the Breed and disposition of the People, be stout and warlike” (29.56). Later in this section, Bacon makes this point more explicit: “the Principal Point of *Greatnesse* in any *State*, is to have a Race of Military Men” (29.73). In order for a state to achieve greatness, the people must be brave and militaristic. All of the other potential indicators—“Walled Townes, Stored Arcenalls and Armouries, Goodly Races of Horse, Chariots of Warre, Elephants, Ordnance, Artillery, and the like” (29.53-55)—Bacon now declares are “but a Sheep in a Lions Skin” (29.55). They masquerade as indicators of greatness, yet are not.

Bacon's reference to the sheep in lion's clothing combines two distinct images. The first is from Aesop.⁶⁷⁶ In the fable “The Ass in the Lion's Skin,” as suggested by its title, an ass dons a discarded lion's pelt. When the ass returns to his village, his family, friends, and fellow villagers are terrified by the approach of the lion, since lions are natural predators of asses. In fact, the ass in his disguise as a lion even terrifies many of the other animals. When the ass comes upon a fox and attempts to frighten him, the ass brays, instead of roars, and is discovered for what he is: an ass. The fox knows the ass for an ass because of his voice. The second image is from the Bible. False prophets in Matthew 7:15 are likened to wolves in sheep's clothing: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”⁶⁷⁷ These two images represent different sides of the same moral: one must not be

⁶⁷⁶ Aesop, *Fables*, “The Ass in the Lion's Skin.”

⁶⁷⁷ Matthew 7:15.

fooled by the outward appearance of either another person or another state; rather, one must learn to see the actual man or state. Bacon, in the previous section, reminds his readers to probe external appearances so as to see and examine that which is beneath the facade. In the first image, one must not overestimate the strength and greatness of an adversary because of his outward appearance; in the second image, likewise, one must not underestimate the strength and greatness of an adversary because of his outward appearance. Fundamentally, then, character is all important.

As evidence of the importance of the character of the people, Bacon credits Virgil: “For (as *Virgil* saith) *It never troubles a Wolfe, how many the sheepe be*” (29.58). The strong and great are unconcerned by the number of the weak. Regardless of their number, the weak pose no real threat to their stronger foes. Since wolves are the natural predators of sheep, the sheep in Aesop’s fable “The Wolves and the Sheep” enlist dogs as their protectors. The wolves disingenuously recommend a peace. Naively, the sheep believe the false sincerity of the wolves, dismiss the dogs from their duty, and are left unprotected. A slaughter follows. Aesop’s fable suggests that the sheep enact a twofold solution so as to prevent any future fleecing: first, the sheep must ensure that they always retain strong and loyal protectors; and second, the sheep must never underestimate the ruthlessness of the wolves, despite their potentially small number. In the relevant biblical parable, Jesus encourages his disciples whom he “send[s]...forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”⁶⁷⁸ The sheep’s lack of strength may be overcome by their wisdom and cunning: they must use their intelligence and be ever mindful of their neighbors.⁶⁷⁹ As Bacon expands upon this metaphor in the pending

⁶⁷⁸ Matthew 10:16.

⁶⁷⁹ In essay twenty-two, “Of Cunning,” Bacon compares cunning to a crooked wisdom (22.3).

ordinances, he recommends that a state gather accurate intelligence, never underestimate the ruthlessness of its enemies, and always employ strong, loyal protectors.

Bacon provides two historical, military examples of instances wherein those of lesser number triumph over the greater force. First, he discusses Alexander's defeat of the Persians led by Darius III at the Plains of Arbela in 331 BCE. Second, he presents Lucullus' defeat of Tigranes the Armenian at the Battle of Tigranocerta in 69 BCE. In both battles, the more numerous force is defeated. In the first example, according to Bacon, "The Armie of the *Persians*, in the *Plaines of Arbela*, was such a vast Sea of People, as it did somewhat astonish the Commanders in *Alexanders Armie*" (29.60-62). Plutarch notes that the Persians are rumored to have been one million men.⁶⁸⁰ Bacon relates that Alexander's commanders advise a night attack, but Alexander refuses because "*He would not pilfer the Victory*. And the Defeat was Easie" (29.64). Bacon encourages his readers to compare the Persians to sheep.

In the second example, according to Bacon, Tigranes underestimates the strength of the Roman forces because of the greater number of his forces:

When *Tigranes the Armenian*, being incamped upon a Hill, with 400000. Men, discovered the Armie of the *Romans*, being not above 14000. Marching towards him, he made himselfe Merry with it, and said; *Yonder Men, are too Many for an Ambassage, and too Few for a Fight*. (29.65-69)

Tigranes, Plutarch recounts, is undefeated before his battle with Lucullus, who commands the army of the Romans.⁶⁸¹ Tigranes overestimates his own strength as a result of his more numerous soldiers, and he underestimates the greater strength of Lucullus' fewer soldiers. These

⁶⁸⁰ Plutarch, "Alexander," 7:315.

⁶⁸¹ Plutarch, "Lucullus and Cimon," in *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1962), 2:621.

two examples clearly suggest that there is more to military victory than the sheer number of one's forces. More often than not, there are more sheep in an army than there are wolves.

Bacon's mention of Tigranes, who is also discussed by Machiavelli in *Discourses*,⁶⁸² encourages us to consider the man who defeats him, Lucullus, a first-century BCE Roman general and politician. Plutarch, in *Lives*, contrasts Lucullus to Cimon, the fifth-century BCE Athenian strategist and statesman who is contrasted to Themistocles earlier in this chapter. According to Plutarch, Lucullus and Cimon are significantly different political figures: "the one was democratic and charitable, the other sumptuous and oriental."⁶⁸³ In the earlier contrast of Themistocles and Cimon, Themistocles represents the democrats, Cimon, the aristocrats. Here, Lucullus is declared to be democratic, while Cimon is again described as aristocratic. Further, Plutarch declares Cimon the lesser man of war,⁶⁸⁴ as Lucullus commands the seas.⁶⁸⁵ Yet again, Bacon recalls the successes of a democrat over those of an aristocrat.

Unwilling to leave interpretation solely to his reader, Bacon clearly explains how one ought properly to understand the victories of both Alexander and Lucullus:

Many are the Examples, of the great oddes between Number and Courage: So that a Man may truly make a Judgement; That the Principle Point of *Greatnesse* in any *State*, is to have a Race of Military Men. (29.71-74)

A population with a military nature is essential to the greatness of a state. Courage, rather than number, is the quality of import. From the perspective of the wolves, the number or wealth of

⁶⁸² Machiavelli, *Discourses*, II.19.1.

⁶⁸³ Plutarch, "Lucullus and Cimon," 2:613.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., 2:619.

⁶⁸⁵ Plutarch, "Lucullus," in *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1962), 2:471-611.

the sheep is of little concern. All that matters is the disposition of the citizens: if they seek greatness, they must be warlike.

Further elaborating upon the need for a population with a military disposition, Bacon points towards Machiavelli's *The Discourses*. While Machiavelli is not mentioned by name, the discussion in essay twenty-nine parallels Machiavelli's account of war in Book II, chapter ten of *The Discourses*, titled "Money Is Not the Sinew Of War, As It Is according to the Common Opinion."⁶⁸⁶ Without mention of Machiavelli, Bacon advocates the cultivation of a warlike people:

Neither is Money the Sinewes of Warre, (as it is trivially said) where the Sinewes of Mens Armes, in Base and Effeminate People, are failing. For *Solon* said well to *Croesus* (when in Ostentation he shewed him his Gold) *Sir, if any Other come, that hath better Iron then you, he will be Master of all this Gold*. Therefore let any Prince or State, thinke soberly of his Forces, except his *Militia* of Natives, be of good and Valiant Soldiers. And let Princes, on the other side, that have Subjects of Martiall disposition, know their owne Strength: unlesse they be otherwise wanting unto Themselves. (29.74-84)⁶⁸⁷

Contrary to those who suggest otherwise, money is not enough to ensure political success.

Bacon explains that mercenaries, or soldiers for pay, are not the solution for a state that seeks dominion. The final point of this ordinance is a warning: "As for *Mercenary Forces*, (which is the Helpe in this Case) all Examples shew; That whatsoever Estate or Prince doth rest upon them; *Hee may spread his Feathers for a time, but he will mew them soone after*" (29.87). As Kiernan notes, Bacon continues his reference to chapter ten of Machiavelli's *The Discourses*. Any state that relies upon mercenaries may expand and grow for a time, as does a bird who "*may spread his Feathers for a time*" (29.87); however, similarly to the bird, who eventually loses his feathers, a state that employs mercenaries eventually loses the loyalty of its soldiers and thus its

⁶⁸⁶ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, II.10.

⁶⁸⁷ For a detailed elaboration of this point, see Weinberger, *Science, Faith, and Politics*, 124-146.

territory. Bacon, much like Machiavelli, argues that kings must be in possession of their own arms. Money cannot buy victory, since it cannot buy the loyalty of one's soldiers.

At this point in essay twenty-nine, the parallels between Machiavelli's discussion in Book II, chapter ten of *The Discourses*, "Money Is Not the Sinew of War, As It Is according to the Common Opinion,"⁶⁸⁸ and Bacon's consideration in this essay become clear. Machiavelli's chapter starts with the importance of the subject: he states, "a prince should measure his forces before he undertakes a campaign and govern himself accordingly."⁶⁸⁹ Bacon iterates this same sentiment, albeit not at the very beginning of the essay: he claims that his "Argument, [is] fit for Great and Mightie Princes" (29.33) and that princes typically either overmeasure or undervalue their forces (29.34-37). It is not money, both men concur, that is a sign of greatness.⁶⁹⁰ In fact, in this context, Bacon includes a quotation from Machiavelli: "Neither is Money the Sinewes of Warre, (as it is trivially said) where the Sinewes of Mens Armes, in Base and Effeminate People, are failing" (29.74-77).⁶⁹¹ While money can purchase forces, it cannot guarantee the courage, quality, or loyalty of those soldiers: on this point, Machiavelli goes into greater detail than does Bacon. According to Machiavelli, mercenary forces "by themselves are null and do not help

⁶⁸⁸ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, II.10.147.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., II.20.1.147.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., II.10.1.147.

⁶⁹¹ Machiavelli attributes this sentence to "Quintus Curtius in the war that was between Antipater the Macedonian and the Spartan king, where he narrates that the king of Sparta was necessitated by want of money to fight and was defeated, and that if he had deferred the fight for a few days, the news of the death of Alexander would have arrived in Greece, whereby he would have remained victor without combat." According to Mansfield's editorial footnote, "Quintus Curtius does not make this statement in his account...of the war between Antipater and the Spartan king Agis III, which took place eight years before the death of Alexander the Great, nor does he say Agis was compelled to do battle from lack of money." Ibid., II.10.1.

anything without faithful arms.”⁶⁹² Yet, as Weinberger notes, if one has sufficient loyalty and strength, money is the sinew of war.⁶⁹³ Weinberger further argues that all other conditions being equal, he who has the most money is likely to win the war. Problematically, as Bacon states, overestimation of one’s wealth is not uncommon, since it is difficult to measure both one’s own wealth and strength and those of one’s adversaries.

Even Bacon’s first example, the battle between Darius III and Alexander, is found in Machiavelli. While Bacon attributes Darius’ overestimation of his greatness to his greater number of forces (29.60-65), Machiavelli credits Darius’ overestimation of his greatness to the size of his treasure: Machiavelli “say[s] therefore that not gold, as the common opinion cried out, but good soldiers are the sinews of war; for gold is not sufficient to find good soldiers, but good soldiers are quite sufficient to find gold.”⁶⁹⁴ Further, Bacon’s reference to Croesus, the last king of the Lydians, is also from Machiavelli, who states:

Among the other things that Croesus, king of the Lydians, showed to Solon the Athenian was an innumerable treasure; when he asked how his power seemed to him, Solon replied to him that he did not judge him more powerful for that, since war is made with steel and not with gold, and who had more steel than he did could come take it away.⁶⁹⁵

Bacon echoes this sentiment in essay twenty-nine: “For *Solon* said well to *Croesus* (when in Ostentation he shewed him his Gold) *Sir, if any Other come, that hath better Iron then you, he will be Master of all this Gold*” (29.77-79).

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ On this point, I follow Weinberger, Interpretative Essay, in *The History of the Reign of Henry the Seventh*, by Francis Bacon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 240-241 and fn. 54.

⁶⁹⁴ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, II.10.2.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., II.10.1.

Simply put, the first of Bacon's ordinances demands that a ruler cultivate a "stout and warlike" people (29.56). According to Bacon, there is no alternative, not even mercenary soldiers. The issue is not the size of one's military force, evidenced by the example of the defeats of the Persians and the Armenians; the issue is the disposition of one's people. In order to obtain greatness, one must cultivate a population of wolves and lions, rather than a population of sheep and asses.

Ordinance Two: Taxes and Burdens

Bacon's recommendation against overtaxation is connected to his first ordinance. A people can never be great or warlike if they are subservient or enslaved: "*no People, over-charged with Tribute, is fit for Empire*" (29.100). Although Bacon does not mention sheep in this context, we are reminded of the discussion in the previous section. Sheep are fleeced by shepherds, eventually killed, and eaten. In order to cultivate a populace that is strong and warlike, the people cannot be overburdened by taxes. This ordinance is relatively short and consists predominantly of a biblical reference.

Bacon recounts Jacob's predictions for two of his sons—Judah and Issachar—found in Genesis 49, concerning "that which shall befall [his sons] in the last days."⁶⁹⁶ In the biblical account, Jacob addresses each of his twelve sons, who later become the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. However, Bacon focuses solely on the predictions for Judah and Issachar and, unlike Jacob, presents them as a contrast:

The *Blessing of Judah and Issachar* will never meet; *That the same People or Nation, should be both The Lions whelp, and the Asse betweene Burthens*: Neither will it be, that a People over-laid with *Taxes*, should ever become Valiant, and Martiall. (29.89-93)

⁶⁹⁶ Genesis 49:1.

Judah and Issachar are both mothered by Leah, Jacob's first wife.⁶⁹⁷ Judah is a more central character in the Bible than is his brother Issachar. After Jacob's sons conspire to murder their favored brother, Joseph, it is Judah who suggests that they ought rather to sell him for a profit.⁶⁹⁸ Once Joseph is sold, Judah leaves his father's family, marries a Canaanite woman, and fathers three sons.⁶⁹⁹ His eldest two sons are killed by God, the first for his wickedness and the second for refusing to impregnate his brother's widow, Tamar.⁷⁰⁰ After the death of his own wife, Judah visits a prostitute, who, unbeknownst to him, is actually his son's widow, Tamar. When he discovers that he has impregnated his daughter-in-law, he marries her.⁷⁰¹ From his union with Tamar, twins are born. From the eldest twin, Pharez, descends the line of King David⁷⁰² and the line of Jesus.⁷⁰³ Issachar is not a subject of particular interest in the Bible, nor does he boast such noble descendants as does his brother.

In Genesis 49, Jacob outlines his predictions for his sons, including Judah and Issachar. For Judah, Jacob predicts a life of "praise," victory, and superiority over his brothers.⁷⁰⁴ He foretells of a life of honor, power, and rule.⁷⁰⁵ Jacob compares his son to a lion's cub,⁷⁰⁶ a

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid. 29:35 and 30:18.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid. 37:26-27.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid. 38:1-5.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid. 38:6-10.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid. 38:14-27.

⁷⁰² Genesis 46:12 and Ruth 4.

⁷⁰³ Matthew 1:1-17.

⁷⁰⁴ Genesis 49:8-12.

⁷⁰⁵ 2 Samuel 5:1-3.

⁷⁰⁶ Genesis 49:8-12.

biblical symbol of strength and power,⁷⁰⁷ and sanctifies Judah with all the blessings of the messianic ruler—namely prosperity, symbolized by wine;⁷⁰⁸ beauty;⁷⁰⁹ and “teeth white with milk.”⁷¹⁰ Issachar, in contrast, is not blessed as is his brother: “Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that the rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.”⁷¹¹ For Issachar, Jacob predicts a life of servitude. As Jacob foretells, Issachar and his descendants, unable years later to defend against the onslaught of the Canaanites, submit to forced labor.⁷¹²

In Bacon’s discussion of taxation, we see the recurrence of the images of the ass and the lion.⁷¹³ Bacon’s biblical reference to the two sons of Jacob and their differing lots in life recalls the discussion of the wolves and the sheep from the previous ordinance. As before, Bacon iterates the distinction between the lions and the asses, the strong and the weak. This second ordinance explains how one can enact the first ordinance. If one wishes to nurture a warlike people, one cannot treat one’s people as either subordinate or slavish. Overtaxation, Bacon notes, subjugates a people to their ruler; it breaks their spirit and makes them unfit for greatness.

Throughout this ordinance, Bacon alludes to the requirements for wealth. In order to achieve greatness, a state needs to be rich. Taxation, while increasing the wealth of the gentry

⁷⁰⁷ For example, see Judges 14:18; Proverbs 28:1; and Revelations 5:5.

⁷⁰⁸ Genesis 27:28.

⁷⁰⁹ Psalms 45:2-9.

⁷¹⁰ Genesis 49:8-12.

⁷¹¹ Ibid. 49:14-15.

⁷¹² Judges 1:28-30.

⁷¹³ Weinberger argues that another of Jacob’s sons, “Zebulun, standing between Judah and Issachar, was destined to become the haven of the sea.” Weinberger, *Science, Faith and Politics*, 132.

and the prince, does not increase the overall wealth of a state. In fact, overtaxation not only renders a people less affluent but also ensures that they are not disposed to empire. How, then, does a ruler increase the potential for affluence? Bacon provides a suggestion in essay thirty-four, “Of Riches,” in which he states, “*Invention*...doth cause sometimes a wonderfull Overgrowth in *Riches*” (34.76-78). Manufacture and creation are the foundations of commerce, and thus the basis of wealth, which Bacon discusses in ordinance five. For a state to achieve greatness, it must have a system in place that facilitates invention. While in *Essays* Bacon remains silent on the process of invention, the basis of invention is knowledge and discovery, which, in turn, are both dependent on science. Without overtly stating his goal, Bacon has led us one step closer to the relationship between politics—especially a military politics—and science, and thus one step closer to his Instauration.

Ordinance Three: Controlling the Gentry

Ordinances one and two establish the need for a militaristic people who ought not be overtaxed. The third ordinance addresses those who levy the taxes: the noblemen and the gentlemen. In essay fourteen, “Of Nobility,” and in essay nineteen, “Of Empire” (19.126-141), Bacon warns against the dangers posed by the nobles. Bacon begins the third ordinance with a similar warning: “Let States that aime at *Greatnesse*, take heed how their *Nobility* and *Gentlemen*, doe multiply too fast” (29.102). The problem, Bacon suggests, is one of supply. An increase in the number of the nobility and gentry requires that “the Common Subject, grow to be a Peasant, and Base Swaine, driven out of Heart, and in effect but the *Gentlemans* Labourer” (29.104-106). What does Bacon’s argument mean for a state? An increase in the nobility requires an increase in the number of peasants and servants who serve the nobility, which corresponds to a decrease in the number of common, free subjects. Therefore, while the

commoners are actually capable of being militaristic, they are rendered unfit for war if the gentry is too profuse. That is, the gentry reduces the commoners to sheep.

To further emphasize his point, Bacon uses a silvical image, which begins the dendrological theme in this essay: “Even as you may see in Coppice Woods; *If you leave your staddles too thick, you shall never have cleane Underwood, but Shrubs and Bushes*” (29.106-108). Bacon likens the nobility to a coppice woods, “[a] small wood or thicket consisting of underwood and small trees grown for the purpose of periodical cutting.”⁷¹⁴ If not enough trees are removed,⁷¹⁵ the new growth is diminished, weaker, and less useful. If strong, continual growth is desired, one cannot retain an excessive number of large trees:

So in Countries, if the *Gentlemen* be too many, the *Commons* will be base; And you will bring it to that, that not the hundred poll, will be fit for an Helmet: Especially as to the *Infantry*, which is the Nerve of an Army: And so there will be Great Population, and Little Strength. (29.108-113)

If too much of the population is made subservient to the gentry, the state cannot be militaristic. Therefore, while there may be many sheep, they are not good for anything except being fleeced.

As examples of the above metaphor, Bacon contrasts the British and the French, and later adds the experience of ancient Italy. Although Britain has less territory and a smaller population than does France, it is a superior power: “the *Middle People* of *England*, make good Souldiers, which the *Peasants* of *France* doe not” (29.117). Bacon directs us to his consideration of Britain’s King Henry VII of whom he has “spoken largely in the *History of his Life*” (29.119). In this essay, Bacon encourages the “device of King *Henry* the Seventh” (29.118), which he describes as “Profound, and Admirable” (29.120):

⁷¹⁴ “coppice n.” *OED*, July 23, 2012. Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷¹⁵ “staddle, n.” *Ibid.*: “A young tree left standing when others are cut down. Also...the root or stump of a tree that has been felled.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

In making Farmes, and houses of Husbandry, of a Standard; That is, maintained with such a Proportion of Land unto them, as may breed a Subject, to live in Convenient Plenty, and no Servile Condition; And to keepe the Plough in the Hands of the Owners, and not meere Hirelings. (29.120-125)

King Henry's stratagem is clear: equitable land distribution and the assurance that those who own the land, work the land, a tactic that offers sufficient material comforts and freedom to encourage production and promote loyalty to the state.

The conditions of King Henry's rule, as described by Weinberger, are much like those that Bacon has discussed in this section thus far:

The new king faces a country wracked by political disorder, lawlessness, disease, and war. His coffers need filling. The nobility must be tamed, and the people yearn for peace. His title is uncertain, and many wish to challenge it.⁷¹⁶

In 1485 CE, following his defeat of King Richard III and his victory in the War of the Roses, Henry inherits a country in political turmoil and a treasury depleted by war. Suffice it to say, King Henry's position is tenuous.⁷¹⁷ This ordinance and the previous ordinance are clearly related. In ordinance two, Bacon cautions against overburdening the people with taxes. Related to that point, the reforms of Bacon's King Henry ensure that the nobles remain limited in both number and wealth. Too many nobles burden the people and the state. Those who own the land, rather than servants or mercenaries, ought to work their land and maintain their farms.

Landowners must be maintained in a position of sufficient comfort to thwart rebellion: they must remain sufficiently satisfied so that they accept their position, but not excessively satisfied so that they believe they deserve better. Bacon's recommendation that landowners work the land is connected to the origins of the middle class. In essay twenty-nine, Bacon advocates, based on

⁷¹⁶ Jerry Weinberger, introduction to *Henry VII*, 8.

⁷¹⁷ For a further discussion on this point, Bacon directs his readers to his *Henry VII*.

the example of Henry VII, that the king ought to expropriate power from the nobles and give rights to the people.

Why, here, does Bacon present King Henry VII as an exemplar of proper relations between a king and his gentry, when, in his *History of Henry Seventh*, he praises Henry for the exploitation of the gentry and for his draconian taxation policies? Weinberger makes this point abundantly clear:

he [King Henry VII] willfully enlarged his own estate, which Bacon describes repeatedly as his having greedily amassed an enormous fortune by depressing the nobles and taxing the people. Henry reduced the supposedly natural order of society—clergy, lords, commons, and king—to the two genuinely natural types: princes and peoples. These two types were combined into a nonpartisan and stable whole based on their common interest: the need to acquire and to keep what had been acquired.⁷¹⁸

Bacon commends Henry's ability to exploit both the nobles and the people for his own benefit.

The nobles, church, and people are all subordinated to the power of the king. As a consequence, Henry, according to Bacon's account, extricates the people from the power of both the nobles and the Church.⁷¹⁹ In part, Henry initiates the conditions that give rise to the middle class and establishes the foundations of society based on acquisition and preservation.⁷²⁰

From King Henry VII, then, we learn that there is power in land ownership. To corroborate this lesson, Bacon cites Virgil, the first-century BCE Roman poet, and provides the modern examples of Britain and Poland, countries particularly primed for greatness. Virgil validates Bacon's argument: "And thus indeed, you shall attaine to *Virgils* Character, which he gives to Ancient *Italy*—*Terra potens Armis atque ubere Glebae*" (29.125-128). As Virgil

⁷¹⁸ Weinberger, "Interpretive Essay," in *Henry VII*, 239-240.

⁷¹⁹ Smeaton argues, albeit in the context of "Seditions and Troubles," that "Bacon had long striven," despite attempts by the king and Parliament, "to foster between the First and Third Estates of the realm" a greater "feeling of mutual sympathy." Smeaton, introduction, xiv.

⁷²⁰ Machiavelli, *Prince*, 9, 14, and 16

argues, one should aspire towards a land mighty in arms and fertile in soil.⁷²¹ Britain, and perhaps Poland, Bacon claims, are in a unique political condition, one which is conducive to “*Martiall Greatnesse*” (29.137). Although “the Close and Reserved living, of *Noblemen*, and *Gentlemen*, causeth a Penury of *Military Forces*” (29.138-140), in Britain servants are skilled in the military arts (29.132-137). Bacon recommends that a king foster a sense of loyalty towards the state. In Britain and perhaps Poland—partly as a result of King Henry VII’s legacy, at least in Britain—the servants are free. As a consequence, they have a vested interest in the longevity and prosperity of their respective states. A similar argument may be applied to landowners: when one owns the land that one cultivates, one has an interest in its security. Ties to the state increase loyalty, which, in turn, imbues individuals with both the desire and willingness to protect their state. Through control of the gentry, a ruler is able to cultivate a people fit for military service.

In this respect, Bacon appears to be an advocate of democracy. He has already unseated God as supreme ruler, thereby enervating the power of the Church, and praised Themistocles, who is a noted democrat. Now, he turns his attention to the nobles and weakens the traditional power structure. As a result, the power of the ruler increases, and the potential challenge of the gentry is mitigated. Since Bacon seeks to remove the aristocracy from the political arena, all that remains, according to his account in ordinance three, is the ruler and the ruled.

Ordinance Four: Liberal Naturalization, an Argument about Foreigners

In his fourth ordinance, Bacon addresses the importance of liberal naturalization. This section is divided into two parts: the first contains Bacon’s reinterpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s

⁷²¹ Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York, NY: Random House, 1983), 1.531.

dream as a justification of naturalization; the second includes three historical models of naturalization—Sparta, Rome, and Spain.

Bacon begins by extending the dendrological imagery introduced in the previous ordinance. Here, he turns to the biblical account of a dream attributed to King Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled Babylon from 605 to 562 BCE, conquered Judah and Jerusalem, sent the Jews into exile, and destroyed the First Temple.⁷²² In the biblical account of the dream, described in Daniel 4:10-26, a large tree extends to heaven; it has many leaves and much fruit; under the tree, beasts are sheltered; in its bow, birds are protected.⁷²³ In the dream, Nebuchadnezzar is approached by a heavenly creature that orders him to “Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches.”⁷²⁴ The base of the tree must remain in the earth.⁷²⁵ The dream is interpreted by Daniel as a prophecy of the ultimate decline of the Babylonian Empire.⁷²⁶

Whereas in the Bible, Nebuchadnezzar’s dream represents the destruction of an empire, Bacon interprets the dream as a means for imperial success:

By all meanes, it is to be procured, that the *Trunck* of *Nebuchadnezzars* Tree of *Monarchy*, be great enough, to beare the Branches, and the Boughes; That is, That the *Naturall Subjects* of the Crowne or State, beare a sufficient Proportion, to the *Stranger Subjects*, that they governe. (29.141-145)⁷²⁷

⁷²² For example, see 2 Kings 24:10-11; 1 Chronicles 6:15; Ezra 2:1 and 5:12; Nehemiah 7:6; and Esther 2:6.

⁷²³ Daniel 4:10-12.

⁷²⁴ Ibid. 4:14.

⁷²⁵ Ibid. 4:10.

⁷²⁶ Ibid. 4:19-24.

⁷²⁷ In essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things,” Bacon also discusses lot (58.146).

Bacon explains the dream as a metaphor for naturalization. While Bacon remains silent on the heavenly creature who predicts the destruction of the empire, the trunk of the tree represents monarchy, and the branches represent the people. Bacon employs the dream as evidence that a state must be able to maintain its dominion. The dream, as Bacon interprets it, represents the need for a ratio or proportion between the size of a state—the citizens, the foreigners, the territory, and the economy—and its ability to maintain itself.

Despite Bacon's interpretation, the historical Nebuchadnezzar fails to maintain his treasury and does not practice liberal naturalization. First, as a result of wars of conquest, Nebuchadnezzar depletes the royal coffers. Second, Nebuchadnezzar, once he has conquered Judah and Jerusalem, actively exiles the Jews to Babylon. Roughly thirty years after his reign, the Neo-Babylonian, or Chaldean Empire is destroyed, thereby fulfilling the prophecy in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

According to Bacon, the proportion of a state's natural subjects in relation to foreign subjects must be maintained in a balance. Determination of the ideal ratio requires that one understand the unique condition of one's state (29.32-37). Yet, Bacon believes that "all States, that are liberall of Naturalization towards Strangers, are fit for *Empire*" (29.146). In the previous ordinance, Bacon suggests that for a state to succeed, the people must have a connection with the land. Imperial expansion is accompanied by territorial expansion which, as we have learned from Machiavelli, introduces challenges and difficulties to those who govern. A free and ample immigration policy increases a state's ability to control the conquered population, establishes unity within the state, and likely enhances loyalty.⁷²⁸ That is, if foreign-born and natural-born

⁷²⁸ In *New Atlantis*, Bacon presents a different approach to strangers. The people of Bensalem are isolated, and while they welcome strangers onto their island and offer them comforts, they do not integrate them into society. Bacon, *Atlantis*, 41.

citizens have the same rights, both have an interest in the well-being of the state. Further, a liberal immigration policy establishes a precedent for colonization.

If the goal of a state is to increase and grow, it necessarily requires a strong and militaristic people. Unless a people has both great courage and great policy, or the “greatest Courage, and Policy in the World” (29.148), they will be unable to obtain greatness of empire. Moreover, as a state becomes increasingly affluent, it becomes increasingly desirable to foreign people. History has shown that although “an Handfull of People, can, with the greatest Courage, and Policy in the World, embrace too large Extent of Dominion, it may hold for a time, but it will faile suddainly” (29.147-150). While a small population may conquer a vast territory, they may be unable to retain their dominion: expansion is the first task, but maintenance and prosperity are the goals. This is the challenge: if the population of a state is too low in relation to its empire, when its dominion reaches a certain size, as we have learned in essay nineteen, it will not be able to manage or defend its territory; alternately, if the population of a state is too high in relation to its empire, it will be unable to sustain the demands of its populace. As evidence, Bacon presents three examples of immigration policies: the Spartans’, the Romans’, and the Spaniards’.

Bacon begins with the Spartans, “a nice People, in Point of Naturalization; whereby, while they kept their Compasse, they stood firme; But when they did spread, and their Boughs were becommen too great, for their Stem, they became a Windfall upon the suddaine” (29.151-154). Spartan immigration policy is restrictive: the Spartans do not admit foreigners; and while their population remains stable and sustainable, they do not send out colonies. However, when their population increases to a size that is no longer sustainable, they do send out colonies. In

order not to break the branch, they send out colonies to create new populations of Spartans.⁷²⁹

This policy serves a twofold purpose: first, it ensures the health of Sparta by sustaining the population; second, it ensures that Sparta grows, through periodic and organized colonization.

In the second example, Rome, in contrast to Sparta, practices an unprecedented policy of immigration:

Never any State was, in this Point, so open to receive *Strangers*, into their Body, as were the *Romans*. Therefore it sorted with them accordingly; For they grew to the greatest *Monarchy*. Their manner was, to grant Naturalization (which they called *Jus Civitatis*) and to grant it in the highest Degree; That is, Not onely *Jus Commercii*, *Jus Connubii*, *Jus Haereditatis*; But also *Jus Suffragii*, and *Jus Honorum*. And this, not to Singular Persons alone, but likewise to whole Families; yea to Cities, and sometimes to Nations. Adde to this, their Custome of *Plantation of Colonies*; whereby the Roman Plant, was removed into the Soile, of other Nations. And putting both Constitutions together, you will say, that it was not the *Romans* that spread upon the *World*; But it was the *World*, that spread upon the *Romans*: And that was the sure Way of *Greatnesse*. (29.154-169)

The Romans extend the same rights to naturalized citizens that are afforded to domestically born citizens. Naturalized citizens are given the rights of trade, marriage, inheritance, voting, and honors. The Romans naturalize entire cities and countries. In this way, the Romans are able to ensure the loyalty of naturalized citizens and thus increase the power and dominion of the state.

The Roman policy serves as a foil to the previous example of the Spartan policy: the Spartans do not naturalize foreigners, as they do not require them to maintain their state. The Romans, to the contrary, absorb foreigners and enlist them in the maintenance of their dominion. As such, the Roman state practices active immigration and a liberal naturalization policy to fulfill its requirements. However, the Roman immigration policy is two-pronged: the second Roman practice, much like the Spartan policy, includes colonization. In addition to naturalization of

⁷²⁹ “windfall, n.” *OED*, July 24, 2012: “a tree or branch, or a number of trees or branches; *spec.* (chiefly *U.S.*) a heap or tract of fallen trees blown down by a tornado.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

foreign citizens, the Romans also sent colonies to spread their culture, language, and religion to other countries.

The Spanish, Bacon posits, employ a unique approach that allows them to “containe so large Dominions, with so few Naturall *Spaniards*” (29.170). In fact, Bacon argues that the greatness of Spain exceeds that of both Sparta and Rome. The Spanish do not “Naturalize liberally” (29.174). Unlike the Romans, the Spanish do not extend citizenship and its commensurate rights to foreigners. However, unlike the Spartans, they employ foreigners in their military. Bacon claims that they “*employ, almost indifferently, all Nations, in their Militia of ordinary Soldiers; yea, and sometimes in their Highest Commands*” (29.175-177). In order to ensure the loyalty of foreign-born soldiers and mitigate the dangers posed by mercenaries, the Spanish create incentives to serve: all military men, regardless of whether they are citizens or foreign born, are eligible to receive the same honors and exert the same responsibility within their army.

The examples of Sparta, Rome, and Spain suggest that an immigration and naturalization policy must fulfill the needs of each specific state. There is not a single model of naturalization that can be applied to all situations: the Spartans prevent all immigration and instead compel their own citizens to emigrate; the Romans, in addition to programmatic colonization, liberally naturalize; and the Spanish do not allow liberal immigration, yet provide foreign soldiers with the same honors and opportunities as citizen soldiers. Given these alternatives, Bacon strongly advocates liberal policy. A state must maintain a ratio so as to ensure that its population’s needs are fulfilled and its dominion secured. There must be an appropriate balance between population, material requirements, and territory. Regardless of the specific policy employed by a

state, the goal must be to extend the greatness of the state's dominion, ensure the comfort of domestically born citizens, and secure the fidelity of foreign-born individuals.

Ordinance Five: Production and the Vulgar Natives

The fifth ordinance, in many respects, is a corrective to the first ordinance—the imperative for a “stout and warlike” people (29.56)—and to the fourth ordinance—the imperative for a liberal immigration and naturalization policy. Taken together, these two ordinances may result in two distinct, albeit related, challenges: first, the requirement for a warlike people may leave a deficiency in the manufacturing and artisan trades; second, a liberal naturalization policy may cause tension between domestic and foreign-born inhabitants over access to jobs, distribution of money, and cultural mores. Further, as ordinance five addresses manufacture and production and thus tacitly includes the requirements for innovation, it extends the subtle discussion of science introduced in the second ordinance. Therefore, at the start of the fifth ordinance, two questions arise: how does a leader balance the economic and material requirements of the state with the ordinance for a militaristic people? and how does a leader popularize a liberal immigration policy? The fifth ordinance, the first of the two central ordinances, attempts to solve these problems. A third question also arises in this context which, despite not being addressed in this ordinance, serves as a subtext for Bacon's argument: what is the connection between production and innovation?

Building an empire requires citizens of “a Military disposition” (29.182), as Bacon makes clear in ordinance one. Not all people possess such a disposition, nor can all citizens be employed in arms. In fact, an empire needs citizens who practice “*Sedentary, and Within-doore Arts, and delicate Manufactures* (that require rather the Finger, then the Arme)” (29. 180-

182).⁷³⁰ As Faulkner notes, here, Bacon addresses the “sophisticated economy.”⁷³¹ Bacon explains that two challenges arise when one’s people possess warlike natures: first, they “are a little idle” (29.183); and second, they “love Danger better than Travaile” (29.184). Warlike people do not want to perform manual labor;⁷³² they are trained to fight. The difficulty is clear: a military population cannot fulfill all of the needs and requirements of a state. The solution, Bacon contends, is to maintain balance. Bacon emphasizes that in regard to their military dispositions, these warlike men must not “be too much broken of it, if they shall be preserved in vigour” (29.184). These warriors must be permitted to remain warriors; they ought not be expected to assist in the manual arts or service industries. What then is the balanced solution to this predicament?

According to Bacon, slavery is the most obvious solution (29.186-188). However, as Bacon quickly admits, “that is abolished, in greatest part, by the *Christian Law*” (29.189). Regardless of its impossibility as a viable option, Bacon explores the idea of a class “completely divested of freedom and personal rights,” who are “the property of, and entirely subject to, another person.”⁷³³ In this way, a state can maintain a militaristic population and still fulfill its economic, mercantile, domestic, and social necessities. As examples of states that have grown great as a result of a slave class, Bacon mentions “*Sparta, Athens, [and] Rome*” (29.187); Spain

⁷³⁰ “within-door, n.” Ibid., December 8, 2012: “that which is, or those who are, indoors.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷³¹ Faulkner, *Progress*, 192.

⁷³² “travail, n.” *OED*, December 8, 2012: “Bodily or mental labour or toil, especially of a painful or oppressive nature; exertion; trouble; hardship; suffering.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷³³ “slave, n.” Ibid.: “One who is the property of, and entirely subject to, another person, whether by capture, purchase, or birth; a servant completely divested of freedom and personal rights.” Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

is noticeably absent from this list. In these states, slaves labored in the production of goods and in other less desirable tasks of society.⁷³⁴ After the abolition of slavery, different means must be sought. Bacon does not make an argument against slavery on a moral level; instead, he acknowledges that it has been abolished and then turns to alternative solutions.

In a world that, according to Bacon, now condemns slavery, what is the solution to this problem of manufacture? Bacon's proposal is twofold. First, a state must "leave those Arts chiefly to Strangers, (which for that purpose are the more easily to be received)" (29.190-192). In ordinance four, Bacon recommends a policy of liberal naturalization, whereby immigrants and conquered peoples are given rights and privileges equal to those of natural-born citizens. A question, in that context, arises concerning the employment and care of these new citizens: a challenge with most immigration concerns job allocation and social services. Since the "*Sedentary*, and *Within-doore Arts*, and delicate Manufactures" (29.180), despite being necessary, are not considered desirable for military people, foreigners can be employed in these areas to fulfill the needs of all citizens yet not take jobs from natural citizens. Employment of foreigners in manufacture that is useful to the state, Bacon avers, increases the likelihood of their acceptance by the domestic-born population.

Second, Bacon turns to the "vulgar Natives" (29.192), those ordinary citizens who do not possess militaristic natures.⁷³⁵ These citizens, Bacon recommends, ought to be contained, or at least "the principall Bulke" (29.192) of them, in one of three occupations: *Tillers* of the Ground; *Free Servants*; and *Handy-Crafts-Men*, of Strong and Manly Arts, as Smiths, Masons,

⁷³⁴ "rid, v." Ibid.: "To accomplish or get through (work of any kind); to clear *off* or *away*." This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷³⁵ "vulgar, adj." Ibid.: "Holding an ordinary place in a certain class; esp. of soldiers." A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Carpenters, &c; Not reckoning Professed Souldiers” (29.189-196). Since men of this nature are not suited to soldiering, they are to be employed as farmers; servants who are free (not slaves); or laborers who work with their hands in noble, rather than debasing trades.

In ordinance five, Bacon acknowledges that not all citizens in a state are predisposed to have militaristic natures. Those “vulgar Natives” (29.192) must be occupied in a way that is beneficial to the state. The employment that Bacon recommends for the “vulgar Natives” (29.192) is the same as that which he recommends for the foreigners. Therefore, the foreigners and some domestically born citizens may potentially be in competition for the same jobs. The suggestions in ordinance five, then, do not completely solve the problem for either foreigners or the “vulgar Natives” (29.192). In fact, Bacon’s proposed solutions highlight the political tensions between natural-born citizens and immigrants, one of the greatest challenges that faces an empire.

The first five ordinances, as we now learn, are preparative. They are, Bacon now admits, “but *Habilitations* towards Armes” (29.200). These ordinances help to cultivate a capacity for greatness in a state by increasing the propensity for a state to act militarily.⁷³⁶ In order to prepare for greatness, a state must ensure that it has a warlike people who are not overburdened by taxes or subjugated by the nobility. The nobility, Bacon avers, must not be allowed to become either so large or so powerful that they exploit the people or attempt to overthrow the king. A state must ensure that foreigners and conquered peoples develop an interest in the success of the state and are loyal to the sovereign. Last, a state must have a commercial or manufacturing industry sufficient to sustain the needs of the people. Bacon advocates a large,

⁷³⁶ “habilitation, n.” Ibid.: “The action of enabling or endowing with ability or fitness; capacitation, qualification.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as the first example of this usage.

cosmopolitan, commercial republic. In the next five ordinances, Bacon explains how actually to mobilize a state.⁷³⁷ In preparation for the sixth ordinance, he rhetorically asks, “And what is *Habilitation* without *Intention* and Act?” (29.201) The sixth ordinance finally provides an answer to the question that Bacon introduces in essay eleven: what ought the goal of a state to be? The answer, which is not unexpected, provides a rationale for the warlike people cultivated in the first ordinance. The goal of a state, Bacon explains, is arms.

Ordinance Six: Profession of Arms

In the sixth ordinance, Bacon turns from those characteristics that enable or endow a state with the predisposition to be militaristic, to those actions that actually create a militaristic state. In this section, Bacon explains the ways by which a state can actually achieve this goal: “above all, for *Empire* and *Greatnesse*, it importeth most; That a Nation doe professe Armes, as their principall Honour, Study, and Occupation” (29.197-199). If a state is desirous of greatness, it must publicly acknowledge its intention towards arms. The state must be dedicated to military greatness. Arms, then, must be understood ideologically as some understand religion. The entire state must be dedicated to the pursuit of war: honors must be allocated for military skill, accomplishment, and dedication; and education must be directed to military history, preparedness, and practice.⁷³⁸ The purpose of the first ordinance, the imperative for a warlike people, is clear in this context: a state that is dedicated to war must have ideological unity and a national identity founded on military conquest and preparedness.

⁷³⁷ As Faulkner notes, “The first five show how to produce a nation that can be mobilized, the last five, how to produce the attitudes and incentives for mobilizing.” Faulkner, *Progress*, 185.

⁷³⁸ “occupation, n.” *OED*, December 8, 2012: “The action of taking or maintaining possession or control of a country, building, land, etc., esp. by (military) force; an instance of this; the period of such action; (also) the state of being subject to such action.” A passage from Bacon’s *Consideration of a War with Spain* is cited as an example of this usage.

Bacon's recommendation for constant preparedness in war echoes Machiavelli's discussion in chapter fourteen of *The Prince*:

a prince should have no other object, nor any other thought, nor take anything else as his art but that of war and discipline; for that is the only art which is of concern to one who commands of war and its orders and discipline.⁷³⁹

Machiavelli is clear: a prince ought to have no object or concern other than war. Bacon extends Machiavelli's recommendation: preoccupation with war, Bacon posits, ought not be the concern of only the prince; rather, the entire state must be dedicated to the military arts—through education, honor, and occupation. Whereas Machiavelli isolates the prince from the people, Bacon involves the people in this project, thereby ensuring their commitment to the military success of the state.

As evidence of the success of this policy, Bacon lists eleven states, or empires, that embody this ethos of military preparedness: the Romans, the Spartans, the Persians, the Macedonians, the Galls, the Germans, the Goths, the Saxons, the Normans (29.201-211), the Turks, and the Spaniards (29.209-211). Bacon contends that all of these states, while they “professed Armes” (29.219), flourished and “attained that *Greatnesse* in that Age” (29.220) and, when they no longer maintained a military people, they “hath growen to decay” (29.222).

Here, Bacon reminds us that it is impossible to succeed at a task which one does not attempt. From these examples, Bacon claims, “it is so plaine, *That every Man profiteth in that hee most intendeth*, that it needeth not to be stood upon” (29.211-213). Greatness is not a condition that simply befalls a state; greatness requires effort. As such, “no Nation, which doth not directly professe Armes, may looke to have *Greatnesse* fall into their Mouths” (29.213-215).

⁷³⁹ Machiavelli, *Prince*, 14.

The entire state, therefore, must always be ready to mobilize and be prepared to sacrifice for the military glory of the empire.

Ordinance Seven: Legal Enforcement

In the previous ordinance, Bacon maintains that “for *Empire* or *Greatness*, It importeth most; That a Nation doe professe Armes, as their principall Honour, Study, and Occupation” (29.197-199). In ordinance seven, Bacon explains how this goal can be accomplished. That is, he turns to the means of obtaining these ends:

For a State, to have those Lawes or Customes, which may reach forth unto them, just Occasions (as may be pretended) of Warre. For there is that Justice imprinted, in the Nature of Men, that they enter not upon Wars (whereof so many Calamities doe ensue) but upon some, at the least Specious, Grounds and Quarells. (29.223-228)

Bacon recommends that a state develop laws—understood as formal legal ordinances—or customs—understood as regnant practices and accepted behaviors—that sanction war. However, the preparedness for war does not require that the war for which the state prepares be just. Bacon does not distinguish between proper, or just wars, and wars fought on spurious grounds. The essential requirement is that a state have a mechanism, legal or conventional, that authorizes war. Why do we need these justifications? Bacon has already introduced this idea in essay nineteen in his argument for the “lawfull Cause of Warre” (19.85). According to Bacon, most people demand that war be undertaken only when necessary. During war, “whereof so many Calamities doe ensue” (29.227), there is so much destruction and death that the carnage must be validated; there must be a purpose, reason, or justification for death and mayhem. Men, Bacon notes, are imprinted by justice, which, for most, inhibits the acceptance of war solely for the sake of war. According to Bacon, human beings require justifications for war, “at the least Specious, Grounds and Quarells” (29.228). In order to accept war, we require an identifiable cause, reason,

or ground,⁷⁴⁰ even if these explanations are based on pretext or appearance. The reasons for war, Bacon argues, need not be true.

As evidence, Bacon refers to the Turks and the Romans, two of the empires that he earlier cites as examples of states who profess war as their primary occupation. He begins with a brief discussion of the Turks and then turns to a much longer consideration of the Romans. According to Bacon, “The *Turke*, hath at hand, for Cause of Warre, the Propagation of his Law or Sect; A Quarell that he may alwaies Command” (29.228-230). The sultan of the Turks always has a justification for war:⁷⁴¹ jihad, “[a] religious war of Muslims against unbelievers, inculcated as a duty by the Qur'an and traditions.”⁷⁴² Therefore, the sultan, Bacon posits, derives his war power from the Qur'an and the mandate to disseminate Islamic laws and beliefs to the infidels.⁷⁴³ By employing this rationale for military action, the sultan may always control when to undertake a war and against whom.⁷⁴⁴ Not all states have recourse to religious doctrine to substantiate war. Therefore, a secular state needs an ideological justification for war, one that is acceptable to the populace.

⁷⁴⁰ “quarrel, n.” *OED*, December 8, 2012: “In extended use: a cause, reason; a ground.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷⁴¹ For example see, Francis Bacon, *An Advertisement Touching a Holy War*, in *Works*, 7:11-36; and Lerner, “The Jihad of St. Alban,” 5-26.

⁷⁴² “jihad, n.” *OED*, February 26, 2013.

⁷⁴³ “sect, n.” *Ibid.*, December 9, 2012: “A system of belief or observance distinctive of one of the parties or schools into which the adherents of a religion are divided; sometimes *spec.* a system differing from what is deemed the orthodox tradition; a heresy. A body of persons who unite in holding certain views differing from those of others who are accounted to be of the same religion; a party or school among the professors of a religion; sometimes applied *spec.* to parties that are regarded as heretical, or at least as deviating from the general tradition.” A different passage from *Essays* is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷⁴⁴ In essay three, “Of Unity in Religion,” Bacon also discusses Jihad (3.114-116).

The Romans value territorial increases and believe that their generals deserve honors for such increases (29.231-234).⁷⁴⁵ War is esteemed by the Romans. However, in order to instigate a war, an argument in favor of territorial expansion does not suffice. According to Bacon, expansion—including territorial, legal, and cultural expansion—is an insufficient justification for war. While expansion may be the true justification for war, in order to convince the populace of the necessity of war, other reasons must be employed.

Bacon now addresses rationales for war.⁷⁴⁶ His first recommendation involves two connected points: a state must be cognizant of any potential causes for dispute, such as sovereignty issues, economic or trade transgressions, or political slights or missteps; relatedly, a state, once provoked, must not hesitate to respond or retaliate (29.234-237). The second point concerns the relationship between a state and her allies (29.237-243). A state must be ready for action and prepared to proffer assistance to its allies.⁷⁴⁷ This recommendation recalls Bacon's previous consideration, in essay nineteen, of the potential dangers posed by neighboring states (19.63-85). As advice, Bacon suggests that a state must be constantly aware of the potential justifications for war, including incursions against both its own sovereignty and the sovereignty of its neighbors. Bacon concludes, "Let it suffice, That no Estate expect to be *Great*, that is not awake, upon any just Occasion of Arming" (29.252-254). A state, therefore, must educate its people to accept military action. This acceptance, Bacon avers, is founded upon customary

⁷⁴⁵ "extend, v." *OED*, December 9, 2012: "To cover an area; to stretch out in various directions. Of immaterial things: To have a certain range or scope." This passage is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷⁴⁶ "pretend, v." *Ibid.*: "To put forward as an assertion or statement; to allege, assert, contend, claim, declare; *esp.* to allege or declare falsely or with intent to deceive." This passage is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷⁴⁷ "prest, adj. and adv." *Ibid.*: "Ready for action or use; at hand; prepared; in proper order." Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

mechanisms and formal laws designed to sanction war. Once a precedent for acceptance has been established, a people becomes conditioned to concede to the military ends of the state.

Ordinances Eight and Nine: The Body Politic: Military Fitness and Nautical Strength

In the eighth ordinance, Bacon likens the state to a human body. If the human body is left to languish, it slowly decays; so, too, according to Bacon, does the body politic. Bacon notes that “No Body can be healthfull without *Exercise*, neither Naturall Body, nor Politique: And certainly, to a Kingdome or Estate, a Just and Honorable Warre, is the true *Exercise*” (29.255-257). For Bacon, the activity that ensures a state’s fitness is war.⁷⁴⁸

How, then, does a state correctly exercise for war? A foreign war, rather than a civil war, is the more desirable form of conflict (29.258-261). Bacon contrasts civil and foreign wars: “A Civill Warre, indeed, is like the Heat of a Feaver; But a Forraine Warre, is like the Heat of *Exercise*, and serveth to keepe the Body in Health” (29.258-260). During a civil war, men fight against their neighbors, relatives, and friends and become weak and womanish,⁷⁴⁹ since their conduct and behavior fall into “moral decay.”⁷⁵⁰ In contrast, during a foreign war, men fight with their friends, neighbors, and family against an external foe, which increases camaraderie and loyalty to the state. In order to be prepared for war, a state requires an exercised army, one that is strong and experienced. Further, since the cost of an active army is extensive, a state must direct its funds towards military preparations.

⁷⁴⁸ Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 139-145.

⁷⁴⁹ “effeminate, v.” *OED*, July 30, 2012: “To become womanish; to grow weak, languish.” This passage is listed in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷⁵⁰ “corrupt, v.” *Ibid.*: “of moral decay.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Throughout this essay, the emphasis on Themistocles alludes to the importance of the seas. In the ninth ordinance, Bacon expresses the need for a state to command the seas: “To be Master of the *Sea*, is an Abridgement of a Monarchy” (29.270). Command of the seas, according to Bacon, is the embodiment of monarchy.⁷⁵¹ Strong states have equally strong naval forces. As examples of naval battles that have had decisive political consequences, Bacon cites “The Battaile of *Actium*” (29.276) and “The Battaile of *Lepanto*” (29.277). At Actium in 31 BCE, the final battle between the Roman Emperor Octavian and the combined forces of Marc Antony, who formerly ruled with Octavian, and the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra “decided, the Empire of the World” (29.276); at Lepanto in 1571 CE, the Holy League defeated the fleet of the Ottoman Empire and “arrested the Greatnesse of the *Turke*” (29.277). Bacon claims that in battles at sea, as opposed to those on land, a commander may participate in “as much, and as little of the Warre, as he” wants (29.282). In a land battle, an army is at the mercy of geography and the opposing forces. However, in a sea battle, both forces have an equivalent battle site and are on equal waters. If one is attacked on land, one is compelled to fight. On the seas, however, one may sail away: retreat at sea is more effective than is retreat on land.

In this context, Bacon, once again, makes a tacit reference to Themistocles, who, as discussed previously, devises Athens’ naval armament. Mastery of the sea, Bacon explains, has unique benefits. Whoever rules the sea is supreme:

Whereas those, that be strongest by land, are many times neverthelesse in great Straights. Surely, at this Day, with us of *Europe*, the Vantage of Strength at *Sea* (which is one of the Principall Dowries of this Kingdome of *Great Brittain*) is Great: Both because, Most of the Kingdomes of *Europe*, are not meereley Inland, but girt with the *Sea*, most part of their Compasse; And because, the Wealth of both *Indies*, seemes in great Part, but an Accessary, to the Command of the *Seas*. (29.283-291)

⁷⁵¹ “abridgement, n.” Ibid.: “A person who or thing which epitomizes or embodies something, a compendium; a representation in miniature; the essence or distillation of something.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Naval command, Bacon argues, imbues a state with freedom and opportunity.⁷⁵² Further, mastery of the sea opens trade routes and exposes opportunities for economic, religious, military, and political expansion. This passage in the essay is reminiscent of Thucydides' account of Themistocles in *The Peloponnesian War*:

He saw, as I think, that the approach by sea was easier for the King's army than that by land; he also thought the Piraeus more valuable than the upper city; indeed, he was always advising the Athenians, if a day should come when they were hardpressed by land, to go down into the Piraeus, and defy the world with their fleet.⁷⁵³

Themistocles knows that mastery of the sea can free a state from the imprisonment of land. The sea, as is clear from these passages, permits a state to have relatively unrestricted movement. Since a naval commander can choose when to engage and when to sail away, the state maintains more control over the sea battles that it chooses to fight than it does over the land battles. Moreover, as has been mentioned previously, battles fought at sea provide a more even field of combat than do battles on land. At sea, despite differences in their design, their weaponry, and the skill of the mariners, all of the boats are at the same level and subject to the same weather and currents (now, of course, there are submarines). A state that dominates the sea also dominates the transportation routes that connect it to distant countries. As such, the sea opens increased opportunities for travel, trade, and empire. Sea strength is one of the great British endowments⁷⁵⁴ and one of the most effective precursors to greatness.

⁷⁵² “compasse, n1., adj., and adv.” Ibid., January 20, 2013: “Designing, skillful devising, ingenuity; passing into the bad sense of craft, subtlety, cunning.” A different passage from Bacon's corpus is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷⁵³ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian*, 1.93.7.

⁷⁵⁴ “dowry, n.” *OED*, December 13, 2012: “A ‘gift’ or talent with which any one is endowed by nature or fortune: an endowment.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Ordinances eight and nine ensure that a state is prepared for military activity, should the necessity arise. Command of land and sea are essential to military greatness. Military preparedness and activity guarantee, Bacon argues, that in both times of peace and of actual war a people are ready to fight. In the eighth and ninth ordinances, Bacon alludes to an answer to the question that is posed as a result of ordinance two: what is the relationship between a military politics and science? In essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things,” which has previously been discussed in this dissertation, Bacon presents the three primary vicissitudes of war: location, weapons, and conduct (58.104-108). Each of these three vicissitudes is, in fact, an innovation. Increases in knowledge, technological development, and production capabilities change the manner in which wars are fought and fuel innovation. That is, war is a great impetus to human ingenuity. A state that maintains a program of military preparedness must train and arm its soldiers. Outfitting the ranks necessitates that the military machine be supported by an intellectual, engineering class—who design, test, and modify weapons and military accoutrements—a production class—who actually build the weapons and technologies—and an economic class—who find the wealth to support all aspects of the war effort. Clearly, a military politics demands constant innovation and invention, which are founded on knowledge and science.

Ordinance Ten: Honor and Reputation

The final ordinance addresses issues raised in ordinance one and ordinance six, where Bacon posits that war be the “principall Honour, Study, and Occupation” of a state (29.198). The tenth ordinance highlights the importance of cultivating a population with warlike natures and explains how to encourage militaristic pursuits. Essay fifty-five, “Of Honour and Reputation,” identifies public acknowledgement and public recognition of achievements and

excellences as essential to a robust state. In order for such incentives to be effective modifiers of particular behaviors—in this case, to increase the population’s commitment to military service—people must believe, first, that the pursuit is worthy and noble and, second, that it is appreciated and rewarded. The tenth ordinance acknowledges the demands of honor and reputation that incentivize military service.

The human aspiration for honor and reputation is an example of the potency of human desire. Since men desire accolades and prestige, a ruler can exploit this fact to control his citizens. In military states, where citizens are asked to sacrifice their own lives for the good of the country, the emphasis on distinction is especially important. A state must educate its citizens to believe that honor in battle, including death, is the epitome of civic greatness. In so doing, a state creates a culture of war that is based on courage, honor, reputation, and sacrifice.

The ancients understood the importance of honor and glory: “The *Warres of Latter Ages*, seeme to be made in the Darke, in Respect of the Glory and Honour, which reflected upon Men, from the *Warres in Ancient Time*” (29.292-294). In ancient times, military men were treated with admiration and deference, and war heroes were venerated. In contrast, Bacon argues that the treatment of soldiers by his contemporaries pales in comparison (29.294-299). Once reserved for soldiers,⁷⁵⁵ knighthood is now indiscriminately bestowed on both soldiers and civilians, with no necessary connection to military excellence, or even military service. Further, while injured soldiers are provided with hospital care, fallen soldiers are rarely given elaborate, honorary funerals.⁷⁵⁶ Whereas the ancients honored warriors and encouraged military

⁷⁵⁵ “chivalry, n.” Ibid., July 30, 2012: “Knighthood as a rank or order.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷⁵⁶ “maimed, adj. and n.” Ibid.: “Of a person, limb, etc.: mutilated, crippled, injured.” This passage is cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

occupations, Bacon's contemporaries expect their soldiers to serve without the commensurate rewards. That is, in Bacon's time, men are expected to fight and die for their countries, despite the absence of the honor and reputation befitting a soldier.

The ancients' approach to death and honor in war, particularly seen in the customs of the Spartans, contrasts the moderns' approach as is evident in Bacon's example. Bacon alludes to the Spartan saying, "Come back with your shield—or on it."⁷⁵⁷ As opposed to the moderns, the ancients, Bacon claims, understood the necessities of war:

But in Ancient Times; The *Trophies* erected upon the Place of the Victory; The Funerall Laudatives and Monuments for those that died in the Wars; The Crowns and Garlands Personal; The Stile of Emperor, which the Great Kings of the World after borrowed; The Triumphes of the Generalls upon their Returne; the great Donatives and Largesses upon the Disbanding of the Armies; were Things able to enflame all Mens Courages. (29.299-306)

The ancients, Bacon argues, recognized the importance of the spectacle of war: the monuments; the funeral dirges; and the honors for the soldiers, generals, and emperor. Such rewards inspire courage. If a state expects soldiers to risk their lives to protect its dominion, the state must encourage a warlike populace; to that end, a state must honor its soldiers with both accolades and gifts. Soldiering and the military arts must be acknowledged as indispensable services to the state. War is dangerous and deadly. Therefore, a state must provide its soldiers and its civilians with incentives to justify their sacrifices. If one might die in the protection of one's state, one must believe that one's death has purpose and reason, that one's memory will be honored, and that one's family will be protected and compensated. One must put the needs of one's state above one's own need to live. That is, one must have a reason to fight that supersedes potential death.

⁷⁵⁷ "scutcheon, n." Ibid., December 13, 2012: "Used for: A shield." Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

Bacon recognizes the Romans as having had “one of the Wisest and Noblest Institutions, that ever was” (29.308). Three characteristics of Roman policy are particularly effective: first, “Honour to the Generall” (29.309); second, “Riches to the Treasury out of the Spoiles” (29.310); and third, “Donatives to the Army” (29.311). War ought to be of economic benefit to a state. Since the wealth of the state is increased through successful wars, the general ought to be respected for his contribution to the state. Such an incentive provides a clear motive for the general to win wars. As has been discussed previously, war is a costly endeavor. In Rome, military conquests significantly augment the wealth of the state. Therefore, there is a clear monetary benefit for war and a reasonable justification for subsequent wars. Bacon has already discussed the danger of a discontent military (19.152-157). The Romans reward their military sufficiently to ensure their loyalty. They provide their soldiers with honor and riches, but also with a justification for their deaths: soldiers in Rome are honored with accolades and gifts; immortalized in song and verse; and, as a result, aware that their deaths serve a greater purpose.

In this context, Bacon distinguishes between a monarchy and a republic (29.311-318). A monarchy must have a different approach to honor and reputation than that of a republic. In a hierarchical political system, organized under a king who rules supreme, a king must be cautious of when and in which manner he honors his generals. A monarch, as discussed in essay nineteen, suffers unique challenges and dangers. One of the specific threats to monarchical power is the general who controls the military. A general who has loyal forces and the respect of the people may be able to unseat a king. As such, the king must be particularly cautious when he distinguishes generals for their excellence. Therefore, a ruler must be tempered in his allocation of honors. A ruler must be moderate, so as to ensure continued fealty, and tempered, so as to ensure that the honor received has sufficient value to inspire loyalty; a reward of either

insufficient or excessive value may lead to insult, anger, and revolt. A balance, then, must be established between an excess and a penury of honors. Accolades and prizes must be awarded with sufficient frequency to provide an incentive to fight, yet not so often as to devalue the award or provide a general with cause to overstep his place.

By distinguishing between monarchies and republics, Bacon reminds his readers that there are many different ways to allocate honors and many different types of political structures. The consistent thread is the requirement for honor: men need to be recognized for their worth, their sacrifice, and their contribution to the state (55.4-25). This essay concerns military and political honors. There are, however, many ways to honor men, depending on the type of regime. In military regimes, honors are allocated based on prowess in war; in commercial regimes, honors are allocated based on wealth; and in scientific regimes, honors are allocated based on discovery and invention.⁷⁵⁸ The types of honors and the ways in which they are bestowed are the result of the characteristics that the regime believes are important; simultaneously, the types of honors and the ways in which they are bestowed help to shape the culture of the regime and reinforce its ideology.

As should be evident, contrary to Faulkner's suggestion, these ten ordinances are not strict rules of conduct. They are not catechisms for Bacon's statecraft. Rather, as has been discussed throughout this dissertation, they are recommendations—essential points to consider in seeking political greatness. Bacon's ten ordinances, if employed correctly, enhance a state's likelihood of greatness. However, what is effective in one state under one set of circumstances is

⁷⁵⁸ At this point in the argument, we confront a theoretical question that is beyond the scope of this dissertation: as Bacon understands the relationship, is politics intended to be subordinate to science, or science to politics? Abbot definitively answers this question: "The *State*, high as it stood in Bacon's mind, was subordinate to Science." Abbot, introduction, xxvii.

unlikely to work either for the same state under different conditions, or for a different state under the same circumstances. Bacon's profusion of historical examples make this point evident. In politics, Bacon suggests, there are no absolutes and no catechisms for success. Unlike in religious orders, which have rules, instructions, and laws for many aspects of life, in politics there are no clear programmatic rules for behavior. For this reason, politics is an art, and for Bacon, according to this account, the high art of politics is war. A state organized around military pursuits is more likely to achieve greatness than one that is not.

Part IV: Summary

Bacon concludes essay twenty-nine with a reminder of the importance of imperial greatness. Humans, he argues, are frail and limited by our mortal existence (29.319-321). The "little Modell of a *Mans Body*" (29.320) cannot be increased beyond its genetic design. As discussed in essay two, "Of Death," our bodies are weak and mortal. We procreate to ensure our genetic legacies. In politics, we can extend beyond our mortal existence: "in the Great Frame of *Kingdomes*, and *Common Wealths*, it is in the power of Princes, or Esates, to adde Amplitude and *Greatnesse* to their *Kingdomes*" (29.321-323). Men of great ambition have opportunities to survive beyond their mortal lives: territorial expansions, cultural contributions, and lasting policy initiatives all stand as testaments to their legacies.

Man's inability to "*adde a Cubite to his Stature*" (29.320), as Bacon reminds his readers, is a line from the scripture. Bacon's challenge to religion has been discussed throughout this dissertation. Essay twenty-nine's call for imperial expansion provides a clear alternative to religion. A political ideology directed towards imperial expansion, military greatness, and earthly honor challenges regnant religious doctrine. In a biblical passage that Bacon appropriates, Matthew discusses the importance of unity of purpose:

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon....
Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?⁷⁵⁹

Matthew understands that men cannot serve God and be unlimited consumers simultaneously. That is, man cannot fulfill the requirements of religion and the commercial expectations of the state at the same time. As has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter of this dissertation, there is a tension between the demands of religion and the demands of secular humanism. One must choose a master. Whereas Matthew recommends divine faith, Bacon recommends politics. In this apparently innocuous passage, Bacon attacks religion at its core. A man must choose to serve either God and receive benefits in the next life (if there is a next life), or his state and receive benefits in this life. The demands of religion are not amenable to the requirements of earthly greatness. As such, Bacon's attack on religion is most evident in his call for a military politics.

SUMMARY: PROGRESS AND MILITARY PREPAREDNESS

These three essays clearly reveal the benefits of the political life over the religious life. Bacon's critique of religion, analyzed in the previous chapter, culminates in his discussion of the political life. At least as practiced during Bacon's time, religion and politics provide competing accounts of human nature and the good life. As a consequence, they challenge each other, and the result is political discord. In the previous chapter, religion is revealed to be an inadequate solution for human longing. In this chapter, politics is presented as an alternative. The political life provides man with meaning and understanding, coupled with the promise of worldly greatness. For a certain type of ambitious man, the political life certainly stands as a viable alternative to the religious life.

⁷⁵⁹ Matthew 6:24-27.

Yet, Bacon presents politics as base, ugly, and soul-crushing. In these three essays, politics is depicted as the realm of contradictions: liberty and servitude, power and impotence, as well as excellence and ignobility. Politics affords the potential for greatness, with a strong likelihood of misery and failure. Political men are not guaranteed a life of success and honor. In fact, political men exist in a world of constant turmoil and change. They wait to be unseated by younger, more ambitious, more charismatic leaders.

In *Essays*, Bacon does not offer another option for ambitious men. However, in *New Organon*, Bacon ranks human desires “to distinguish three kinds and degrees of human ambition.”⁷⁶⁰ This tripartite order helps us better understand the options that are available:

The first is ambition of those who are greedy to increase their personal power in their own country; which is common and base. The second is the ambition of those who strive to extend the power and empire of their country among the human race; this surely has more dignity, but no less greed. But if anyone attempts to renew and extend the power and empire of the human race itself over the universe of things, his ambition (if it should so be called) is without a doubt both more sensible and more majestic than the others’.⁷⁶¹

As Bacon orders these types of ambition according to their worth, the lowest type of aspiration is the pursuit of domestic glory; the second type of aspiration is the pursuit of imperial glory, the ostensible topic of these essays; but, the greatest type of aspiration—the type of glory that is “both more sensible and more majestic than the others”—is the pursuit of science. Through science, man can achieve mastery “of the human race” and “over the universe.” For Bacon, this is the true aim of human aspiration. Through the “arts and the sciences,” man is able to sate ambition and achieve true greatness.⁷⁶²

⁷⁶⁰ Bacon, *Organon*, I.129.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

⁷⁶² Ibid.

Tobin Craig, in an article that explicitly concerns *New Atlantis*, argues that the great danger with the Instauration and innovation is the effect that it has on politics.⁷⁶³ Science and innovation challenge regnant power structures and threaten the existing order. In order for the Instauration to be possible, the political realm must not only be receptive but must be supportive. That is, Bacon needs to encourage a politics that is in service to the ends of the Instauration.

Faulkner, in his interpretation of essay twenty-nine, asks a rhetorical question: “Does Bacon conceal the problem so as hardly to acknowledge that an enlightened nation’s faith in continual progress is an illusion?”⁷⁶⁴ If the response to Faulkner’s question is yes, the implications are profound: Bacon’s entire project, the Instauration, is based on an illusion. Continual progress, and thus the ongoing betterment of man, is not possible. Bacon’s project, then, is another lie—perhaps even a noble one—that serves an undisclosed political purpose. If Faulkner is correct, the next logical question concerns the nature of Bacon’s political purpose.

However, if Bacon believes that progress is not an illusion, what is the purpose of his rhetoric? The unstated alternative, introduced in the introduction to this dissertation and highlighted in the conclusion, is the life of science. Bacon’s political writing can be read as an allegory for the Instauration and as a primer for the scientific way of life. The “new and warlike faith,”⁷⁶⁵ identified by Faulkner, is the ideology of the Instauration. The stout and warlike people who ought to be cultivated by a state are the type of people who fight for scientific progress, defend intellectual freedom, and demand technological innovations. The type of

⁷⁶³ Tobin L. Craig, “On the Significance of the Literary Character of Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* for an Understanding of His Political Thought,” *The Review of Politics* 72 (2010): 214.

⁷⁶⁴ Faulkner, *Progress*, 193.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 194.

citizens and leaders that Bacon recommends in *Essays* are the type of individuals who can most benefit a state dedicated to the pursuit of science.

As discussed previously in this dissertation, in essay fifty-eight, “Of Vicissitude of Things,” Bacon provides an explanation of why a state ought to cultivate a warlike people: “In the *Youth* of a *State*, *Armes* doe flourish: In the *Middle Age* of a *State*, *Learning*; And then both of them together for a time; In the *Declining Age* of a *State*, *Mechanicall Arts* and *Merchandize*” (58.177-180). That is, the military arts are the precursor to the arts and the sciences; and the arts and sciences are the foundations of the mechanical arts. In order to cultivate a state dedicated to learning, one must first establish a state that is accustomed to arms. Bacon’s command that a state “professe Armes, as their principall Honour, Study, and Occupation” (29.198), is but a habilitation towards learning and science; it is a primer. If progress is the true end of Bacon’s project, why the subterfuge?

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, Bacon's *Essays* is an exercise in analyzing the human condition and assessing the natures of men. By design, each essay is diagnostic, while the text as a whole is formative. Essay one begins with a question—"What is Truth" (1.3); essay fifty-eight, "Of Vicissitude of Things," concludes with an invitation to study the "turning Wheelles of Vicissitude" (58.185) through Bacon's other "Writing" (58.187). Bacon expects that some of his readers, as they experience the teachings in *Essays*, will come to love learning and choose to embark on further study with him.⁷⁶⁶ Bacon begins with men as they are. At the start of *Essays*, many men, including many of his readers, prefer "the Masques and Mummeries" (1.20), and "Candlelights" (1.21). Bacon warns his readers that truth may "leave the Mindes, of a Number of Men, poore shrunken Things; full of Melancholy, and Indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves" (1.28-30). Bacon concludes with men as they can be. At the end of his text, Bacon encourages us to step out of the half-lights and into the "Naked, and Open day light" (1.19). Bacon invites us to exit the cave;⁷⁶⁷ he expects that some of his readers will become partisans of the Instauration. Through the process of reading the text, Bacon prepares his readers to be receptive to the Instauration and the idea of progress—to embrace the ever-changing horizons of existence—as a way of life. *Essays* is a primer for those individuals who will support and propagate the Instauration. How has the process of reading *Essays* prepared us for the Instauration and encouraged us to be partisans of progress?

⁷⁶⁶ As Bacon states in essay fifty-eight, "Of Vicissitude of Things": "it is not good, to looke too long, upon these turning Wheelles of *Vicissitude*, lest we become Giddy. As for the *Philology* of them, that is but a Circle of Tales, and therefore not fit for this Writing" (58.184-187). "philology, n." *OED*, May 3, 2013: "Love of learning and literature." Bacon is not cited in the *OED* as an example of this usage.

⁷⁶⁷ Plato, *Republic*, 514a-517b.

Bacon identifies two essential points that regard the human condition. In the first essay, Bacon claims that the highest good, the best life available to us, is a life dedicated to the pursuit of truth (1): such a pursuit does not require that we always be truthful, or that we act in accord with the truths that we know; rather, Bacon posits that to desire, pursue, and know more about the world are all essential components of a good life. In essay fifty-eight, Bacon reminds us neither to take anything for granted, nor to be content with life as it is, since all things are subject to vicissitude and change (58): progress does not mean that nothing is knowable; rather, Bacon argues that we must prepare for change and be adaptable to new and unforeseen circumstances. Love of truth and acceptance of change are two characteristics that Bacon attempts to foster in *Essays*.

Preeminence of truth and acceptance of change are the two fundamentals that Bacon believes we need in order to learn and know about the world. Although love of truth and acceptance of change are the very foundation of Bacon's account, he does not identify an epitome or archetype of an ideal human. Unlike many of his intellectual predecessors, Bacon does not propagate an ideal—likely unattainable—type of man.⁷⁶⁸ He describes men as they are and can be.⁷⁶⁹ Bacon is the first thinker in the western liberal tradition to propose that mankind has the power systematically to overcome nature, including our physical bodies. Progress and mastery—the tenets of the Instauration—are unique to Bacon's thought. Unlike Machiavelli, Bacon does not believe that mankind must accept the limitations imposed on us by nature and

⁷⁶⁸ In this respect, Bacon is clearly not in agreement with the ancient account of human nature.

⁷⁶⁹ In *The Advancement of Learning*, Bacon praises Machiavelli for his practical understanding of human nature: "We are much beholden to Machiavel and others that write what men do, and not what they ought to do." Bacon, *Advancement*, II.xxi.9. For a detailed discussion of Bacon's passage in this context, see Faulkner, *Progress*, 59 and fn. 18.

our physical bodies. Bacon's project promises to make nature and men other than they are. The Instauration is nothing less than a complete reconstruction of the horizons of existence.

Mastery of opinion is essential to Bacon's success. Bacon must convince men—all different types of men—of the possibility and desirability of the Instauration. Human nature must be commanded, manipulated, and molded. Much like the natural variation in plants, there are many different types of human natures—"all Sorts of Persons" (48.30): for example, there are "Meane Men" (51.11), "Great Men" (15.239 and 51.12), "Amusing Men" (26.30), "Craftie Men" (47.23 and 50.16), "Bold Men" (12.50 and 47.22), "Faire spoken Men" (47.23), "Cunning Men" (22.18 and 22.117), "Able Men" (14.47 and 36.59), "Honest" men (36.65), "Simple Men" (50.17), "Men of a Plainer Sort" (47.15), "Wise Men" (9:115; 12.22; 17.24; 22.22; 40.43; 50.17; 52.51; and 54.58), "Glorious Men" (54.58), "Weake Men" (22.8), "Men of great Judgment" (12.42), "foolish rich covetous Men" (8.18), "Martiall Men" (10.53), "Ambitious Men" (36.7; 36.13; 36.24; and 36.46), and others. Further complicating classification are variations in rational capacities: for example, there are men of "Quality and Judgement" (53.14), "Trust and Judgement" (49.27), "Weaknesse of Humane Judgement" (58.76), and men of Bad Mindes, crafty minds, and corrupt minds (49.5-6). There are also variations in natural predispositions: for example, there are men of "Solide and Sober Natures" (54.31), "Divine Nature[s]" (27.9), "Blessed Natures" (16.37), weak natures (such as "Children, Women, Old Folkes, Sicke Folkes") (57.23), and "Tender and Delicate Persons" (57.31). In addition, variations occur amongst ages (30.9 and 42). Men respond differently to situations, stimuli, and other men as a result of these factors and a host of other conditions: for example, studies (50.16-18), opportunities (52.51), dress (52.51-53), flattery (53), glorious men (54.58), factions (51.51), suspicions (31.7), justice (49.21-25), suitors (49), negotiations (47), anger (57.55), action (42.10), honor, praise, and

religion—including religious controversies, prophecies, atheism, superstition, and faith. Each type of man, or combination of types—since hybrid natures are possible—handles different circumstances and different men in varying ways, is vulnerable to different weaknesses, possesses different strengths, is susceptible to different types of flattery and flatterers, and therefore requires different educations. *Essays* reveals the endless variation in human beings. In fact, even men of different types are each unique, since no two men have all the same experiences. Bacon understands that not all men are the same, nor can all men be made to be the same.

In spite of the infinite human variations, there are a number of human characteristics that all men, except those men who suffer from sickness of the soul (mental illnesses), have in common. First, all men love themselves more than they love other men (4.16-17); as such, men act in accord with their own interests. Second, men are not senselessly cruel (4.14); unless they are ill, men do not purposefully cause others to suffer unnecessarily. Third, all men act with purpose “to purchase [them]sel[ves], Profit, or Pleasure, or Honour, or the like” (4.15); human beings are rational actors who strive towards a particular goal. Fourth, most men are honor loving (55 and 54); we are ambitious (36) and thus susceptible to flattery (48; 49; and 53). Fifth, when necessary, men act unjustly to accomplish their desired goals (1; 20; 22; 26; 38; 48; and 53).

From this very practical foundation, there are a number of general lessons—diagnostic procedures—that are presented throughout the essays: first, it is essential to gather as much information as possible; second, it is necessary to articulate a clear goal or outcome prior to acting; third, one must consider with whom one is dealing and the context in which one is operating; fourth, one must carefully consider one’s options; and fifth, one must avoid acting in

the heat of anger or frustration—clear, rational, methodical action is the most effective behavior when one hopes to obtain a specific goal. This is not to say that one will always be successful in one's attempt. In fact, *Essays* contains numerous examples of prudent men who fail to see the true nature of a situation or person and who suffer the consequences.

A rank order of men is essential to Bacon's thought: some men are better and others worse at certain tasks, while some men are better and others worse at obtaining their desired ends. We must learn to make accurate assessments about ourselves and other men in order to influence other men and accomplish our goals. This task is complicated by our abilities to lie (1) and hide our true natures (38). That said, all men who wish to participate in the affairs of men—that is, those who wish to interact with other men—must learn to navigate the vicissitude of human types by first learning to identify their own desires and the desires of other men. The goal of Bacon's study of human nature and the purpose of the lessons contained in *Essays* are to help man better learn to understand himself and his desires and, in doing so, better learn to understand other men and their desires, in order to become a more prudent analyst and a more rational political actor.

BACON'S CRITIQUE

Before the advent of science, which has recast the parameters of human existence, religion and politics were the two primary domains wherein men interacted with other men. Together, they composed the public sphere. The realm of religion is explicitly concerned with men's souls, while the realm of politics is explicitly concerned with men's bodies. Between these two realms was the realm of learning, which is explicitly concerned with men's minds. The distinction between these three explicit realms was not hard and fast, but fluid. Each of these three realms posited a worldview and purported to be concerned with the condition of man.

At their foundations, Bacon argues, the respective worldviews of these three powers were not only incorrect and premised on ignorance about the world, but also designed to augment the power of those who ruled.⁷⁷⁰ In *Essays*, Bacon is most concerned with religion and politics—practical human concerns.

For most people, according to Bacon's account in *Essays*, the world is a hostile and cruel place, and life is an unpleasant and painful experience (1.25-30). Our ignorance about the world exacerbates our discomfort and fuels our fearfulness. People are naturally fearful of those things that are not understood (2.3-5), whether related to nature, ourselves, or other men. In an attempt to fill in the gaps between what we understand and what we do not, we rely on stories and imaginings that offer an account of what we do not understand and that provide purpose for our lives (1.25-35). In *Essays*, Bacon does not address the sources of our ignorance, a subject into which he delves in other works; rather, here his concern is the effect of ignorance on our practical existence.

Lack of knowledge and lack of power compel men to rely upon those who provide explanations of the world, imbue our lives with purpose and meaning, foster community, and have the power to ensure our safety. We come to trust those who claim to have concern for our psychological and physical well-being. In itself, this dependence is not a problem: for most people, such reliance is a necessity. These opinion leaders, however, can be dangerous on two levels: first, if the tales that they tell or the protection that they provide prove false; and second, if their directives result in a call to violence (3 and 58). Moreover, for those who aspire to place,

⁷⁷⁰ In *The Advancement*, Bacon makes clear that he is delivering learning “from the discredits and disgraces which it hath received, all from ignorance; but ignorance severally disguised, appearing sometimes in the zeal and jealousy of the Divine; sometimes in the severity and arrogancy of the Politiques; and sometimes in the errors and imperfections of the learned men themselves.” Bacon, *Advancement*, I.i.1.

life can be dangerous: first, they are constantly subject to plots and intrigues by those who wish to replace them (11; 15; 29; and 51); second, they are subservient to their political superiors (11); and third, they are beholden to those whom they purport to serve (11). As Bacon notes, “It is a strange desire, to seeke Power, and to lose Libertie; Or to seeke Power over others, and to loose Power over a Mans Selfe” (11.6). Throughout history, there have been countless competing accounts of the world and even more supposed protectors of the weak. Bacon recommends caution when one is confronted with a supposed truth-teller or protector; at the same time, Bacon warns those who claim to have knowledge to be mindful of both personal and public dangers and advises those who hold power to ensure that their positions are not usurped.

In *Essays*, Bacon presents politics as an undesirable occupation yet a moderate means to fame and reputation. Politics provides men of ambitious natures a potentially precarious, and certainly unguaranteed, forum for actions. As discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation, political men may experience great successes, or dire failures. Based on Bacon’s account, at least two things are clear: political life is certainly dangerous, and political men are certainly not to be trusted. During Bacon’s time, politics, war, and perhaps the Church were the only outlets for ambitious men to gain notoriety: the divines, politiquers, and men of learning held power. In *Essays*, Bacon alludes to the alternative that he makes explicit in his other writings: the life of science—that is, the life promised by the Instauration—provides an opportunity for ambitious men to obtain greatness.

Two issues of import generally discussed with respect to Bacon’s view of religion are Bacon’s own piety, or lack thereof, and his understanding of the relationship between religion and politics. A conclusion in respect to the first point, namely Bacon’s personal piety, is nearly impossible to reach based on the evidence in *Essays*: Bacon remains silent on his personal

comportment towards God. With respect to the second point, however, Bacon's account of religion in *Essays* is subject to varying interpretations. For each potential benefit that religion facilitates, Bacon presents a commensurate danger. Bacon's discussion of religion in *Essays* is based on his account of human nature. Therefore, his account of religion must mediate between that which is in the best interests of the individual and that which is in the best interests of the state.

For most men, given the mysteries of our existence, religion provides an account of the unknown, a sense of community, and an impetus for good behavior (3). Consequently, religion is one of the most powerful means to control men: "For those Orbs rule in Mens Minds Most" (58.72). On the one hand, Bacon argues that religion explains those aspects of our environment and our lives that are otherwise inexplicable; on the other hand, the religious account of the world is not formed on rational grounds, nor subject to rational assessment. Religion may be used to bring people together, yet it may also be used to drive people apart. It provides an otherworldly impetus for good behavior, yet it can also be used to justify heinous and unconscionable acts. Religion provides comfort, yet it can also be used to exploit and manipulate adherents.

According to Bacon, religion is required to overcome our "Humane Frailty" (16.83).⁷⁷¹ Bacon does not specify, in this context, precisely which frailty he has in mind; however, based on his account of human nature, he is likely referring to our general natural weaknesses. In order "to exalt it selfe" (16.83) and rise above our infirmities, human nature requires the belief in God. Bacon appears to be affirming the divinity of Christ. If man, however, were otherwise able to rise above our "Humane Frailty," we would not require belief to overcome our deficiencies.

⁷⁷¹ Bacon states that godlessness, or a disbelief in God, "is in all respects hatefull, so in this, that it depriveth humane Nature, of the Meanes, to exalt it selfe, above Humane Frailty" (16.81-83).

This is the crux of Bacon's argument. In a world that is inexplicable, where we live in shadows and half-lights, religion and God serve an essential role. In the world promised by the Instauration, wherein man understands nature and is able to manipulate nature better than he can during Bacon's time—a world not discussed in *Essays*—human beings, Bacon suggests, might not require religion.

Based on the account in *Essays*, Bacon presents a rank order of belief. In one who has the proper constitution, disbelief is the appropriate comportment: "*Atheisme* leaves a Man to Sense; to Philosophy; to Naturall Piety; to Lawes; to Reputation; All which may be Guides to an outward Morall Vertue, though *Religion* were not" (17.12-15). For a true atheist, disbelief permits the freedom to be circumspect; it allows the disbeliever the opportunity to forge his own path: religion is not required for living a good life, if one is the right type of man. From the perspective of the state, a true atheist is harmless: "*Atheisme* did never perturb *States*" (17.15). Since true atheists do not proselytize (16), there is no reason for a true atheist to disrupt a regime on religious grounds.

In contrast to atheism is superstition: that is, incorrect belief. In Bacon's rank order, atheism is more desirable than superstition:

It were better to have no Opinion of *God* at all; then such an Opinion, as is unworthy of him: For the one is Unbeleefe, the other is Contumely: And certainly *Superstition* is the Reproach of the Deity. (17.3-6)

According to Bacon, it is better not to believe in God than to believe incorrect things about God. Superstition is one of the primary causes of religious unrest and thus political instability. When touted, contradictions in religious accounts of the world raise the danger of sectarian violence. In fact, "The greatest *Vicissitude* of Things amongst *Men*, is the *Vicissitude* of *Sects*, and *Religions*" (58.71).

Religion is, Bacon contends, the most powerful idea that can be used to influence men. Despite its importance, Bacon's account of religion is one of the most contentious and confusing aspects of his writing. From the outset, he acknowledges the powerful role of religion in uniting people. Historically, religion, as it is and has been practiced, is a stronger source of disunity than of unity. Therefore, we are left with two options: no religion, or modified belief and practice. Bacon suggests that for the wisest, most self-sufficient man, atheism is the proper comportment. However, the universal removal of religion would likely render the rest of mankind hollow, impious, immoral creatures. Bacon implies that since faith cannot be excised, it must be modified. At the end of *Essays*, religion is treated as a danger that must be enervated in order to be made subservient to politics and thus useful to mankind in our pursuit of knowledge. A state's religion, as we have seen in *Essays* and as has been discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, must be based on toleration, wherein theology is weak and ritual strong.

Bacon's account of politics in *Essays* is not technical; it is practical. Bacon does not present a blueprint for a regime, or a preference for a specific government structure; rather, he presents practical advice for political actors, regardless of the particulars of a given regime. As in the case of his discussion of human nature and religion, Bacon advocates moderation in the case of politics. *Essays* warns against the perils of political life: political life is dangerous (11 and 19). Political actors are typically insincere and fawning (53), concerned with their reputations (55), vain (54), and subject to praise and flattery (53). The political realm is a quagmire of "Candlelights" (1.21). Further, when one has reached political greatness, one may experience a fall from grace. Based on Bacon's account, it is unclear why anyone would desire political greatness. Those who choose to participate in men's business must learn to assess other men accurately. Bacon succinctly describes the purpose of learning:

All Practise, is to *Discover*, or to *Worke*. Men *Discover* themselves in Trust; In Passion; At unawares; And of Necessitie, when they would have somewhat done, and cannot finde an apt Pretext. If you would *Worke* any Man, you must either know his Nature, and Fashions, and so Lead him; Or his Ends, and so Perswade him; Or his Weaknesse, and Disadvantages, and so Awe him; or those that have Interest in him, and so Governe him (47.38-46).

In order to command men, it is necessary to know each man's nature and manners, his desires, his strengths and weaknesses, and those of his friends and colleagues. Politics demands knowledge of human nature and human desires. Thus, Bacon teaches political men to develop comprehensive knowledge of the human condition—that is, knowledge of men's affairs and desires.

Bacon discusses political situations, rather than presents an account of regime types. While he acknowledges that many men desire political affluence, Bacon's view of political life is decidedly modern, rather than ancient. Political life, in this text, is neither high nor lofty; it is the realm of human action and interaction that is most necessary and, at the same time, potentially most debasing (11). One who has political aspirations must be prepared to commit unethical and ignoble actions as may be required to reach high levels of political influence and affluence. Further, once one has achieved political heights, one must constantly be concerned that one's political position may be lost.

BACON AND MACHIAVELLI

Bacon's relationship to Machiavelli is the subject of considerable scholarly attention. Michelle Tolman Clarke divides the scholarly literature into two contradictory camps. On the one hand, she notes, scholars such as Peltonen, Box, and Zagorin, "have argued that Bacon partakes of a republican tradition inherited from Machiavelli and traceable to Cicero, a tradition

that was currently under attack.”⁷⁷² On the other hand, she identifies scholars such as White, Faulkner, Kennington, and Weinberger, who draw “a more careful distinction between Bacon and Machiavelli.”⁷⁷³ Tolman Clarke does not mention Rossi, whom Faulkner credits with “reviving among historical scholars an awareness of Bacon’s slipperiness and of his problematic Machiavellianism.”⁷⁷⁴ As is evident from the preceding chapters, the analysis in this dissertation falls into the second camp.

According to Kennington and restated by Faulkner, Bacon is the only writer of his time who explicitly mentions Machiavelli.⁷⁷⁵ In *Essays*, Bacon acknowledges Machiavelli by name five times, in four essays (13.28-33; 15.44-47; 39.7-17; and 58.40-46). Each reference is to the *Discourses*. In the first two references, Bacon explicitly praises Machiavelli; in the last two references, Bacon appears to disagree with Machiavelli, but, on consideration, in fact agrees. White notes that Bacon does “appea[r] to agree with Machiavelli’s formulation that political philosophy ought to concentrate on what men do and not on what they ought to do.”⁷⁷⁶ Bacon seems in accord with Machiavelli in regard to the dangers of Christianity and the need to temper the power of the Church. He also seems to agree that men can and should make their own

⁷⁷² Michelle Tolman Clarke, “Nebuchadnezzar,” 367. See also Peltonen, “Politics and Science,” 279-306; Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought, 1570-1640* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Peltonen, “Bacon’s political philosophy,” 283-310; Box, “Bacon’s moral philosophy,” 260-282; and Zagorin, *Francis Bacon*.

⁷⁷³ Tolman Clarke, “Nebuchadnezzar,” 367. See also Howard B. White, “Bacon’s imperialism,” *American Political Science Review* 52 (1958): 470-89; Faulkner, *Progress*, 183-200; Richard Kennington, “Bacon’s Humanitarian Revision of Machiavelli,” in *On Modern Origins: Essays in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Pamela Kraus and Frank Hunt (Toronto, ON: Lexington Books, 2004), 57-77; and Jerry Weinberger, *Science, Faith, and Politics*, 121-145.

⁷⁷⁴ Faulkner, *Progress*, 17. See also Rossi, *Magic to Science*, 82-116.

⁷⁷⁵ Faulkner, *Progress*, 60, fn. 4. See also Kennington, “Humanitarian Revision,” 58.

⁷⁷⁶ White, “Francis Bacon,” 367.

fortune (at least to the best of their respective abilities). Similarly to Machiavelli, Bacon is clear that men sometimes must do immoral acts to accomplish their desired aims.⁷⁷⁷ Bacon learns much as concerns the nature of man from Machiavelli and, like his predecessor, adopts a pragmatic understanding of human nature. Nevertheless, Bacon, by no means, reiterates Machiavelli's teaching. First, Bacon holds a more positive perspective on human nature than does Machiavelli. According to Bacon, men are essentially good, but act unjustly with purpose (1; 4; and 13). Second, as Kennington, White, Faulkner, and Tolman Clarke argue, Bacon's project hinges on the importance of *philanthropia*, which has been discussed in detail in the second chapter of this dissertation.⁷⁷⁸ Third, Bacon's teaching is part of a synoptic and benevolent project. And fourth, as Kennington identifies, Bacon is the first thinker to propose the relief of man's estate as the goal of both politics and individual striving.⁷⁷⁹

Moreover, unlike Machiavelli and more in line with the ancients, Bacon advocates the path of moderation, or the middle road.⁷⁸⁰ According to Bacon, mediating the extremes of political life requires a moderate and balanced path. In this respect, Bacon owes much to the ancients. This moderation, which Bacon argues is essential to prudential political behavior, is drawn directly from Aristotle.⁷⁸¹ Although we cannot overcome our natures (13 and 38), we can be educated and habituated. Bacon understands men to be relatively benevolent, albeit self-

⁷⁷⁷ Leo Strauss, "Niccolo Machiavelli," in *History of Political Thought*, third edition, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 301.

⁷⁷⁸ Tolman Clarke, "Nebuchadnezzar," 368; White, "Bacon's Imperialism," 485; Kennington, "Humanitarian Revision," 73; and Faulkner, *Progress*, 140-141, 62-63, and 262-263.

⁷⁷⁹ Kennington, "Humanitarian Revision," 57.

⁷⁸⁰ Strauss, "Niccolo Machiavelli," 367: "Machiavelli saw the origins of the good political order in extremes, in violence and crime."

⁷⁸¹ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1109a,

interested. Finally, the type of knowledge that Bacon promises to provide in *Essays* is akin to Socrates' erotic knowledge. In fact, Socrates claimed to know nothing, except erotic knowledge.⁷⁸² However, if one actually has erotic knowledge—that is, knowledge of precisely what one desires and what other men desire—one possesses a synoptic understanding of what motivates men and, therefore, what can be used to motivate men. If one knows that which another man wants, one can have power over him. This is the type of knowledge that Bacon promises his readers in *Essays*: knowledge of men's affairs and men's desires.

Most fundamentally, Bacon differs from Machiavelli with respect to the human condition. While human mastery of nature has roots in Machiavelli's thought—Machiavelli does discuss the diversion of rivers—he does not provide a systematic account of the potentials for human progress.⁷⁸³ Bacon genuinely believes that human existence can be other than it is: scarcity and political power, two fundamental themes in Machiavelli's thought, become irrelevant to Bacon. Scarcity can be overcome through human ingenuity, and political power can be supplanted by scientific power.

ESSAYS AND THE INSTAURATION: A BENEVOLENT PROJECT

At its foundation, the Instauration is a benevolent project. Bacon makes clear that the purpose of the Instauration is the betterment of mankind. The mastery of nature is for “the relief of man's estate”⁷⁸⁴ for the “benefit of the human race.”⁷⁸⁵ In *Essays*, Bacon outlines the parameters of moral, religious, and political behavior, presumably in order to serve as the

⁷⁸² Plato, *Plato's Symposium*, trans. Seth Bernardete (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2001), 177d-e and 198d.

⁷⁸³ Catherine Zuckert, “Machiavelli's Popular Prince” (paper presented at the Michigan State University Political Philosophy Colloquium, East Lansing, Michigan, March 12, 2013).

⁷⁸⁴ Bacon, *Advancement*, I.v.11.

⁷⁸⁵ Bacon, *Instauration*, 3.

foundation for and support of his Instauration: *Essays* is foundational, since Bacon subtly reshapes regnant moral, religious, and political opinions to facilitate the restructuring of existence that is required for the Instauration; *Essays* is supportive, since the Instauration requires popularity to foster the growth of science and make progress a continual way of life. *Essays* reshapes men to be receptive to Bacon's project.

Bacon's Instauration is designed to instigate the improvement of the human condition. Since Bacon's grand project is intended to elevate man above his current circumstances, Bacon must provide an account of the moral and mental—that is the religious, political, and psychological—conditions of man. Bacon claims that *Essays* contains his most coherent and practical account of the moral and mental conditions of man. The Instauration is both a founding and a refounding.⁷⁸⁶ In *Essays* we learn that the Instauration requires men who are thoughtful, considerate, generous, unafraid, courageous, and benevolent. Such men make reasoned judgments and take care of themselves. They are not cruel, but they are self-sufficient. It is these men, a distinctly modern type of man, who, Bacon believes, will support the idea of science and progress.

It is true that there is no overt discussion of science in *Essays*, but why should there be? First, in order to advocate for science and support innovation, every man need not be versed in science and scientific method. In fact, as we have seen from modern life, most of us demand the benefits of science despite not being ourselves scientists. Most individuals who support innovation and accept progress understand little about the actual process of doing science or the

⁷⁸⁶ Jerry Weinberger, introduction in *New Atlantis and The Great Instauration*, by Francis Bacon (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1989), vii.

scientific knowledge that makes possible the development of amenities.⁷⁸⁷ Second, Bacon has an extensive corpus of recurrent themes, concerns, and quotations. There is no reason to assume that the lack of science in *Essays* indicates either a deficiency in the text or affirms the text's peripheral nature. Moreover, there is no reason to expect Bacon to discuss science in a work about practical human concerns. In fact, Bacon acknowledges the limitations of *Essays* and indicates that he is cognizant of its connection to his other work (58).

We can see that the entire text—its content and its chiasmic structure—is designed to teach his readers how to think about themselves, the world, and other men in order to become wise readers, thoughtful individuals, and partisans of progress. Bacon's discussion in *Essays* concerns rank ordering, information weighing, and decision making. Progress, mastery, and adaptability are unique to Bacon's thought. Prior to Bacon, thinkers believed that man had limited power to affect nature: the parameters of human existence were, for the most part, deemed fixed; and human beings were believed to be subject to the conditions imposed by nature and physiology. Scientific study and scientific experiments permit man an opportunity to alter our physical environment and our physical selves. That is, as Bacon reasoned almost five-hundred years ago, with scientific helps and ever-increasing knowledge, man is able to overcome our human frailty and master both ourselves and our environment.

The way in which we think about the world has been radically changed by Bacon and, as a result of his contributions to our intellectual tradition, continues to change. The modern world is one of shifting horizons. As wise readers, we learn to be more adaptive and less afraid of those things that we do not understand. In this way, we become prepared for progress and prepare ourselves for progress. Bacon's *Instauration* and the teachings in *Essays* not only

⁷⁸⁷ Carl Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1996).

ushered in a new period for mankind, but also have stood the test of time. Bacon was correct in his assessment of human nature. *Essays* is of lasting benefit, not only to Bacon scholars and academics, but also to the general population at once. *Essays* is a primer: Bacon has designed the text to prepare us for the age of progress. Bacon's *Essays* provides insight into our natures and our desires; helps us to overcome our frailty, ignorance, and fear; and frees us to embrace the endless possibilities of the modern age.

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