A RECONSIDERATION OF BACON'S *ESSAYS*

A RECONSIDERATION OF BACON'S ESSAYS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis begins by examining various critical opinions of Bacon as a literary figure. He has been both praised for the clarity of his writing and his ability to synthesize disparate realities and ridiculed for his expediency and his lack of imagination. During the twentieth century critics have championed both viewpoints. We have examined this controversy and attempted to point out the limitations of each argument. In particular, we have considered the Essays since this work has been selected by critics as representative of Bacon's positive and negative qualities. The Essays pose several problems because Bacon chose to write them in three different versions, 1597, 1612, and 1625. Most people have noted the various additions and emendations in the editions but few scholars have discovered a pattern or rationale for the development of the Essays. Stanley Fish, however, has put forth an interesting and provocative thesis. He suggests that the changes, in the form especially, are analogous to Bacon's inductive, scientific method. We have considered carefully his theory and then proceeded to examine the audience or readership of Bacon's Essays. It has been commonly accepted that the Essays, like many other common-

place books, were written for the growing middle class. Our thorough investigation of the Essays shows, however, that in a number of essays changes in the content focuses them on the affairs of state and particularly on the duties of the King. Moreover, we note that the changes in form reveal a use of techniques common in grammar school exercises. We suggest, then, that Bacon wrote his Essays in response to the social and political needs of the era, and further, that the new essays appealed both in content and form to an elite audience rather than an exclusively middle class group. In so doing, we have offered several comments about Bacon's literary abilities in general and we have introduced a new idea regarding the development of the Essays specifically. We hope that this thesis will be of value to future Bacon scholars.

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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

CHAPTER I

THE CRITICAL FOUNDATIONS

Few scholars of the seventeenth century can work at length in this field without substantial consideration of the writings of Francis Bacon. He was, for better or worse, a man driven by a "Faustian" urge to acquire and record knowledge. He has contributed to philosophy, science, law, politics, ecclesiastical affairs, history, and literature. As Bush has noted, Bacon "was a man of the Renaissance who, unlike many of his critics never lost sight of the whole range of knowledge".[1] One recalls that Bacon, himself, once asserted to his cousin, Lord Burghley, ". . . I have taken all knowledge to be my province".[2] Certainly, a survey of Bacon's titles: Essays; Meditationes Sacrae; Of Colours of Good and Evil; The Proficience and Advancement of Learning; De Sapientia Veterum; Novum Organum; Historia Naturalis et Experimentalis; The History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh; De Augmentis Scientiarum; Apophthegms; A Declaration of the Practises and Treasons Attempted and Committed by Robert Late Earl of Essex; Sylva Sylvarum;

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[1] Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century (1st ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1945), p. 261.

[2] Francis Bacon, Letters, in S. Warhaft, ed.,

New Atlantis; A Brief Discourse Touching the Happy Union of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland; Advertisement Touching an Holy War; Considerations Touching a War with Spain: informs the reader that Bacon did attempt to comment on "all knowledge". His remark to Burghley was not a fatuous boast. It is not, however, the volume of writing that makes Bacon noteworthy. It is primarily the impact his writing had on the nature of inquiry. Like Descartes, Bacon marks a watershed in the development of Western thought. He was able to redirect the thinking of his age away from the moribund tradition of Aristotelian method towards a method of inductive investigation based on the observations of concrete reality. In the 1660's, a generation after Bacon's death, Cowley, in his poem "To the Royal Society", eulogizes "Bacon, [who] like Moses, led us forth at last" to the "promis'd Land"[3] where the observation of nature and reality is free from the tyrannies of Wit and Art.

Although the body of Bacon's works is all-encompassing, it is not within the scope of this thesis to comment, even briefly, on the extent of its impact on Western thought. The writer does, however, choose to

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Francis Bacon: A Selection of His Works (Toronto: MacMillan, 1963), p. 460.

[3]Abraham Cowley, "To the Royal Society", in

examine Bacon's influence on prose style. In order to facilitate our study it is fitting to consider the various critical judgments that have been made about his work. The writer will attempt to present a chronological survey of this criticism.

Several contemporaries of Bacon were conscious of his style. Rawley, in his Life (1638), appraised the clarity of Bacon's writing:

> In the composing of his books he did rather drive at masculine and clear expressions than at any firmness or affection of phrases, and would often ask if the meaning were expressed plainly enough, as being one that accounted words to be but subservient or ministerial to matter, and not the principal. And if his style were polite, it was because he would do no otherwise. Neither was he given to any light conceits, or descanting upon words but did ever purposely and industriously avoid them; for he held such things to be but digressions or diversions from the scope intended, and to derogate from the weight and dignity of the style.[4]

Jonson, a friend and admirer of Bacon, comments:

> His language (where he could spare or pass by a jest) was nobly censorious. No man ever spake more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or

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A. B. Grosart, ed., The Complete Works of Abraham Cowley (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969 republished), I, 167-168.

[4]Quoted by L. C. Knights in "Bacon and the Seventeenth Century Dissociation of Sensibilities", in his Explorations (2nd ed.; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), p. 102.

> suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered. No member of his speech but consisted of his own graces. His hearers could not cough, or look aside from him, without loss.5

He further praises Bacon in Discoveries in a marginal note at the conclusion of a catalogue of great writers.

> [Bacon] is he, who hath fill'd up all numbers; and perform'd that in our tongue, which may be compar'd, or preferr'd, either to insolent Greece or haughty Rome. In short, within his view, and about his times, were all the wits borne, that could honour a language, or helpe study. Now things daily fall: wits grow downeward and Eloquence grows back-ward: So that hee may be nam'd, and stand as the marke and akme of our language.6

Some years later, Sprat notes in his History of the Royal Society:

> He [Bacon] was a Man of strong, clear and powerful Imaginations: his Genius was searching and inimitable: and of this: I need give no other proof, then his Style itself; . . . The course of it vigorous, and majestical; the wit Bold, and Familiar: the comparisons fetch'd out of the way, and yet the most easie. . . .7

Sprat, like his fellows in the Royal Society, admired the concise, neat Baconian style.

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[5] Ibid., p. 102.

[6] Quoted by B. Vickers in his Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), p. 236.

[7] Ibid., p. 236.

Augustan critics were not as favourable. Although Bacon was quoted frequently in the Tatler and the Spectator, he was criticized by Budgell in 1713 for ". . . ever endeavouring to be witty, and as fond of out-of-the-way similes as some of our old play-writers. He abounds in low phrases, condescends to little conceits and quibbles".[8] Swift makes several allusions to Bacon in "The Battle of Books". For example, Bacon's "Of Truth", opens with the phrase "What is Truth? said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer", and Swift writing of Momus, the dullard of criticism, parodies this "Momus having thus delivered himself staid not for an answer".[9] For the most part, Bacon's style did not conform to the eighteenth century's notions of decorum.

During the nineteenth-century Bacon's reputation as a writer oscillated widely. Blake describes the Essays as "Good advice from Satan's kingdom". Hazlitt comments in his Lectures on the Age of Elizabeth (1820):

> His writings have the gravity of prose with the fervour and vividness of poetry. . . . His style is equally sharp and sweet, flowing and pithy, condensed and expansive, expressing volumes in a sentence, or amplifying a single

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[8] Ibid., p. 245.

[9] Ibid., p. 241.

> thought into pages of rich, glowing and delightful eloquence.10

Content notwithstanding, Hazlitt and other figures of the Romantic Revolution like Shelley, Byron, Wordsworth, De Quincey, and Coleridge considered Bacon's works as *exempla* of English prose and the product of a powerful and synthetic imagination: "Pungent antitheses, and the analogies of wit in which the resemblance is too often more indebted to the double or equivocal sense of a word than to any real conformity in the thing or image form the *dulcia vita* of his style . . .".[11] The Victorians, however, did not share the Romantics' enthusiasm for Bacon. Macauley, his foremost critic, wrote in the *Edinburgh Review* for July 1837:

> He had a wonderful talent for packing wit close, and rendering it portable. In wit, if by wit he meant the power of perceiving analogies between things which appear to have nothing in common, he never had an equal, not even Cowley, not even the author of *Hudibras*. Indeed, he possessed his faculty, or this faculty possessed him to a morbid degree.12

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 255.

[11] Quoted by Anne Righter in her "Francis Bacon", in B. W. Vickers, ed., *Essential Articles for the Study of Francis Bacon* (Hamden: Archon, 1968), p. 304.

[12] Quoted by Vickers, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

Later in the period, Hallam, in the Introduction to the Literature of Europe, finds Bacon "too metaphorical and witty".[13]

Early twentieth-century critics continue with the Victorians' low regard. C. S. Lewis, in a commentary, describes Bacon's Essays: "as a metallic-looking cactus raised on the edge of a desert sterile, inedible, cold, and hard to the touch".[14] The notion that Bacon's writing reveals a "powerful and synthetic" imagination is ignored or refuted by many. L. C. Knights, for example, compares the poetic imaginations of Shakespeare and Bacon:

> But the characteristically Shakespearean manner, depending as it does on the maximum range of sensitive awareness, is diametrically opposed to the Baconian manner, which represents a development of assertive will and practical reason at the expense of the more delicate perceptive elements of the sensibility.15

For him, Bacon is the forerunner of the "dissociation of sensibilities" which is said to plague twentieth-century society. Douglas Bush, in his book, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, views Bacon's prose style

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[13]Quoted by Vickers, op. cit., p. 259.

[14]C. S. Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), p. 538.

[15]Quoted by Knights, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

as expedient and impersonal. Of the Essays he writes that they are "reinforced homespun" which illustrate "the attitude of the scientific analyst who does not gossip and ramble, whose mind is a dry light".[16] For these critics, Bacon's prose style is noteworthy but clearly not praise-worthy. The conventional, early twentieth century critical description of Bacon's prose style is "dense", "arresting", "cold-blooded", "pithy". "Poetic" was an adjective yet to be discovered.

At this point the writer would like to make a speculative aside concerning the "negative" attitudes expressed by these twentieth-century critics of Bacon. As we know, Bacon had an seminal influence on Western thought. Bacon's advocacy of the advancement of learning established him as an agent provocateur of New Science. It is possible that the catastrophe of World War One and the subsequent disillusion with post-industrial society which characterizes much of twentieth century thought and criticism have caused modern man to long for a simpler, holistic world view. In fact, certain critics have never forgiven the seventeenth century for its "Scientific Revolution" because they believe this to be the fountain-

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[16] Douglas Bush, op. cit., p. 184.

head of our contemporary malaise. For the twentieth century, science has become to mean technology, and technology means fragmentation which causes dehumanization. However, the seventeenth century viewed science as knowledge. This knowledge lead to discovery, growth and freedom. It seems unlikely that men of the era, including Francis Bacon, could ever have predicted that science would come to dominate society. At that time science was still a handmaiden to faith. It was hoped that knowledge would repair the ruins of man's estate and lead him back to a prelapsarian state. From the vantage point of the twentieth century we now see that this has not been the case. Bacon, a Renaissance man, could not have such insights into future. He argued for the advancement of knowledge (and science) because he hoped to improve the human condition and to inspire confidence in human potential. This positive spirit is best expressed in this selection from the Advancement:

> God hath framed the mind of man as a mirror or glass capable of the image of the universal world, and joyful to receive light; and not only delighted in beholding the variety of things and vicissitudes of times, but raised also to find out and discern the ordinances and decrees which throughout all those changes are infallibly observed.17

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[17] Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning, in Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, eds., Works (London: Longman et al, 1859), III, 265.

Proper observation would "enlighten" the human mind and make it capable of perceiving divine perfection. What Bacon could not foresee was the dominance method would have in future societies. Bacon becomes for many a pragmatic utilitarian, the bellringer of the new age of Reason and Science.

It is not unreasonable to suggest that the revolt by twentieth-century critics from positive, scientific philosophy has also led some to regard Bacon as a negative figure. And by inference, if the message is infamous, the medium is equally unworthy of praise. Hence, his prose style is perceived as dry, if not arid. Stylistic figures, if and when they do exist, are considered as merely decorative knicknacks. Although critics should not have this kind of bias, they are a product of their society and reflect, in turn, the critical temperament of their age.

The second issue that must be raised is the study of "schools" of prose styles that several other early twentieth-century critics pursued. The foremost critic in this field was M. W. Croll. His study of the development of modern prose style focuses on the Baroque period. He sees this as the pivot of modern prose. Prior to this period Ciceronian prose was the popular medium. Yet throughout the late Renaissance there was increasing reaction

against Ciceronian "eloquence". He cites Erasmus' complaints that this style was too perfect: "Fie upon that eloquence . . . that makes us in love with itself, and not with the thing."[18] Croll describes the Ciceronian style as round, consistent, ornate and sensuous. He further implies that it is unnatural and inflexible. For him Bacon is part of the growing Anti-Ciceronian movement. To be sure Bacon did criticize the "affectionate study of eloquence and copie" which had grown to such excess that

> . . . man began to hunt more after words than matter, and more after the choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clean composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration of their works with tropes and figures than after the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention or depth of judgment.19

Also in another passage Croll has noted Bacon condemns writers who are guilty of the study of words and matter:

> Then grew the flowing and watery vein of Osorious, the Portugal bishop, to be in price. Then did Sturmius spend much infinite and curious pains upon Cicero the Orator and Hermogenes the

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[18] M. W. Croll, "Attic Prose: Lipsius, Montaigne, Bacon" reproduced in S. Fish, ed., Seventeenth Century Prose (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 4.

[19] Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning, in Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, eds., Works (London: Longmans et al, 1861), p. 283.

> Rhetorican, besides his own books of periods and imitation and the like. Then did Car of Cambridge and Ascham, with their lectures and writings, almost deify Cicero and Demosthenes, and allure all young men that were studious unto that delicate and polished kind of learning. Then did Erasmus take occasion to make the scoffing echo, Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone, and the echoe answered in Greek 'Ove Asine' (Thou Ass). Then, grew the learning of the scholmen to be utterly despised as barbarous. In sum, the whole inclination and bent of those times was rather towards copie than weight.20

We must note that Bacon ridicules the excessive imitators of Cicero, and not Cicero himself. Croll assumes that to be anti-Ciceronian is to be pro-Attic. The Attic style, as developed by Seneca, Tacitus, and Sallust, was diametrically opposed to the Ciceronian. It was brief, asymmetrical, clear, informal. And Croll implies that it was natural and flexible. He argues:

> Bacon's great service to English prose was that he naturalized a style in which ingenious obscurity and acute significance are the appropriate garb of the mysteries of empire; and by means of his example the Tacitean strain became familiar to many Englishmen who were not sufficiently trained in Tacitus, themselves, to imitate his style directly.21

Croll's premise for suggesting the Bacon modelled himself on Tacitus is not well-founded. Bacon did praise Tacitus but as Robert Adolph has pointed out in his

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[20] Ibid., pp. 283-284.

[21] M. W. Croll, "Attic Prose: Lipsius, Montaigne, Bacon", p. 18.

thorough comparison of the styles of Bacon and Tacitus, Bacon is not Tacitean.[22] The reason for Croll's insistence that Bacon wrote in the Attic style arises from his belief that there is a link between the "New" style and the growth of rationalism. Whereas the Ciceronian period, revealed a completed thought, the Attic period developed at the same time as a mind thinking. In his article, "Baroque Prose", Croll further distinguishes between the two types of periods he finds in the Attic style: the curt period or the stile coupée; and the loose period. The "loose" period with its loose conjunctions such as "and", "but", and "for" developed like a chain in a linked or trailing fashion. It was best able to express the "natural" progression of thought. The curt period was marked by brevity, symmetry and an omission of ordinary syntactic ligatures. Croll finds that these two periods are best able to represent the two sides of the seventeenth-century mind: the dislike of formalism, skepticism, the concern with self-investigation; the sententiousness, the wit and the Stoicism. In contrast, the Ciceronian style represents the stagnant, bankrupt, scholastic tradition, alien to progress and resistant to change. As Croll sees it, Bacon, the buccinator novi temporis, must inevitably reject the Ciceronian style as

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[22]See R. Adolph's Rise of Modern Prose Style (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T., 1968).

inappropriate for his message.

Like any critic, Croll has been selective in accumulating his "evidence". Clearly, he has missed Bacon's comment in the Latin version of the Advancement translated by Gilbert Watts in 1639:

> Little better is that kind of style (yet neither is that altogether exempt from vanity) which near about the same time succeeded this copy and superfluity of speech. The labour here is altogether, 'That words be aculeate, sentences concise, and the whole contexture of the speech and discourse, rather rounding into it selfe, than spread and dilated: So that it comes to passe by this Artifice that every passage seemes more witty and waighty than indeed it is. Such a stile as this we find more excessively in Seneca; more moderately in Tacitus and Plinius Secundus; and of late it hath in very pleasing unto eares of our time. And this kind of expression hath found such acceptance with meaner capacities as to be a dignity and ornament to Learning; neverthelesse, by the more exact judgements, it hath bin deservedly despised, and may be set down as a distemper of Learning, seeing it is nothing else but a hunting after words, and fine placing of them.23

Not only did Bacon revolt against excessive Ciceronian prose, he also challenged the extreme application of the Attic style. To lock Bacon in a "school" of style seems both inappropriate and unfounded.

Further, there is a danger in Croll's suggestion that the Attic style is "natural". This asymmetrical prose

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[23]For this discussion I am indebted to Brian Vickers. He has made these observations in Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose, p. 112.

involves deliberate rhetorical techniques: omitted ligatures, inverted word orders, surprising the reader's expectations.[24] As Barish has noted:

> One wonders, then, whether baroque writers were not mislead, partly by abuses of Ciceronian style, partly by its origin in formal oratory, into thinking that it contained some intrinsic barrier to uninhibited thought: whether tilting against the reader's expectations, they did not find themselves conducting campaigns of sabotage that involved more premeditation than the pre-meditated style they were warring against; whether, as a result, their own rhetoric is not parasitic in a peculiar way, unthinkable without the background of 'normal' Renaissance practice.25

Croll's work is significant because it removes the study of Bacon's prose style from the works themselves and places it in the larger context of one specific school of style. This tends to have a Procrustean effect on subsequent investigations of Bacon's prose. More than one critic has looked for Attic characteristics in Bacon's writing (cf. George Williamson's book, The Senecan Amble). Such studies as Croll's are ultimately tentative if the author's style is abstracted from the primary source and considered only in the light of a particular school.

It is not until recently that Baconian scholars have attempted a re-evaluation of Bacon's prose style based

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[24] B. Vickers, Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose, p. 110.

[25] Quoted by Vickers, op. cit., p. 111.

on close readings of the primary texts. One of the first critics to do this is Anne Righter. She argues for a reconsideration of Bacon as an imaginative prose writer: "whatever the practical consequences of those pieces of Bacon's work which have been taken up by later men, the architecture of the whole is that of the imagination not of fact".[26] That Bacon has been interpreted as a utilitarian does not impair her criticism. Righter takes issue with Knights' charge that Bacon's imagery merely clinches an argument and is not integral to the prose. She notes a similarity between Bacon's prose style and techniques used by the metaphysical poets: an abstract idea is expressed in concrete physical terms so that the audience may comprehend the meaning. She sees a similarity between Bacon's river in the following passage from the Advancement:

> . . . for the truth is that time seemeth to be of the nature of a river or stream which carrieth down to us that which is light and blown up, and sinketh and drowneth that which is weighty and solid. . . .27

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[26] Anne Righter, op. cit., p. 302.

[27] Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning, Sp. III, pp. 291-292.

and Donne's stream in "Satire III":

> As streams are, power is; those blest flowers
> that dwell
> At the rough stream's calm head thrive and
> do well,
> But having left their roots, and themselves
> given
> To the stream's tyrannous rage, alas, are
> driven
> Through mills and rocks and woods, and at last,
> almost
> Consumed in going in the sea are lost.[28]

She claims Bacon did not "divorce" the imagination from the pursuit of truth. Rather, he enlisted the imagination to work together with the reason in order to move the will to serve right action.[29] It is the imagination which fashions images which in turn strike the memory:

> Bacon is employing imagery, neither in the
> service of false argument, nor simply for
> decoration: it is a precise and subtle means
> of expression linked tightly to the great
> English tradition of imaginative prose.30

Righter's study, though brief, is important since it returns critical attention to the use and significance of figurative language in the primary texts. Her rejection of previous twentieth-century critical evaluations and her sympathetic treatment of Bacon as an imaginative, if not poetic, writer

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[28] J. Donne, "Satire III" in Witherspoon and Warnke, Seventeenth Century Prose and Poetry (2nd ed.; New York: Harcourt, Brace, World, 1963), p. 755.

[29] A. Righter, op. cit., p. 306.

[30] Ibid., pp. 306-307.

opens the way for a renewed critical debate on Bacon's prose style.

An illuminating study by Walter Davis entitled "The Imagery in Bacon's Late Work", follows Righter's lead in suggesting that Bacon's imagery performs a significant function in the transmission of his philosophy. Davis hypothesizes that images

> should perform a hitherto unsuspected function in his works in spite of their subordination to an argument; they should deepen statements or even produce suggestions going beyond statements in readying the reader's consciousness for what is new.31

Using the essay "Of Truth" (1625) and the Novum Organum (1620) Davis suggests that Bacon uses certain images to shift the reader's point of view and to provide a sense of unity between the ideas expressed throughout the works. He notes that Bacon employs various pairs of image patterns which work positively and negatively. Light is always used as a positive image whereas dark is negative. The model is positive, the labyrinth negative. The mirror through its association with light is positive; and the circle, a means of entrapment, is negative. His observations, while not astounding, suggest that Bacon uses images in a way similar to his contemporaries. Indeed Righter also noted

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[31] W. Davis, "The Imagery in Bacon's Late Work" in S. Fish, ed., Seventeenth Century Prose (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 240.

Bacon's use of images common to his age: world as stage; the garden; life as a journey; natural growth and music as symbols of order or, if disturbed in some way, as symbols of chaos. For him, Bacon is not a revolutionary of prose style as Croll would have it. And, contrary to Knights, Davis thinks that Bacon uses imagery to clarify his meaning and to encourage an unitive response from the reader's mind and imagination. This observation that certain language and images demand a particular reader response is important. The notion that Bacon anticipated and provoked an active relationship between the reader and the text will be discussed later in this thesis. The primary significance of Davis' work is that it expands the study of Bacon's prose style (albeit, one aspect of that style, figurative language) by means of reference to specific works.

Both Righter and Davis have examined a limited area of Bacon's prose style. It is Brian Vickers who attempts a thorough consideration of Bacon's style. His book Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose is a milestone in Baconian scholarship. He investigates numerous components of Bacon's writings: organization and structure, the aphorism, syntactical symmetry, image and argument, philosophy and image-patterns, and literary revisions. Like Righter and Davis, he argues that Bacon is an imaginative writer: ". . . one cannot ascribe Bacon's remarkable

hold over men's minds in the seventeenth century and after to any other source but his ability as an imaginative writer".[32] And, like the two preceding critics discussed in this chapter, he bases his argument on a close investigation of primary texts: the Essays and The Advancement of Learning. Whereas other critics have looked for and at the rhetorical and figurative devices in Bacon's prose, Vickers relates Bacon's use of these techniques to the classical and Renaissance traditions. He indicates where, when and why Bacon either conforms to the accepted fashion or deviates from it. While the book is not biographical criticism, Vickers does imply that certain aspects of Bacon's life, most notably his twin careers as lawyer and parliamentarian, have influenced his prose style. Vickers theorizes that Bacon was "seldom if ever neutral, being concerned throughout his whole career to convince the reader of a definite viewpoint".[33] Bacon's use of language is, then, inextricably bound to his thought. Vickers claims that

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[32] B. Vickers, op. cit., p. 3.

[33] Ibid., p. 17.

> Bacon's situation as a prose writer approaches very close to that of the lyric poet: both are involved in demonstrative and deliberate orations; indeed Bacon's whole life's work is geared to persuade and dissuade the world . . . and in these, his writings has an added urgency, being much more to action than the poets.[34]

For him, the poet and persuader are inseparable masks in Bacon's prose.

We must pause momentarily and take stock of the various critical positions that have been presented. We see that in this century there has been a controversy among Bacon scholars. This conflict primarily focuses on the prose style. Is Bacon an innovator of the "new style" as Croll argues, or are his writings a logical development of the Renaissance traditions as Vickers suggests? Further, does he employ figurative language merely as a device or trick to support his argument as Knights and Bush say, or is his language the result of a forceful imagination trying to unite the disparate aspects of reality as Righter and Davis imply? Perhaps the most interesting question is why is there such a conflict of critical opinion. If this writer's earlier speculations on the reasons for "negative" critical opinion in the early twentieth century are in any

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[34] Ibid., p. 155.

way valid, why should critical opinion alter so radically in recent years? Certainly, man's world-view is still fragmented, and science is still popularly conceived of as technology. The valiant efforts to return to a simple life have not succeeded. The writer acknowledges this to be true. There has, however, been a change in the critical temper because there has been a radical change in the critical method. Recent scholarly critics have turned their attention to primary works. Detailed readings of the text are now the order of criticism. This is not to suggest that Croll of Knights or Bush did not actually read Bacon, but it is to suggest that they did not read him in the same manner as their recent colleagues. Whereas former critics considered Bacon within the context of the development of English prose style, in general, and the modern essay, in particular, the latter critics, affected by the school of new criticism, have examined individual works as separate, nonetheless complete entities. Both critical methods impose limitations on analysis. In this thesis, we will attempt to synthesize these techniques so that the reader will have a more comprehensive understanding of Bacon's style.

There is one work of Bacon's which deserves special mention: this is the Essays. Almost every student of English prose has encountered some of these essays. This

body of prose may in fact, be the root of the current critical debate. We recall that Lewis described them as "metallic-looking" and Bush called them "cold-blooded" and "expedient". Such a perception as "Ther is little friendshipe in the worlde; and least of all betweene equals" ("Of Followers and Friends") may have prompted some to recoil aesthetically from the Essays. We must also note that Righter, Davis and Vickers see flashes of Bacon's imaginative genius in this same prose work. For example, this passage from "Of Truth" "Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day: but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights"[35] demands that the reader wrestle with the image in order for the meaning to be realized. Lies are "profitable" because they are more flexible than truth; they "show [illegible] best in varied lights". Daylight, however, is the only natural light. If Truth is a pearl, it "showeth best by day", that is, it is perceived in natural light. Truth may not be profitable, but it is natural. Lies on the other hand, are unnatural. Although it is not immediately apparent, truth is, then, superior to falsehood. As we see, Bacon's images are at

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[35] F. Bacon, "Of Truth" in Works, VI, 377.

times deliberately puzzling. This fact may have inadvertently prompted critics to ignore them.

The "typical" pithy style one associates with the Essays is certainly not always present. For example Bacon begins "Of Delay" with the following analogy: "Fortune is like the market: where many times, if you can stay a little, the price will fall" yet he continues "And again, it is sometimes like Sibylla's offer; which at first offereth the commodity at full, then consumeth part and part, and still holdeth up the price". In the first passage Bacon's simile is dual faced. Delay may cause the price to fall. For the buyer this is good news; for the seller this is bad news. (This assumes, of course, that maximization of buying power and profit are the respective goals of the buyer and seller.) Fortune may increase or decrease with delay. The second image is equally equivocal. Delay does not alter the price; instead, it reduces the commodity offered. One gets less value the more he delays. For the buyer this is bad news; for the seller this is good news. (This could be an excellent image for inflation.) Again, fortune may increase or decrease with delay. There are, then, merits and demerits to delay. It depends on who one is, and as is implied throughout, it depends on the workings of chance. It is hoped that this last example has

whetted the reader's interest in the imaginative possibilities of the Essays since this is one aspect we wish to explore further in the thesis.

The Essays are a worthy subject of investigation not only because there is a critical controversy about the style Bacon used in them, but also because Bacon, himself, was very conscious of the importance of the Essays to his reputation. In 1621 he wrote to Launcelot Andrewes:

> As for my Essays, and some other particulars of that nature, I count them but as recreations of my other studies; and in that sort purpose to continue them; though I am not ignorant that those kinds of writing would, with less pains and embracement (perhaps), yield more lustre and reputation to my name, than those other which I have in hand.36

That Bacon revised and expanded the Essays twice during his life is of some significance. In fact, the Essays are one of Bacon's few completed prose works. This writer is fascinated by the diversity of subject matter and manner of presentation that Bacon develops in the three editions of the Essays. The slim ten essay volume of 1597 swells to a fifty-eight essay edition in 1625. One gnawing question persists, however, when one considers the Essays. Why? Why did Bacon choose, as he obviously did, to write

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[36]F. Bacon, "Letters" in Francis Bacon: A Selection of His Work, p. 481.

a series of essays? Why did he write in the vernacular, when he considered Latin "the universal language"? In other words, who is Bacon's audience and what is Bacon saying to them? How do the medium, the essay and the language therein, suit the message?

In part, the interest in the reader's relationship to the Essays has been aroused by Righter's suggestion that the essay "Of Truth" is "a joint creation of author and reader"[37] and also by the more extensive study of the reader's experience in the Essays by Stanley Fish in his essay, "The Georgics of the Mind: The Experience of Bacon's Essays", in his book, Self-Consuming Artifacts.

Lastly, since the Essays were an on-going process throughout his life, this writer would like to speculate on the changes that occur within the Essays both in terms of the medium, that is the prose, and the audience. Does Bacon exhibit a consistent pattern throughout his work, or is he, as Bowen suggests, a "paradox of personality"?[38]

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[37] A. Righter, "Francis Bacon", p. 319.

[38] C. D. Bowen, Francis Bacon: The Temper of a Man (Boston: Little Brown, 1963), p. 15.

With these problems in mind, the remainder of this thesis will investigate three areas: the style used by Francis Bacon in the Essays; the role of the reader in the Essays; and the relationship between changes in prose style and the audience of the Essays.

CHAPTER II

THE STYLE OF THE *ESSAYS*

The essay as a *genre* in English did not develop until Francis Bacon began writing them in 1597. Although Montaigne's *Essais* (1580) had already been translated into English by Florio (C.1591),[1] scholars usually consider Montaigne and Bacon as founders of the modern essay. These modern essays undoubtedly have roots in the writings of such Classical authors as Plato, Cicero, Horace, Seneca, and Plutarch. Bacon notes that Seneca's *Epistles to Lucillus* "are but *Essaies*, -- that is dispersed Meditacons, though conveyed in the forme of Epistles".[2] W. Crane in his book, *Wit and Rhetoric in the Renaissance*, also traces the modern essay to exercises used in grammar school to teach rhetoric. Three in particular -- *chria*, thesis, and commonplace, -- follow specific methods of developing an argument or composition which are similar to that used in the essay. In each, the students were asked to base their themes on various proverbs or *sententiae*. The *chria* and the thesis, however, were more formalized than the common-

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[1] D. Bush, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

place. A student followed this pattern when writing a *chria*:

i) statement of initial proverb
ii) praise or dispraise of the speaker (if known)
iii) a paraphrase of the statement
iv) an illustration of a particular example of the proverb
v) confirmation or confutation by means of cause and effect, contraries, similes, examples and testimonies of authorities
vi) conclusion by means of a terse epilogue.[3]

In the thesis, the arguments were written in *pro* and *contra* fashion. The topic was investigated according to the logical processes set forth by Aristotle in the *Topica* and by Rudolphus Agricola in his *Re inventione dialectica libri*.[4] As in the *chria*, the student used contrary examples and the testimonies of Classical authorities. He also utilized such techniques as definition, division, cause, and similitude. The commonplace, "an oracion dilating or amplifying good or evil, which is incidente or lodged in any man"[5] originally developed in Classical times and

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[3]William G. Crane, *Wit and Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1964, reprinted; originally published Columbia University Press, 1937), p. 136.

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 138.

[5]F. Rainolde, *The Foundation of Rhetoricke*, quoted by Crane, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

flourished throughout the Renaissance.[6] Like the thesis, it discussed an idea (a topos or place) in positive and negative terms; however, these terms were often considered in the context of virtue and vice. A notebook was frequently used to record the quotations, maxims and apophthegms that crystalized these pro and contra arguments. It was hoped that these three exercises would develop the following rhetorical techniques: the inventio (the selection of arguments which support the speaker); the dispositio (the art of arranging the arguments in order to interest and persuade the listener); and the elocutio (the art of clothing the language in pleasing but appropriate schemes and tropes).

Both the chria and the thesis were academic exercises; the commonplace, however, spilled over into public life. As we have mentioned, commonplaces were recorded customarily in notebooks. These notebooks became "storehouses", as it were, for arguments which might some day be useful. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the commonplace notebook, together with sundry other handbooks of improvement, was extremely popular. We even know

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[6] See Lechner's study Renaissance Concept of the Commonplace.

this from the drama: Hamlet exclaims "My tables! meet it is I set it down" and Pandarus observes "There was never a truer rhyme. Let us cast away nothing for we may live to have need of such verse." L. B. Wright in his book, Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England, suggests that the reason for this popularity was the growth of the bourgeoisie. To think, speak, and act like a gentleman was the ambition of the middle class. There was a growing number of books published on a variety of topics. During the early sixteenth century these books were exclusively for an aristocratic audience and tended to be humanistic in subject. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was, however, a shift towards the middle class reader and the books became increasingly practical in scope. There were courtesy books: Erasmus' De Civilitate Morum Puerilium . . . A lytell book of good maners for Chyldren (1532); della Casa's Il Galatio (translated into English by Peterson in 1516); Braithwaite's The English Gentleman (1630) and The English Gentlewoman (1631). There were books on conversation: T. T.'s The Schoolemaster or Teacher of Table Philosophie (1576) and Selden's Table Talk. Books on culture and education: Castiglione's The Courtier (translated by Hoby in 1561). Books of wisdom: Politeuphuia: Wits Commonwealth (1597), Mere's Palladis Tamia -- Wits Treasury Being the Second Part of

Wits Commonwealth (1598) and Jonson's Timber: or Discoveries (1641). And finally books of advices: Lyly's Euphues (1578, 1580), Breton's A Post With a Packet of Mad Letters (1602) and The Mother's Blessing (1602) and Osborn's Advice to a Son (Part one 1656 and Part two 1658). In short, a generous supply of ready-made encyclopaediæ was available.

This discussion comes into focus when we consider two things. First, Bacon commended the practice of recording commonplaces: "I hold the entry of common-places to be a matter of great use and essence in studying; as that which assureth copie of invention and contracteth judgment to a strength"[7] and he transcribed at least three of his own notebooks prior to the first essays: The Promus of Formularies and Elegancies; Apophthegms Old and New; and Antithetica Rerum.[8] Secondly, we should consider the time of the publication of the first volume of Essaies, 1597. In this year, the exceedingly popular Wits Commonwealth was also published. It is not irresponsible to suggest that Bacon, too, wished to "cash in" on a good thing. And although he labels his work Essaies, more than one critic

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[7]Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning, III, 398.

[8]Crane, op. cit., p. 138.

has noted the similarity between them and commonplace notebooks. Bush writes: "The ten 'Essays' of 1597 were merely groups of related apophthegms transcribed from the commonplace book".[9] Clark also notes: "That he kept his own books of commonplace to a good purpose is made manifest by his essays which are clearly developed from them".[10] Bacon should have known that the term essay was originally derived from the Latin exagium, that is, a weight or balance.[11] Theoretically, the essay attempts to examine a topic pro and contra (similar to the grammar school exercises) and is longer and more discursive than the sententiae of the notebook. The essay also seeks to persuade the reader to accept the authorial point of view.[12] If the 1597 Essaies were not the "real" thing, we should have no doubt that his work in 1612 and 1625 was more deserving of its title.

So that the reader may see the differences and developments in Bacon's prose, we have reproduced three

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[9]Bush, op. cit., p. 184.

[10]Clark, John Milton at Saint Pauls (Hamden: Archon, 1964 c.1948), p. 223.

[11]Crane, op. cit., p. 133.

[12]An interesting observation is made by Huntington Brown in his book, Prose Styles: Five Primary Types (Minneapolis: University of Minesota, 1966). He believes

essays, each of which is representative of its edition.

"Of Studies" (1597)

> Studies serue for pastimes, for ornaments and for abilities. Their chiefe vse for pastime is in priuatenes and retiring; for ornamente is in discourse, and for abilitie is in iudgement. For expert men can execute, but learned men are fittest to iudge or censure.
>
> To spend too much time in them is slouth, to vse them too much for ornament is affectation: to make iudgement wholly by their rules, is the humour of a Scholler. They perfect Nature, and are perfected by experience. Craftie men continue them, simple men admire then, wise men vse them: For they reach not their owne vse, but that is a wisedome without them: and aboue them wonne by observation. Reade not to contradict, nor to belieue, but to waigh and consider. Some books are to bee tasted, others to bee swallowed, and some few to bee chewed and di gested: That is, some books are to be read only in parte; others to be read, but cursorily, and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention. Reading maketh a full man, conference a readye man, and writing an exacte man. And therefore if a man write little, he had need haue a great memorie, if he conferre little, he had needs haue a present wit, and if he reade little, hee had neede haue much cunning, to seeme to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise, Poets wittie: the Mathematickes subtle, naturall Phylosophie deepe: Morall graue, Logicke and Rhetoricke able to contend. (Sp. VI, 525)

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that the essay is written in prophetic style. It tries to convince by means of its terseness, "for terseness implies the thing said needs no defense" (p. 71). As such the essay sustains as oracular quality.

"Of Death" (1612)

Men feare death, as Children feare to goe in the darke: and as that naturall in Children is encreased with tales; so is the other. Certainely the feare of death in contemplation of the cause of it, and the issue of it, is religious: but the feare of it, for it selfe, is weake. Yet in religious meditations there is mixture of vanitie, and of superstitioun. You shall reade in some of the Friers Bookes of Mortification, that a man should thinke with himselfe, what the paine is, if he haue but his fingers end pressed, or tortured; and thereby imagine what the paines of Death are, when the whole body is corrupted and dissolued: when many times, Death passeth with lesse paine, then the torture of a limme. For the most vitall parts are not the quickest of sence. And to speake as a Philosopher or naturall man, it was well said, Pompa mortis magis terret, quam mors ipsa. Grones, and Conuulsions, and a discoloured face, and friends weeping and Blackes and obsequies, and the like, shew death terrible. It is worthie the obseruing, that there is no passion in the minde of man so weake, but masters the feare of death; and therefore death is no such enemy, when a man hath so many followers about him, that can winne the combat of him. Reuenge triumphes ouer death, Loue esteems it not, Honour aspireth to it, deliuery from Ignominy chuseth it, Griefe flieth to it, Feare preoccupateth it: nay we see after Otho had slain himselfe, pitty (which is the tendrest of affections) prouoked many to die. Seneca speaketh of nicenesse: Cogita quam diu eadem feceris; Mori vell non tantum fortis, aut miser, sed etiam fastidiosus potest. It is no lesse worthy to obserue how little alteration in good spirits the approaches of death make: but they are the same till that last. Augustus Caesar died in a complement, Tiberius in dissimulation, Vespasian in a iest, Galba with a sentence, Septimus Seuerus, in dispatch; and the like. Certainely the Stoikes bestowed too much cost upon death, and by their great preparations made it appeare more fearfull. Better saith he,

Qui finem vitae extremum inter munera ponat naturae. It is as naturall to die, as to bee borne; and to a little Infant perhaps, the one as painefull, as the other. (SP. VI, 544)

"Of Truth" (1625)

What is Truth? said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer. 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. And though the sects of philosophers of that kind be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing wits which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labour which men take in finding out of truth; nor again that when it is found it imposeth upon men's thoughts; that doth bring lies in favour; but a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself. One of the latter school of the Grecians examineth the matter, and is at a stand to think what should be in it, that men should love lies, where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchant; but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell: this same truth is a naked and open day-light, that doth not shew the masks and mummeries and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that sheweth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that sheweth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? One of the Fathers, in great severity, called poesy vinum daemonum [devil's wine], because it filleth the imagination; and yet it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in and settleth in it, that these things are thus in men's depraved judgments and affectations, yet 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. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of reason; and his sabbath work 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 breathed and inspireth light into the face of his chosen. The poet that beautified the sect that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle 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 air is always clear and serene,) and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests, in the vale below; so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.

To pass from theological and philosophical truth, to the truth of civil business; it will be acknowledged even by those that practise it not, that clear and round dealing is the honour of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehood is like allay in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent; which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious. And therefore Montaigne saith prettily, when he inquired the reason, why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace and such an odious charge. Saith he, If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth,

> is as much to say as that he is brave towards God and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man. Surely the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold, that when Christ cometh, he shall not find faith upon the earth. (Sp. VI, pp. 377-379)

It is obvious that Bacon's prose style grows and matures with each edition of the Essays; however, it may not be clear what specific changes and revisions Bacon makes. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted, therefore, to an examination of the changing prose style Bacon uses in the Essays.

In the Epistle Dedicatorie of 1597 Bacon writes:

> And as I did ever hold, there mought be as great a vanitie in retiring and withdrawing mens conceites (except they bee of some nature) from the world, as in obtruding them: So in these particulars I have played my selfe the inquisitor, and find nothing to my understanding in them them contrarie or infectious to the state of Religion, of manners but rather (as I suppose) medicinable. (Sp. VI, 523)

That he sees his compositions as "medicinable" is interesting for this suggests that he sees himself as a doctor ready to seek out disease and prescribe a cure. Since the traditional doctor-patient relationship is one in which the doctor tells and the patient accepts, the astute reader might anticipate that these 1597 essays will exhort. He would be correct.

Certainly one of the obvious qualities of the first essays is the hortatory tone. Repeatedly Bacon commands: "it is better . . .", "it is good . . .", "it is commonly seene . . .". The strength of the present tense of the verb "to be" is such that the reader "is" forced to agree with the author's argument.[13] The commanding nature of the Essaies is, however, compounded by the "coldness" of the tone: "it is better to take with the more passable then with the more able . . ." ("Of Followers and Friends"). Indeed, it is probably statements like this one which have evoked criticism that the Essaies are "metallic". If the overriding tone of this first volume is, however, cold and hortatory we should consider how Bacon achieves this effect.

It seems that Bacon attains the terse quality in these essays by two means: the aphorism and syntactical symmetry. Bacon's use of the aphorism is not unique. Ancients had long commended the aphorism and its similar figure, the maxim, as effective vehicles of argument. Aristotle in Ars Rhetorica praised the maxim for two reasons. First, it gratified the vanity of the audience; secondly,

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[13]See Taresilius' essay "All Colours Will Agree in the Dark" in B. W. Vickers, ed., Essential Articles for the Study of Francis Bacon (Hamden: Archon, 1968).

it gave speech "an air of character".[14] Because the maxim contains a universal rule that can be confirmed by everyone's experience, the listener/reader is able to verify the speaker's observation and, consequently, feels more willing to accept the speaker's position. Moreover, the colour and variety of the maxim "rounds" the speaker's address so that the audience does not feel inundated by the formality of the address. That the aphorism had come into its own by the Renaissance is confirmed by its inclusion in Rider's Bibliotheca Scholastica (1589)

> Aphorism "a principle in an arte . . .
> l. Theorema, n. Maxima, f. aphorismus, m. axioma, principium, pronuntiatum proloquium, effatum, aphorisma n.[15]

And prior to Bacon both Hippocrates (in his Aphorisms) and Machiavelli (in The Prince) had used aphorisms to record observations of human nature and statecraft.[16] Bacon was probably attracted to the aphorism because of its economical and pithy nature. In the Advancement he writes: "so knowledge while it is in aphorisms and observations it

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[14] Aristotle, Ars Rhetorica ([n.p.]: Bohm, 1857), pp. 173-174.

[15] Bibliotheca Scholastica (Minston: The Scolar Press, 1970; reprinted R. L. Alston, ed.), panel 43.

[16] This is discussed by Vickers in F.B. and Renaissance Prose, pp. 65-69.

is in growth".[17] The aphorism had another value, as Aristotle has suggested. It has a mnemonic function; if the reader could remember the aphorism, perhaps he would also remember the author's message. Although the aphorism need not be cold, it is by its very nature clipped. We can not doubt, then, that this device contributes to the terseness of the Essaies.

As we have noted, the aphorism is abetted by Bacon's use of syntactical symmetry. Vickers has identified seven rhetorical figures common to the Renaissance:

parison -- refers to a corresponding structure in consecutive clauses (that is, noun matches noun, verb matches verb, etc.)

isocolon -- refers to the use of clauses which are of similar length

antimetabole -- refers to the use of the same structure only inverted from the original (that is, A,B,C,:C,B,A)

paromoion -- refers to a figure in which the corresponding parts of consecutive clauses rhyme internally

homioteleuton -- same as paromoion, except the rhyme occurs at the of the clauses

anaphora -- refers to the use of the same word at the conclusion of consecutive clauses.18

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[17] Bacon, Works, III, 292.

[18] B. Vickers, Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose, p. 97.

The parallel structure evident in each of these figures provides both visual and aural repetition. Like the aphorism, syntactical symmetry has a mnemonic function. It also is an effective method of persuasion. The reader, as a result of continuous repetition, is unlikely to challenge the author's argument. Just as there is an inherent force in the use of the present tense, so too, is there compulsion in repetition. Vickers finds that although Bacon rarely uses a rhetorical figure in its exact axiomatic form he does employ slightly modified figures with frequency:

isocolon -- To be governed by one is not good, and to be distracted with many is worse. ("Of Followers and Friends")

paromoion -- Some have certaine commonplaces and theames wherein they are good and want varitie which kinde of povertie is for the most part tedious, and now and then ridiculous ("Of Discourse")

anaphora -- Manie ill matters are undertaken, and many good matters will ill mindes. ("Of Sutes")

epistrophe -- If you dissemble sometimes your knowledge of that you are thought to knowe, you shall be thought another time to know that you know not. ("Of Discourse")

Bacon's syntax is, for the most part, tight and extremely well-controlled. Like the aphorism, it creates the impression of density and terseness.

It is interesting to note that Bacon's symmetry is Ciceronian; it is rich in parallelisms which seek to make a rhetorical impact on the audience. However, lest one be dragged into "school" criticism, the writer will point out that Bacon also uses an asymmetrical pattern that has been previously described as Attic: "It is better to sound a person with whome one deals a farre off, then to fal uppon the pointe at first, except you meane to surprise him by some shorte question" ("Of Negociating"). This sentence trails on, clause linked to clause by means of conjunctions. It is significant that Bacon incorporates both "Styles" into his own style. At times he is direct and symmetrical; at others, he is rambling and discursive. It would seem that style is merely a vehicle, a means of presenting an argument to the reader and that in itself it is without consequence.

One final aspect of the 1597 Essaies that should be examined is Bacon's use of figurative language. As the reader will recall, this is one area of controversy amongst Baconian critics. In these Essaies there are very few figures of speech. When he uses imagery, he tends to draw his examples and analogies from everyday experience: "He that is only reall had need have exceeding great parts of vertues as the stone had neede be rich that is set without foyle" ("Of Ceremonies and Respects") or from the

physical world: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested" ("Of Studies"). The absence of images tends to reinforce the stark aspect of these essays. Bacon does not choose to ornament or develop his sententiae and for the most part, this volume makes "dull" reading.

In summary, then, the 1597 Essaies are dense, pithy fragments. They appear to have a didactic function only: both the aphorism and syntax reinforce the heuristic quality of the Essaies. The tone is both cold and hortatory which also strengthens the "telling" nature of the Essaies. In general, these pieces extoll expedient behaviour and ignore moral scruple or sensitivity. They strive to present a clear, if not naked, picture of social reality. Bacon, as physician, announces and does not debate his observations on life.

Yet if the tone is exclusively "cold" and compelling in the 1597 work, in 1612 there is a new development. As both Crane and Zeitlin have noted "a different moral atmosphere pervades the volume of 1612 from that which characterizes the essays of 1597".[19] In numerous new essays Bacon appears to concern himself with moral values:

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[19]Jacob Zeitlin, "The Development of Bacon's Essays", Journal of English and Germanic Philology, XXVII (1928), 507.

> This of all vertues [man's inclination towards goodness] is the greatest: being the character of the Deitie, and without it, man is a busie, mischevious, wretched thing: no better than a kind of vermine. ("Of Goodnesse and Goodnes of Nature")

and

> There is no greater desert or wilderness then to bee without true friends. For without friendship, society is but meeting. ("Of Friendship")

Bacon does not, however, abandon the original tone of 1597. In such essays as "Of Counsell", he presents straightforward, astute, if not, politic, advice:

> In government it is good to use men of one ranke equally: For to countenance some extraordinarily is to make them insolent, and the rest discontent; because they may claime a due. But in favour to use men with much difference and election is good. . . . ("Of Counsell")

Moreover, he sometimes surprises the reader with his practicality. For example, one might expect a "moral" comment on the topic "Of Love". Bacon, however, does not offer this. He writes: "it is impossible to love and bee wise".[20] We can see, then, that the 1612 Essays are more complex. Rather than speculate on the reasons for this development at the present time, we will first examine how Bacon achieves tonal variety.

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[20]This idea of surprising the reader's expectation is discussed by Fish, and we will review his thesis in chapter III.

We have discovered that the rhetorical and logical techniques used by Bacon in 1597 contributed to the detached, surprisingly amoral, quality of the essays. If we examine Bacon's techniques in the 1612 version we see that he has wrought some subtle changes. The first thing we should notice is his use of the aphorism. Whereas in 1597 it was consistently pithy and dull, in 1612 it is more provocative and interesting. In the aphorism Bacon uses figurative language such as the simile: "Beauty is as sommer fruits, which are easie to corrupt and cannot last" ("Of Beauty") and the metaphor: "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune" ("Of Marriage and Single Life"). He, on occasion, becomes obscure: "Certainly Fame is like a River that beareth up things light, and swolne: and drownes things weighty and solid" ("Of Praise") and, at times, witty: "Long and curious speeches are as fit for dispatch, as a Robe or Mantle with a long traine, is for race" ("Of Dispatch").[21] Although not every aphorism has been "developed", as it were, the variety in Bacon's new aphorisms probably con-

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[21] Vickers has catalogued the various changes that occur in the aphorism including structural changes. One should consult his study. One should also refer to Padhi's discussion of Bacon's wit in his Serpent and Columbine. Although he considers the Advancement, he makes some interesting observations.

tributes to the notion that the 1612 Essays exhibit a "warmer" tone.

A second change that we notice is Bacon's use of the testimonies of others to reinforce or illustrate his own arguments. In the 1597 edition he used this technique only once -- in "Of Ceremonies and Respects" -- however, in 1612 he refers to the words of others in sixteen of the thirty-eight essays. He quotes numerous authors, for example, Aesop, Pliny, Virgil, Tacitus, Livy, Machiavelli, as well as Biblical writers, but Solomon appears to be his favourite source. Often Bacon uses these quotations as foils against which he sets up his example or image. In "Of Judicature" he writes:

> There be (saith the Scripture) that turne judgement into wormewood; and surelie there be also that turne it into vinegar. For injustice maketh it bitter, and delaies make it sowre.

which he follows with

> For certainely Grapes (as the Scripture saith) not be gathered of thornes or thistles; neither can Justice yield her fruitwith sweetnesse, amongst the briers and brambles of poling Clearkes and Ministers. ("Of Judicature")

It is interesting to observe that using the opinions of others in composition was a standard grammar school practice. Was Bacon resorting to grammar school techniques? If we cannot answer this question, we can suggest how the

testimonies of authorities effect the Essays. First, the opinions of others are interesting to read. They give the Essays a looser, "gossipy" quality. In addition, (and this is perhaps the most important fact) they give the Essays a structure. The quotations become a centre as it were, whereby Bacon may prove his points. The testimonies of others may support his arguments. On the other hand, they may be "fond" or ludicrous statements which Bacon may argue against. In this way, the author is not only able to organize the development of his own opinion, but also to manipulate the reader's acceptance of his opinion. Thus we see that the use of the testimonies of others makes the Essays appealing and persuasive.

The third thing we see is that Bacon begins to use a certain rhetorical device more frequently.[22] Partitio, the ability to break down a topic into various headings or sections, had been used once in 1597 (in "Of Honour and Reputation"). In 1612, Bacon uses liberally (in "Of Dispatch", "Of Counsell", "Of Ambition", "Of Deformity", "Of Studies", "Of Judicature", and "Of Great Place"). Unlike the aphorism and the testimonies of authorities, which give the essays a "warmer" tone, this technique does not.

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[22]See Vickers' useful discussion on partitio in Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose, pp. 30-59.

It does, however, contribute to the structure of the essays.

The author must clearly designate the areas he wishes to cover in the argument. The reader, as a result, should be able to follow the argument easily and remember the main points. There is a psychological effect here, in that since the reader can anticipate the structure of the argument he may feel more confident that the author is presenting a comprehensive view of the heading. This notion that the author is "fair" may, in turn, influence the reader to accept the author's opinion. The author, in addition, provides himself with an outline of his argument which allows him to keep his main ideas "in front of him" and prevents tangential rambling. Partitio structures the essays for both the reader and the writer, and it makes the essays appear clear, comprehensive, and logical. When we combine Bacon's use of Classical authorities and his use of partitio we see that a number of the 1612 essays, display a structural arrangement different from the 1597 Essaies.

The fourth thing we should observe is Bacon's use of figurative language. As we have noted in our discussion of the aphorism, Bacon uses many more similes and metaphors in 1612. In fact, figurative devices appear in at least twenty-five essays. He seems to use images in several

ways. On the one hand, the image graphically explains what has already been stated. It is a visual paraphrase. For example:

> Affected dispatch is one of the most dangerous things to businesse that can bee. It is like that which the Physitians call pre-digestion, or hasty digestion, which is sure to fill the bodie full of crudities and secret seedes of diseases. ("Of Dispatch")

As colourful as the simile is it does not advance the initial proposition: It "clinches".[23] At other times Bacon creates an analogy which is integral to the argument: "The way of fortune is like the milken way in the skie, which is a meeting or knot of a number of small starres; not seen asunder but giving light together" ("Of Fortune"). Meaning resides within the image. Further, this particular example illustrates Bacon's ability to reach beyond the "homespun" and to synthesize unlikenesses into an imaginative whole.[24] Before we attempt to consider the question of why Bacon adds more figurative devices to his 1612 Essays, it will be helpful to examine his work in detail. "Of Riches" is a good example of Bacon's imagery. The essay begins with an image:

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[23] L. C. Knights' argument.

[24] This supports Righter's point.

> Riches have wings; and sometimes they fly away of themselves; sometimes they must bee set flying to bring in more. Men leave their riches, either to their kindred, or to the publike: and moderate portions prosper best in both.

The rich man is the keeper of an aviary. Bacon redirects the image: "A great state left to an heire, is as lure to all the birds of prey round about, to seize on him, if he bee not the better stablished in yeeres and judgement". The second image is an extension of the first. Whereas riches were like birds, now they "lure" birds, birds of prey. There is, also, a carrion quality to riches. This notion of decay is transferred into the succeeding period: "Likewise glorious gifts, and foundations, are but the painted Sepulchres of Almes, which soon will putrifie and corrupt inwardly". The image has evolved from "wings" to "birds of prey" to "painted sepulchres". It has literally been transformed from a vital to a moribund image. It can go no further. So too, the essay -- the succession of images brings the argument to the conclusion:

> Therefore measure not thy advancements by quantity, but frame them by measure; and deferre not charities till death: for certainly, if a man weigh it rightly, he that doth so is rather liberall of another mans than of his own.

The initial metaphor, "Riches have wings" is easily understood by the reader. Its simplicity has charm: riches are an organic entity. The second sentence, then,

tumbles along ("Men leave their riches . . . and moderate portions prosper best in both). Bacon, as usual, advocates a moderate approach, but this is seen by the reader as sound advice. Yet this sentence is the key to the second image for it is in this sentence that the word "riches" is shifted from its position as subject to that of object. As a result the metaphor also turns. ("A great state . . . is as a lure to birds of prey . . .".) The reader's response is lead on by the image. Bacon uses his third image, that of putrefication, to encourage the reader to accept his premise, excess in riches may be foolish, if not, dangerous. ("Likewise glorious foundations . . . corrupt inwardly.") Bacon gives no logical reason why things need corrupt and putrefy. The force of his argument rests solely in the image. The reader is expected to recoil from the image of the decaying façade of Almes. While the reader is in the process of recoil Bacon hammers his didactic conclusion. ("Therefore measure not thy advancements . . . then of his owne.") The reader, if he is to accept "if a man weigh it rightly", must agree with Bacon that "Measured" allotments are the best. That is, the reader must retrace his path and realize that in order to avoid decay and corruption "moderate portions prosper best in both". The imagery, then, becomes a distinct method of conveying the argument.

Bacon's use of imagery conforms, then, to traditional

use -- that of prodesse and delectare. He both instructs and delights his reader with his argument. The essential point to notice is the persuasive power of the imagery.

Our examination of the 1612 Essays has revealed certain changes in Bacon's style. We see that there is a warmer, moral tone in some essays, but this tone co-exists with the earlier cold, expedient one. We also see that Bacon seems to be making a greater effort to persuade the reader. The terse, hortatory quality of the original essays is softened by the use of figurative language and his arguments are made more interesting and acceptable by the use of testimonies from others. Finally, rhetorical devices such as partitio not only work to strengthen the clarity of the argument but also the willingness of the reader to believe the argument. Bacon no longer seems to be forcing his opinions as he did in 1597. In 1612, he seems more ready to "sell" his advice by means of persuasive techniques.

When one studies the 1625 Essays several new developments are apparent. The first is the change in the title. No longer just Essays, they are alternately labelled, "Counsells Civill and Morall". The change should indicate two things to the reader. The essays deliberately range over civil and moral topics. And Bacon has ascribed to himself the role of counsellor. This is a subtle change

from the role of doctor which he gave himself in 1597. The second observation one makes is that the Essays have swelled. Not only has the number of topics increased (fifty-eight), but each essay has been expanded. In general, the writing is more discursive and more illustrated than the previous editions. The reader may compare the 1597, 1612 and 1625 versions of "Of Studies" and note the manner in which Bacon altered his essays.

1597	1612	1625
Studies serve for pastimes, for ornaments and for abilities. Their chief use for pastime is in privatenes and retiring; for ornamente is in discourse, and for abilitie is in judgement. For expert men can execute, but learned men are fitttest to judge or censure	same as 1597	same as 1597 and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned.

1597	1612	1625
To spend too much time in them is slouth, to use them too much for ornament is affectation: to make judgement wholly by their rules, is the humour of a Scholler. They perfect Nature, and are perfected by experience	same as 1597	same as 1597 for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need proyning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions at large, except they be bounded in by experience.
Craftiemen continue them, simple men admire them, wise men use them: For they teach not their owne use, but that is a wisedome without them: and above them wonne by observation	Crafty men contemne them same as 1597	same as 1612
Reade not to contradict, nor to believe, but to waigh and consider	same as 1597	Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.

1597	1612	1625
Some books are to bee tasted, others to bee swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: That is, some bookes are to be read only in partes; others to be read, but cursorily, and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention	same as 1597	same as 1597 curiously Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but what would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; are distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things.
Reading maketh a full man, conference a readye man, and writing an exacte man. And therefore if a man write little, he had neede have a great memorie, if he conferre little, he had neede haue a present wit, and if he reade little, hee had neede haue much cunning, to seeme to know that he doth not	same as 1597	same as 1597

1597	1612	1625
Histories make men wise, Poets wittie: the Mathematickes subtle, naturall Phylosophie deepe: Morall graue, Logicke and Rhetoricke able to contend	same as 1597	same as 1597
[FINIS] (Sp. VI, 525)	Abeunt studia in mores: Nay thear is no stand or impediment in the wit, but maybe wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the Stone and and Raines; Shooting for the longs and breast; gentle walking for the stomacke; riding for the head; and the like. So if a mans wit be wandring, let him study the Mathematiks;	Abeunt studia in mores. [The studies pass into the manners.] Nay there is . . . same as 1612 for in demonstrations, if his wit be called always never so little, he must begin again.
	If his wit be not apt to distinguish, or find difference, let him study the schoolemen	for they are cymine sectores [splitters of hairs]

1597	1612	1625
	if it bee not apt to beat over matters and to find out resemblances, let him study Lawyers cases. So euerie defect of the mind may have a speciall receit (Sp. VI, 575-576)	If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt. (Sp. VI, 497-498)

It is interesting to examine the eighteen essays exclusive to 1625. As one might expect, the essays discuss both civil and moral topics. Several of the civil essays like "Of Travel", "Of Plantations", "Of Masques and Triumphs", "Of Buildings", and "Of Gardens" are merely catalogues of description and advice. These essays are very similar to the handbooks of improvement. Other essays, however, are "real" essays, that is, they explore a topic both pro and contra. "Of Usury" is an excellent example.

> Many have made witty invectives against Usury. They say that it is a pity the devil should have God's part, which is the tithe. That the usurer is the greatest sabbath-breaker, because his plough goeth every Sunday. . . . But few have spoken of usury usefully. It is good to set before us the incommodities and commodities of usury, that the good may be either weighed out or culled out; and warily to provide, that while we make forth to that which is better, we meet not with that which is worse.

> The discommodities of usury are, First, that it makes fewer merchants. . . . The second, that it makes poor merchants. . . . The third is incident to the other two; . . . The fourth, that it bringeth the treasure of a realm or state into few hands. . . . The fifth, that it beats down the price of land; . . . The sixth, that it doth dull and damp all industries, improvements, and new inventions, wherein money would be stirring, if it were not for this slug. The last, that it is the canker and ruin of many men's estates; which in process of time breeds a public poverty.
>
> On the other side, the commodities of usury are, first, that howsoever usury in some respect hindereth merchandizing, yet in some other it advanceth it; . . . The second is, that were it not for this easy borrowing upon interest, men's necessities would draw upon them a most sudden undoing; in that they would be forced to sell their means. . . . The third and last is, that it is a vanity to conceive that there would be ordinary borrowing without profit. . . . Therefore to speak of the abolishing of usury is idle. All states have ever had it, in one kind or rate, or other. So as that opinion must be sent to Utopia.

(We should notice Bacon's use of <u>partitio</u> in the preceeding paragraphs.) Bacon has laid out the commodities and discommodities of business. In the fourth paragraph he "weighs" his evidence and proposes a solution:

> To speak now of the reformation and reiglement of usury; how the discommodities of it may be best avoided, and the commodities retained. It appears by the balance of commodities and discommodities of usury, the two things are to be reconciled. . . .

We see that Bacon offers a compromise solution to the problem.[25] The remainder of the essay explains why Bacon's solution is effective and concludes with a challenge to any opponents:

> If it be objected that this doth in a sort authorize usury, which before was in some places but permissive; the answer is, that it is better to mitigate usury by declaration, than to suffer it to rage by connivance.
> ("Of Usury")

Bacon has tried to make his observation on usury useful, interesting, and acceptable to the reader. He does not obscure the topic with value judgments; he adds examples and extensions which make the essay readable; he has structured his argument so that the reader can easily follow it and, in the end, logically "buy" it. "Of Usury" is, then, a genuine essay. The concern for structure that Bacon demonstrated in several 1612 essays is fully realized now in some of the 1625 compositions. Not only has Bacon's style developed in terms of structure, but it has also matured in terms of tone. Zeitlin finds "the trend of Bacon's thought was increasingly worldly".[26] This is true, primarily, in the "civill" essays which contain Bacon's pragmatic and "worldly" advice -- the end result is most

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[25] In this essay and many others, Bacon suggests a *via media* as the appropriate course of action for his reader. This idea will be discussed further in chapter four.

[26] J. Zeitlin, *op. cit.*, p. 513.

important. In the new "moral" essays like "Of Envy", "Of Revenge", and "Of Truth" we see, however, that the moral tone, initially developed in 1612, continues. Although Bacon concerns himself with man as a rational, expedient being, he recognizes that he is also a moral being capable of virtuous action. Bacon himself was a complex personality. It would be unreasonable of him to assume that in providing a guidebook to life he would not have to embrace as many aspects of life as possible. His essay "Of Truth" is a remarkable work because we see him trying to synthesize many things.

Bacon, like Pilate asks the question, "What is Truth?". Significantly, the essay does not answer the question. Instead Bacon compares truth to what it is not, falsehood:

> Truth may come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day: but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false imaginations as one would, and the like but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves.

Yet it is only men of "depraved judgments" that would ultimately prefer the lie because

> 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 an epistemological viewpoint man, as a creation of God, must prefer truth. The tone and focus of the first paragraph is ethical. The last statement of this paragraph reveals Bacon's "idealistic" self: "Certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth". In this paragraph Bacon has been addressing the idea of Truth.

In the second paragraph the focus shifts: "To pass from theological and philosophical truth to the truth of civil business". Bacon now discusses civil truth and as a result there is a slight shift in tone. The imagery which Bacon employs is similar to that used in the first paragraph, but it is more straightforward and practical:

> it will be acknowledged even by those that practise it not that clear and round dealing is the honour of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehood is like allay in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better but it embaseth it.

The following metaphor for dishonesty is noteworthy: "For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goeth basely upon the belly and not upon the feet". On the surface it is matter-of-fact, but on a

symbolic level it re-introduces an ethical note. The serpent is a primary symbol in Christian mythology. This image serves a dual function in the essay. First, it helps to suggest that any "natural though corrupt love of the lie" is not really "natural"; it is a condition of post-lapsarian of fallen man. Secondly, as a structural point of punctuation it signals the essay's ethical conclusion. The essay, then, pivots and turns to consider the morality of truth. In the aphorism "a lie faces God and shrinks from man" we see Bacon's ability to compress an idea (in this case, Montaigne's) into a dense image which is both simple and enigmatic. In the final analysis, civil affairs are subsumed by moral conduct. Bacon concludes on a strongly ethical note:

> Surely the wickedness of falsehood and breech of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men, it being foretold that when Christ cometh, he shall not find faith upon the earth. ("Of Truth")

Bacon brings together civil and moral issues and images in this essay. It is without a doubt one of the most complex and thought provoking of his essays. It is interesting to speculate on the placement of this essay in terms of the 1625 edition. "Of Truth" begins the collection. One wonders if this essay, in fact, provides a clue as to how the reader should consider the remaining essays. Is the final goal of all the essays the discovery of truth? Does Bacon

provide within the Essays knowledge which, in turn, will lead to truth?

These questions may puzzle us, nonetheless, there are certain concrete statements we can make about the 1625 Essays. They are much more comprehensive, both in the subjects offered and in the detail in which they are discussed. They are also more complex than any previous essays. We see that Bacon has developed the persuasive power of his argument by means of imaginative aphorisms, logical syntax, descriptive examples, and pleasing figurative language. Whereas the 1597 Essaies discussed a limited aspect of human life, by 1625 the Essays attempted to deal with the totality of existence and as such to be an encyclopaedia for the "whole" man. Bacon's style has adjusted to these demands. His essays have developed from pithy, prosaic homespun to round, stimulating debates.

Throughout the chapter we have seen considering Bacon's style in the Essays. It would be foolish, however, to view style in a kind of vacuum. If Bacon has developed his Essays so that they are no longer terse pieces of rarified prose, he must have had a reason for it. We have been suggesting that the Essays expand not only in the medium but also in the message. This notion leads us to

consider the question of Bacon's audience. What role does it play in the Essays? We will attempt to answer this question in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE READER

It is not surprising that the revisions of the essays have posed problems for various critics. While earlier scholars like Arber did not consider the Essays as works integral to Bacon's canon,[1] in 1923 R. S. Crane hypothesized that there was a direct relationship between Bacon's programme of knowledge, as it is outlined in The Advancement of Learning (1605) and the new style and content of the 1612 and 1625 essays. Later Bush tended to support this position when he wrote that the Essays attempt "to fill a gap in practical psychology and ethics to contribute to . . . knowledge of the genus homo".[2] It seems that it is no longer a contentious issue whether there is a relationship between the Advancement and the Essays. Most critics will now assent that the Essays are an educational handbook. Once this general notion has been settled, however, there remain several unsettling questions. If the Essays are related to the Advancement why does Bacon make emendations of his 1612 Essays in the 1625 edition? Surely, he had enough new work to do on the 1625 Essays

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[1] Noted by R. S. Crane in "The Development of Bacon's Essays" in Essential Articles, p. 272.

[2] D. Bush, op. cit., p. 196.

without redoing work which already reflected his scientific programme. Secondly, as for the problems of shifts in style, there is a more fundamental question. How should one read the Essays? Is each essay a separate and complete entity, or is it possible to link the essays together so that the reader may consider them as a cohesive whole?

Stanley Fish, in his chapter "Georgics of the Mind: The Experience of Bacon's Essays",[3] presents a thesis which attempts to answer these questions. He performs an innovative examination of the Essays and his conclusions offer fresh insight into the design of the Essays. Since his work is not only cogent but also unique to Bacon scholarship we will examine his argument in some detail.

The seemingly discrepant tones of the various essays (especially in the 1625 edition) have puzzled scholars. If some essays are impersonal, objective and cold, certainly others are personal, convoluted and moral. Previous critics have generally equated "scientific" with "objective". While they are then able to understand the pragmatic tone of some essays, they are hard pressed to reconcile this with the ethical tone of other essays. Most critics have attempted to understand the Essays in terms of form and to

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[3] S. Fish, "Georgics of the Mind: The Experience of Bacon's Essays" in his Self-Consuming Artifacts (Berkeley: University of California, 1972).

devise theories about this form. Yet Bacon's lack of consistency only creates havoc for those who seek a consistent pattern in his work. Fish's new approach rests on the premise that while it is correct to see a relationship between the Essays and Bacon's scientific programme, most of his predecessors have not understood what is scientific about the Essays. He contends that the "scientific" quality of the works is in the experience provided by the form of the essays; that is, the reading of each essay is an experience analogous to the inductive scientific method advocated by Bacon. Moreover, he finds this experience consistent throughout the 1612 and 1625 essays. We must now consider this experience.

For those unfamiliar with Fish's technique, it will be helpful to reproduce a sample of his analysis:

> Let us begin by examing a section of the 1625 essay "Of Love":
>
> You may observe, that amongst all the great and worthy persons (whereof the memory remaineth, either ancient or recent) there is not one that hath been transported to the mad degree of love: which shews that great spirits and great business do keep out this weak passion. You must except nevertheless Marcus Antonius, the half partner of the empire of Rome, and Appius Claudius, the decemvir and lawgiver; whereof the former was indeed a voluptuous man, and inordinate; but the latter was an austere and wise man: and therefore it seems (though rarely) that love can find entrance not only into an open heart, but also

into a heart well fortified, if watch be not well kept.

Everything about the first sentence serves to inspire confidence in its contents. Before a reader reaches the main statement, he has been assured (by the parenthesis) that it is based on exhaustive research. Both the rhythmic and argumentative stresses fall on the phrase "there is no one," and nothing that follows qualifies this absoluteness. The formal conclusion of the "which" clause is hardly necessary -- it is clearly implied -- but it does add to the impression of completeness and finality especially since the opposition of "great" and "weak," "business" and "passion," is so strongly pointed. the form of the whole is almost syllogistic, moving from the primary proposition -- there are "great and worthy persons" to the secondary proposition -- "there is not one that hath" to the inevitable therefore -- "which shews that". In short, the reader is encouraged in every way possible to confer the status of truism or axiom on the assertion this sentence makes. Of course there are potential ambiguities. As we read it for the first time. "You may observe" is simply a rhetorical formula which allows us to anticipate something unexceptionable; but, strictly speaking that formula includes the possibility of not performing the action: you may observe, or, on the other hand, you may not observe. The material in the parenthesis contains a similar "logical out," since it acknowledges indirectly the possibility of there being a whole body of great and worthy persons whereof no memory remains, persons whose existence would call into question the validity of the generalization that follows. Still, there is no reason for a reader to indulge in quibbles, and every liklihood, if my description of the sentence's effect is accurate, he will not.

But hardly has Bacon established his axiom before he begins to qualify it, and insofar as the reader has accepted it, he participates in the act of qualification. Indeed he has no choice, for in contrast to the permissive "may," Bacon begins the next sentence with a commanding "You

must except"; and as the exceptions are enumerated the force of the original statement is less and less felt, in part because the prose is making so many new demands on the reader. The sentence proceeds in fits, and each stage of it seems momentarily to be the final one. First Marcus Antonius and Appius are set apart from other "great men" and this is a simple enough (mental) action; but then these two are distinguished from one another and the reader is obliged to construct categories for them: both are "great" and subject to the passion of love; but while the weakness (voluptuous and inordinate) of one suggests an explanation for his subjugation -- Marcus Antonius can be "handled" without disturbing the validity of the axiom -- the qualities of the other (wise and austere) prevent us from raising this explanation to the level of a general truth. And meanwhile, the emphasis of the entire experience has shifted from the original assertion to the classification of its exceptions, so that it now seems that no great man is immune from the infection of love.

At this point, the words "and therefore" promise relief from this rather strenuous mental activity. Presumably a new and more inclusive axiom will be forth coming, one which takes into account the fact of Marcus Antonius and Appius Claudius. But unlike the first (and now discredited) axiom, this one is qualified even before it is offered. The firm conclusiveness of "therefore" gives way to the equivocation of "seems" and then to the near negativity of "though rarely". By the time the reader reaches the actual statement, its status is so unclear that the question of record -- whether or not great men and mad lovers constitute mutually exclusive classes -- is only further muddled. The last tail-like phrase, "if watch be not will kept," introduces a new variable -- the vigilance factor -- which would seem to make it even more difficult to formulate a generally applicable rule.[4]

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[4] S. Fish, "Georgics of the Mind: The Experience of Bacon's Essays", pp. 81-83.

Fish's argument depends on a close, if not strenuous reading of each essay. He concentrates on the tension that exists between the form and the content in each essay; that is, the stress between the appearance and the reality of the argument. The superficial essay consists of a number of forceful, euphonious and rhythmic rhetorical structures which are pleasing to the reader's ear and eye. The rhetorical techniques provoke the reader to agree with the argument put forward by the author. But the discerning reader will recognize eventually that the content of the essay, that is the intrinsic essay, consists of a number of qualifications, exceptions and examples which not only challenge this previous assent but flatly deny it. The pattern of each essay is such that the author begins with a strong confidence-inspiring opening statement; however, as the essay develops the confidence is eroded. The reader must undergo a series of shifting mental postures that eventually lead him to question and re-evaluate any seemingly confident assertion made by the author.

Moreover, Fish points out that if one rigorously examines the content of each essay (he uses "Of Love", "Of Usury", "Of Adversity", "Of Simulation and Dissimulation") one will discover that the topic of each essay is never explained. (As we have noted in our discussion of "Of Truth".) What is discussed, that is, the real subject

of each essay, is what men say about . . . or how men think about. . . . The initial "confidence inspiring" statement is often only a commonly held opinion (expressed in the form of a quotation, witticism, aphorism or the like) which is systematically debunked throughout the course of the essay. The form of the argument, the rhetorical structure, initially "deceives" the reader to concur with the "accepted" opinion. Yet, throughout the argument Bacon challenges his own opening statement (read "poor saying", "high saying", "commonly held") with examples and exceptions drawn from the observable world and by means of these exceptions he manipulates the reader and forces him to question the validity of a previously acceptable commonplace. This tension between the content of the essay and the form of the essay is integral to the experience of the essay.

Fish explains that the use of exceptions and examples in the Essays is consistent with the ideas Bacon expresses in the Advancement and the preface to Novum Organum. The examples "do not 'attend upon the discourse' but begin instead 'to control and supply' it".[5] The impact of these qualifications forces the reader to abandon his initial complacent response to the argument and encourages

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[5] Ibid., p. 90.

him to adopt a keener, more inquisitive attitude. He sees the value of this experience of the essay as three-fold:

> 1) the initial agreement evoked by the rhetorical structure demonstrates "a felt knowledge of the attraction generalities have for the mind and therefore a 'caution' against a too easy acceptance of them in the future;
>
> 2) "an awareness of the unresolved complexity of the matter under discussion;"
>
> 3) an open and inquiring mind, one that is dissatisfied with the state of knowledge at the present time.6

And whereas others have complained about the ethical presence or absence in the Essays, Fish states:

> the essays advocate nothing (except perhaps a certain openness and alertness of mind); they are descriptive, and description is ethically neutral, although if it is accurate it may contribute to the development of a true, that is responsible ethics.7

The true experience of the essay is undoubtedly "unsettling" but, in the final analysis, it is a positive experience because it "refines" the reader's sensibilities and re-directs the mind away from moribund complacency and present satisfaction towards a further inquiry into truth. The reader realizes that he cannot rest with accepted notions but must continue to seek out and pursue truth.

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[6] Ibid., p. 91.

[7] Ibid., p. 94.

Fish contends that this pattern or "experience" exists in all the essays, and therefore, the Essays (as a collective) are not to be read as books that teach wisdom, but as books that actively show wisdom. Each volume is one long educating process.

We must still deal with the problem of the "unlike" qualities that exist between the 1612 and 1625 editions. Some critics have suggested that Bacon revised the Essays without design. Righter sees each essay as a disparate piece and asks that they be read like Donne's Songs and Sonnets. Vickers suggests that "Bacon . . . added new material at any moderately suitable point, without much thought to the overall development".[8] But, as we have indicated, Fish reads the Essays as a cohesive unit. He believes that the revisions of the essays in 1625 were made so that the "experience" could be more clearly demonstrated. Each alteration in 1625 is usually a qualifier of some sort; the initial essay is sharpened, redefined and made more obviously problematic. Fish analyzes "Of Love", "Of Goodnesse and Goodnes of Nature", "Of Fortune", "Of Friendship", and "Of Adversity". He acknowledges that the

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[8] Vickers, Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose, p. 132.

revisions of 1625 strain the moral tone which may exist in the 1612 version; but he suggests that the 1625 edition does not contradict the earlier essays. Rather, they supplement and extend the 1612 ones in such a way that the reader's mind may now have to travel two directions simulataneously. This "double-directing" is reinforced by the changes Bacon makes both in content and form. Not only are exceptions and examples added but the neat rhetorical structures are dispersed. Much of the symmetry and balance is weakened. Fish claims that "Bacon's disrupting of patterns is reader rather than information oriented".[9] Whereas excessive rhetorical balance can constrict the reader's ability to scrutinize the sense of an argument (and therefore it becomes a distemper of learning), the new looser structure (looser in comparison to 1612) allows the reader greater flexibility and promotes a more active involvement in the prose. Yet, Fish cannot ignore that the tightly controlled essays of 1612 are still residual in 1625. And as a result of the "co-existence", a certain tension is created between what Fish labels the "inner" and "outer" forms of the essay. In part, the reader develops certain expectations based on the tightness of the 1612 rhetoric; however, these expectations clash with the other reality of the essay, that is, the

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[9] S. Fish, "Georgics of the Mind: The Experience of Bacon's Essays", p. 121.

qualifiers inserted in 1625. These two structures pull at the reader -- and result in an experience which is "inclusive". Fish posits that

> by refusing either to sacrifice the observable facts to his structure or to wholly abandon the structure when some of the observable facts will not be accommodated within it, Bacon avoids both, fostering hope and a healthy skepticism at the same time.10

He suggests, then, that the retention of the 1612 rhetorical structure is purposeful. He considers it to be an "envelope" which holds in the new material of 1625. The revisions of 1625 are not made for clarity (as Vickers suggests); but, for confusion, complication and healthy doubt: "in the conflation everything is gained and nothing is lost, except the momentary satisfaction involved in listening to the recital of commonplaces that support the illusions men hold about the ways of the world".[11]

Fish holds that any informed reader of the Essays cannot help but be struck by the neat, precise, organized structure and simultaneously by the inadequacy of the structure for the material; in other words, the rampant discrepancy between the form and the content. Rather than

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[10] Ibid., p. 124.

[11] Ibid., p. 134.

interpret Bacon as an artistic failure, Fish sees this disparity as a deliberate method of developing essays which in turn awaken within the reader "a critical awareness of the tendency to facility of all methodical schemes" and "a genuine (that is, felt) desire for an arrangement of material which would more perfectly accord with the facts".[12] The reader is the recipient of "broken" knowledge; he is implored and encouraged to inquire further.

The final point of Fish's thesis is perhaps most interesting. His study, Self-Consuming Artifacts, concerns the Platonic-Augustinian dialectic tradition in seventeenth-century literature. Fish compares Bacon's method of inductive reasoning with that of Plato. He finds a shared distrust of the human mind. Both Plato and Bacon recognized the tendency of the mind to accept the immediate horizon as the limit of reality and both philosophers attempt to provide a way of investigation that deters the mind from resting easily in closed systems. Plato turns away from rhetoric; Bacon, from syllogism. To a degree both the dialectic and the inductive method evoke change; they are "refining processes". The fundamental difference, however, is that while the Platonic-Augustinian dialectic refines

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[12] Ibid., p. 150.

the mind so that it can better apprehend the Truth (the divine perfection which the human mind can only hope to glimpse) Bacon's method of induction refines the mind so that it is better able to understand the objective reality, that is, truth which exists in the phenomenal world. The dialectic is transcendent; the inductive is static. The method used in the Essays provides a way of seeing and behaving in the objective world; it creates essays which are self-regulating. The essays are merely products. The dialectic, used in the sermons and poetry of Donne, transcends the objective; it creates works which are self-consuming. In the final analysis Fish sees the Essays as impersonal; the sermon, personal. He concludes:

> method reduces all minds to a common level, the level of empirical observation. Dialectic raises the level of the mind, and raises it to the point where it becomes indistinguishable from the objects of its search and so disappears.13

In answer to the two questions posed at the beginning of this chapter: why does Bacon emend the 1612 essays in 1625, and is it possible to read the Essays as a whole, we see that Fish believes: a) the revisions are a product of design, not chance; and this design creates an essay which provides an "experience" for the reader which is analogous to Bacon's scientific method of induction;

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[13] Ibid., p. 154.

b) this experience which existed in embyronic form in 1612 essays may be found throughout the 1625 edition; the Essays, then should be read as a coherent body of prose which has as its primary end the "refining" of man's mind and the inducing of man to inquire further.

For the most part Fish's work is stimulating and valuable. His application of the "active reader" (which he has used elsewhere) to Bacon's Essays provides a new thrust for Bacon scholarship. His premise that Bacon worked from a preconceived plan is logically sound. That he chose to revise the essays once in 1612 and again in 1625 suggests that he considered the Essays important. And if we bear in mind that Bacon throughout his life demonstrated a penchant for "planning" and a real desire to organize material in a logical manner, it is extremely doubtful that he tackled the Essays in a random fashion. There are two points that this writer would raise in response to Fish's study. The first is a technical quibble. He discovers this pattern of "experience" in the 1625 essays first, then, he applies his formula looking backwards, "if the shoe fits, wear it", as it were. He convinces this writer, at least, that complex manoeuvring occurs in the 1625 essays, and in part, the potential for this existed in 1612. His study would, however, be more thorough if he had examined the changes made in the 1597 essays in

1612. Although Bacon's Advancement was not written until 1605 the "seeds" of the inductive method must have been germinating in Bacon's mind long before the treatise's completion. Is there anything in the 1597 collection which would further support Fish's thesis? Because Fish chooses not to speculate on this, the problem of the development of the Essays in total remains. The second point we wish to make is not a criticism but rather an assumption drawn from Fish's work. The method of reading proposed by Fish is strenuous. Certainly few twentieth-century readers would be aware of a tension between form and content, nor would they be inclined to recognize a bifurcated structure as a technique to stimulate further investigation. Yet, the supposition that the seventeenth-century reader would be more discerning is not unrealistic. There is in fact a strong Renaissance tradition of the double reader in poetry, and the skeptical habit of mind was prevalent to such an extent that this backwards-forwards-over-the-shoulder method of reading which Fish suggests could very well have occurred in prose as well. We should like, however, to qualify (in good Baconian fashion) the identity of this reader. While Fish's method of reading may be plausible, not everyone would do this. Most obviously this kind of reading demands leisure -- time to ponder, weigh, discard,

re-assess, and re-shape ideas; secondly, if as Fish proposes, there is a rhetorical structure which superficially pulls away from the sense of the essay, only a most perspicacious reader would be sensitive and learned enough to recognize this problem. The two keys we think are time and education. If these conditions do not exist, then the "experience" of the essay is lost; the real purpose of the work obscured. We would suggest that this reader of the 1625 essays holds a clue to the development of the Essays. The aphoristic, prosaic essays of 1597 must surely interest a different audience than the dense, complex essays of 1625. Whereas the 1597 Essaies correspond to the commonplace books made popular during the late sixteenth century, the 1625 Essays have shifted away from this model. We contend then, that the shift in the style of the Essays is a result of a shift in the audience, hence purpose, of the essays. The next chapter will discuss this notion.

CHAPTER IV

CHANGES IN CONTENT

In chapters two and three we have examined revisions in the form of the Essays. We have noted these changes and suggested that they may be linked in some way to Bacon's readership. We would now like to consider the revisions in the content in the Essays. It is hoped that the message, as it were, might reveal who Bacon was addressing. We will begin by considering the 1597 Essaies.

There are ten essays in 1597. In general, the topics and advice can be sorted into two categories: essays which deal with aspects of private life; essays which address concerns of public life. In the former group we would place "Of Studies", "Of Discourse", "Of Expense", and "Of Regiment of Health". And, as the reader can determine, these essays deal with personal matters: levels of reading and uses of studies; the art of conversation; the management of one's money; the maintenance of one's body. In the latter group we place "Of Followers and Friends", "Of Ceremonies and Respects", "Of Negociating", "Of Honour and Reputation", and "Of Faction". These essays consider matters which are of a greater "public" importance: how to manipulate followers; how to conduct oneself socially; how to "win" honour; and how to manoeuvre within faction.

This advice on public matters seems to focus on one area: the control, manipulation, or modification of human behaviour. Although his comments may have practical value for a large number of people, it seems that by way of example Bacon is addressing a reader who is, in fact, "privileged". Implicit in essays like "Of Followers and Friends" and "Of Negociating" is the notion that the reader is in a superior position. He attracts followers; he negotiates with inferiors:

> In government it is good to use men of one ranke equally for, to countenance some extra-ordinarily, is to make them insolente, and the rest discontent, because they may claime a due. But in favours to use men with much difference and election is good. ("Of Followers and Friends")

Two essays in particular have a somewhat political cast, "Of Honour and Reputation" and "Of Faction". In the first one, Bacon has a fairly long partitio (long in terms of the length of a 1597 essay) on "the degrees of Soveraigne honour" and in "Of Faction" he opens with

> Manie have a new wisedome, indeed a fond opinion; That for a Prince to govern his estate, or for a great person to governe his proceedings according of the respects of Faction is the principal part of pollicie. . . . ("Of Faction")

These observations about the 1597 Essays suggest that Bacon, although he did not write exclusively on civil matters, did show a preference for these topics. He speaks to the "public" self more frequently than the "private" one. His topics tend to deal more with power in business

and politics than with values and it might be reasonable to assume that his audience would share these interests. There is nothing to suggest, however, that an enterprising middle class person would not enjoy the volume. As we know, this edition of the Essays resembles the handbooks of improvement popular at the time, and the middle class was the dominant audience for such books. The essays are easy to follow and make no demands on the reader other than compelling him to agree.

When we consider the 1612 edition several things are obvious: the volume and the individual essays have been expanded. We may also notice that the public/private categories we considered for the 1597 Essaies also apply to this edition. Moreover, as we have seen, a new, moral tone emerges to balance the practical, expedient tone of the earlier essays. As we have also noted the original essays are reworked so that they are consistent with the twenty-nine new essays. Their aphoristic skeletons are developed by means of figurative language, rhetorical devices, and testimonies of others. Bacon's additions of examples and images to the 1597 essays is a change that we should note. On the whole, the changes in the original essays made in 1612 do not show that Bacon has a particular bias in mind. In "Of Studies" we see that Bacon suggests that learning is most beneficial for those men who judge:

"For expert men can execute, but learned men are fittest to judge or censure"; and in "Of Ceremonies and Respects": "It is a losse also in businesse to be too full of respects, or to be too curious in observing times and opportunities". Bacon, in "Of Regiment of Health", makes a new comparison ("For it is a secret both in nature and state, that it is safer to change many things than one.") which momentarily links the individual and society as a whole. And in "Of Followers and Friends" Bacon has added: "Likewise glorious followers are full of inconveniency; for they taint businesse through want of secrecy", and "To bee governed by one is not good, and to be distracted by many is worse; but to take advise of some few friends, is ever honourable". These changes, in general, do not push the essays much further into the fields of commerce or politics.

In several new essays, however, Bacon indicates a real interest in the issues of the times. The first essay we will consider is "Of Judicature". The topic itself shows an inclination towards the affairs of state, and it would probably have a special interest for Bacon since he was a lawyer and at one time Solicitor-General (1607) (and then Attorney-General [1613]). He counsels the judges to look after their own responsibilities and not make law or quarrel with the Sovereign or States: "Therefore it is a happy thing in a State, when Kings and States doe often

consult with Judges; and againe, when Judges doe often consult with King and State" ("Of Judicature"). This comment has topical significance when we recall that as early as 1610 James I was struggling with the judges. James upheld the authority of the Court of High Commission while a number of judges, lead by Edward Coke (Bacon's arch rival for many years) championed the authority of the common law. This passage suggests that Bacon supports the monarchy in this struggle.

A second issue that Bacon approaches is religion. He argues, in "Of Religion", that religious unity must be strengthened if humane society is not to dissolve. He considers it blasphemy to use a religious cause to excuse "murthering of Princes, butchery of people, and firing of States". The religious controversy between the Puritans and the Anglicans was still germinating at this time. Nonetheless, the "powder treason" which Bacon mentions was a clear sign that England could be in serious trouble. In his opinion, religious sects that advocate the defiance of authority and the disruption of civil order must be rooted out:[1]

> Therefore since these things are the common enemies of humane society; Princes by their power; Churches by their Decrees; and all learning, Christian, moral or whatsoever sect, or opinion, by their Mercurie rod; ought to joyne in the damning to Hell for ever, these facts, and their supports. ("Of Religion")

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[1]Bacon indicates his concern about religious controversy elsewhere. It is ironic that his pamphlet, "Certaine considerations touching the better Pacification of the

Both these issues involve the State, and it is significant that Bacon writes other essays which in some way discuss the State or sovereign. For example, in "Of Empire" we see that Bacon avoids the obvious subject, Britain's recent expansion into the New World, and focuses on the difficulties of being a King. The ruler is the centre of the society: "Princes are like to the heavenly bodies which cause good or evill times; and which have much veneration, but no rest" ("Of Empire"). Then in "Of Nobility" he advises the King to make good use of his nobility:

> It is well when nobles are not too great for Soveraigntie, nor for Justice; and yet maintained in that height, as the insollency of inferiours may be broken upon them, before it come too fast upon the majestie of King. ("Of Nobility")

A well managed nobility not only acts as a buffer between the King and the people, it also adds "life and spirit" to the State. We know that the nobility had greatly expanded during the Elizabethan period, and this was a source of potential unrest for James. In "Of Counsell" Bacon deliberately placed parameters on the discussion so that it excluded advice other than political. This suggests an obvious interest. He speaks of the King's reliance on counsellors as an acceptable practice "except where there hath been either an overgreatness in one, or an overstrict combination in diverse". He cautions the King to select

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Church of England", which was nominally successful during his lifetime, was reprinted twice in 1640.

men who are faithful, sincere, and plain: "The true composition of a Councellor, is rather to be skilfull in their Masters businesse, then in his nature: For then he is like to advise him and not to feed his humor". And he comes to this theme in "Of Ambition"; "Therefore it is good for Princes, if they use ambitious men to handle it so, as they be stil progressive, and not retrograde". He continues:

> He that hath the best of these intentions when hee aspireth, is an honest man; and that Prince that can discern of these intentions in another that aspireth is a wise Prince. Generally, let Princes and States, chuse such ministers, as are more sensible of duty, then of rising; and such as love businesse rather upon conscience, then upon bravery; and let them discerne a busie nature, from a willing minde. ("Of Ambition")

We see that both "Of Counsell" and "Of Ambition" discuss the choice of ministers and counsellors. The King, if he is to manage the State well, must choose shrewdly and wisely. As is the case with "Of Judicature" these topics must have had Bacon's personal interest for he was now (after so many years of deferment under Elizabeth) one of the King's counsellors. Perhaps the essay which most strongly suggests that Bacon was concerned with the State itself is "Greatness of Kingdoms". Bacon addresses the question: what makes a State great? He perceives that the strength of a State is not related to its size, rather it is linked to the military nature of the people. This military, that

is, nationalistic spirit will deteriorate if the people are overtaxed, or the nobility is too large. Both conditions will cause the common citizen to lose heart and not fight; and Bacon assures his reader that a good infantry is made of "middle people" or small property owners. Without the petty bourgeoisie the army is weak. Since a great kingdom, does not have a weak army, it is the State's task to see that it does not alienate this group. Again, this advice has specific significance for the period. James I was pushing the "middle people" into an increasingly difficult position. They were bearing the tax burden and supporting a monarchy and State which, in turn, refused to acknowledge this fact. Granted the major tax revolts were still to come, but Bacon appears to have sensed another area for dangerous discontent. He makes another observation which also has special importance vis à vis James' policy. Bacon discusses war:

> Nobody can be healthful without exercise, neither naturall body nor politike; to the politike body of Kingdom or estate, a civill warre is as the heate of a fever: but an honourable forraine war is like the heate of exercise. ("Greatness of Kingdoms")

We may suggest, although tentatively, that Bacon was concerned with a future civil war in England. Certainly, his example could be borne out by England's past history -- the Wars of the Roses. It is the final clause that is more

noteworthy. Bacon claims "honourable" foreign war is a good and necessary thing. We recall that James had great difficulty in seeing this idea; instead, he consistently attempted to follow a policy of appeasement which brought not only domestic criticism but also international ridicule. Bacon, like most men of his age, realized that the greatness of a kingdom depended primarily on the leader, the King:

> But certainly in the great frame of Kingdomes and Commonwealth, it is in the power of Princes of Estats by ordinances and constitutions and maners which they may introduce, to sowe greatness to their posteritie and succession.

The previous seven essays that we have considered all reflect an awareness of contemporary issues and, we believe, a desire for effective, stable government. While it is true that other new essays in the 1612 edition deal with personal and ethical matters which speak to a general audience, this writer suggests that these essays we have noted, address a readership that first, would be concerned with government and second, would be in a position to influence national policy. This specific interest in State management has been unnoticed by other critics. We contend, however, that it is a real interest in the Essays and suggest that this may in some way affect the audience of the work.

Our thesis that the revisions in the content of the Essays in part reveal a preoccupation with the affairs of State may be supported if we examine the 1625 Essays. Two of the original essays from 1597 contain emendations which specifically point in this direction. Bacon adds a conclusion to "Of Sutors": "There are no worse instruments than those general contrivers of suits, for they are but a kind of poison and infection to public proceeding". In the essay, Bacon has been considering people who rise by means of suits. He seems to have mixed opinions about the value of suits (he knew from his personal experience that they were practised) but he does disapprove of rising too rapidly by this means. Again, when we consider the period, a large number of people were advanced by patronage. The system itself may have been accepted by the Jacobeans, but the concentration of people advanced by one man's favour, Buckingham's, was alarming. "Public proceeding" was undermined not only because those advanced were incompetent or self-interested but also because the "people" despised these appointments. Bacon, now isolated from the Court, was perhaps in a better position to judge this situation. It is in "Of Faction", however, that we see an addition which clearly speaks to the management of the State:

> Kings had need beware how they side themselves, and make themselves as of a faction or party; for leagues within the state are ever pernicious to monarchies, for they raise an obligation paramount to obligation of sovereignty, and make the king *tanquam unus ex nobis*, as was to be seen in the League of France. When factions are carried too high and too violently, it is a sign of weakness in princes; and much to the prejudice both of their authority and business. The motion of factions under kings ought to be like the motions (as the astronomers speak) of the inferior orbs, which may have their proper motions, but yet still are quietly carried by the higher motion of the *primum mobile*. ("Of Faction")

The King needs to understand and control factions for a failure to deal effectively with this problem may allow a faction to usurp power and shatter social order. (The essay seems to foreshadow, as it were, the turbulence of the 1640's. The Stuarts, as a result of a failure of political imagination, fell into the hands of factions.) This essay demonstrates a distinct interest in the maintenance of political control and equilibrium.

These two examples do not constitute a complete argument, but if we review the 1625 versions of the seven 1612 essays that we previously studied, we will see again that Bacon's emendation continues to direct the essays towards the State. For example, in "Of Judicature" Bacon reinforces his argument that the judges must adhere to the King's commands:

> Let judges remember that Salomon's throne was supported by lions on both sides: let them be lions, but yet lions under the throne, being circumspect that they do not check or oppose any points of sovereignty. ("Of Judicature")

(This example has a pointed irony when we consider that James wished to be thought of as the British Solomon.) "Of Religion" becomes "Of Unity of Religion" in 1625, and while Bacon pleads for unity he does not demand uniformity (this perhaps, offers a way of dealing with contemporary religious controversy). He does write that unity of religion must be achieved at all costs:

> in cases of overt scandal, blasphemy or intermixture of practice against the state much less to nourish seditions, to authorise conspiracies and rebellions, to put the sword into people's hands, and the like tending to the subversion of all government, which is this ordinance of God. ("Of Unity of Religion")

Quite clearly, religion must not subvert the State for government is the "ordinance of God" -- both Stuarts would have appreciated this. This addition to the 1612 essay continues to confirm Bacon's interest in the moral issues of his day and his concern about the way these issues affect the State.

The desire that the King be an astute shaper of his society that was evident in "Of Empire" (1612) is further

elaborated in 1625:

> Kings have to deal with their neighbours, their wives, their children, their prelates or clergy, their nobles, their second-nobles or gentlemen, their merchants, their commons and their men of war, and from all these arise dangers, if care and circumspection be not used. ("Of Empire")

As for nobles, it is wise to set them "at a distance", "but to depress them may make a king more absolute but less safe and less able to perform anything that he desires". About second nobles, Bacon writes: "they are a counterpoise to the higher nobility, that they grow not too potent; and lastly, being the most immediate in authority with the common people, they do best temper popular commotions". These additions in 1625 suggest that Bacon was making a deliberate effort to explain how groups at Court may effect the authority of the King. Bacon continues in "Of Nobility" to express the opinion that the king must know his nobility; for, a king cannot intimately know too large a group. As well

> A humerous nobility causeth poverty and inconvenience in a state, for it is a surcharge of expense; and besides, it being of necessity that many of the nobility fail in time to be weak in fortune, it maketh a kind of disproportion between honour and means. ("Of Nobility")

As we have noted the Stuarts (and Tudors) enlarged the noble class (we suspect to Bacon's disapproval). This essay,

like "Of Expense" (1625) and "Of Seditions and Troubles", attempts to show the dangers that may occur when the nobility is large and diffuse, weak and impoverished. The emendations in both "Of Empire", and "Of Nobility", then, strengthen our opinion that these essays reveal a particular concern for the careful management of the State.

When we turn to "Of Counsell" (1625) we see that Bacon has made several additions. The first suggests that "inward counsellors" be "especially true and trusty to the king's ends . . .", and the second, commends that

> A king when he presides in council, let him beware how he opens his own inclination too much in that which he propoundeth, for counsellors will but take the wind of him, and instead of giving free counsel, sing him a song of placebo. ("Of Counsell")

It is clear that the King needs to be aware of the flattering counsellor for he will not necessarily give sound advice. So too must the King be aware of favourites. In "Of Ambition" (1625) Bacon introduces this sub-topic: "It is counted by some a weakness in princes to have favourites, but it is of all others the best remedy against ambitious great ones" ("Of Ambition"). The mention of favourites takes on special significance when we consider James' predisposition to favourites. In particular, we should think of his and later, Charles', relationship with

George Villiers. There can be no doubt that this one man stood before all other men in the kingdom. It would be unlikely that Bacon, himself, would ever directly speak out against Villiers, but we see that Bacon does not propose that favourites, alone, should control the State: "there must be some middle counsellors to keep things steady for without the ballast the ship will roll too much". Both "Of Counsell" and "Of Ambition" suggest that Bacon perceives that the king, if he is to be a successful, effective ruler, must not only know his advisors well, but also use them with care.

This sentiment is also expressed in the new version of "Greatness of Kingdoms". The prince must know his counsellors or "workmen" so that the work of the kingdom may be accomplished:

> But be the workmen what they may be, let us speak of the work; that is, the true Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates, and the means thereof. An argument fit for great and mighty princes to have in their hand, to the end that neither by over measuring their forces they leese themselves in vain enterprises, nor on the other sides, by undervaluing them they descend to tearful and pusillanimous counsels.
>
> ("Greatness of Kingdoms")

But this essay contains other additions, and in these Bacon reveals most clearly a concern for contemporary events in England. Whereas in 1612 he referred vaguely to taxation problems, he now writes:

> It is true that taxes levied by consent of the estate do abate men's courage less, as it hath been seen notable in the exercises of the Low Countries, and, in some degree, in the subsidies of England. For you must note that we speak now of the heart and not of the purse. So that although the same tribute and tax laid by consent or by imposing be all on to the purse, yet it works diversely upon the courage. ("Greatness of Kingdoms")

We cannot read this without considering the difficulties and hostility the Stuarts created when they began to impose taxes contrary to the will of Parliament. And just as Bacon in 1612 had commented on the right purposes of a foreign war, this time he adds comments which are specific and noteworthy:

> But this much is certain that he that commands the sea is at great liberty and may take as much and as little of the strongest of the war as he will. Whereas those that be strongest by land are many times nevertheless in great straits. . . . Surely at this day with us of Europe, the vantage of strength at sea (which is one of the pricipal doweries of this kingdom of Great Britain) is great.

The fact was that the British navy had markedly deteriorated throughout James' reign. Once the pride of the Elizabethans and the scourge of the Spanish, it had become a moribund fleet incapable of assault. This decline undoubtedly stung the British national image. Bacon's advice in "Greatness of Kingdoms" must be seen as an exhortation to rebuild not only the navy, but the country's entire foreign

policy so that Britain could regain its position as the Protestant defender of Europe. This advice could only be of value if it were accepted by the king and his counsellors.

Thus we see by examining the 1625 versions of "Of Judicature", "Of Unity Religion", "Of Empire", "Of Nobility", "Of Counsell", "Of Ambition", and "Greatness of Kingdoms" that Bacon continues to add material which not only reflects and increasing interest in the problems of his age but also a clear desire that the State be managed by the king and his counsellors in a thoughtful and competent manner. Lest the reader is not convinced that Bacon is shifting at least some of his essays away from a general audience towards an audience that has a vested interest in government, we will consider essays written exclusively for the 1625 edition.

As we have noted in chapter three Fish sees a pattern for reading the essays. He initially perceives the "experience" in the 1625 Essays, and then he traces it to certain works in 1612. There are, however, several essays which in no way conform to his thesis. The most notable are "Of Plantations", "Of Travel", "Of Gardens", "Of Masks and Triumphs", and "Of Buildings". These essays are catalogues of information, and in fact, do not deserve the label "essay". Yet the data which Bacon outlines in

these implicitly directs the essay away from a general or middle class reader. In "Of Plantations", which contains a number of practical considerations for the successful growth of a colony, we see a disregard for the middle class merchant as ruler:

> Let not the government of the plantation depend upon too many counsellors and undertakers in the country planteth, but upon a temperate number; and let those be rather noblemen and gentlemen then merchants; for they look ever to the present gain. ("Of Plantations")

Such a statement would certainly be "off-putting" to a merchant who aspired to political leadership. In "Of Travel" we see a similar disdain. The European tour was considered an essential part of a young man's education. Although wealth could ensure that the trip was possible, it alone was not a guarantee that one would see and do the important things while in Europe. Bacon writes:

> The things to be seen and observed are, the courts of princes, especially when they give audience to ambassadors; the courts of Justice, while they sit and hear causes . . .

and

> As for the acquaintance which is to be sought in travel; that which is most profitable, is the acquaintance with the secretaries and employed men of ambassadors. ("Of Travel")

Clearly social prominence was necessary if a boy were to gain access to the "courts" and "secretaries".

One of the most unusual essays is "Of Gardens". Traditionally gardens were a nominal topic for a discussion on the spiritual qualities of man -- the garden was man's original home. (Browne's "The Garden of Cyrus", Milton's "Paradise Lost".) In this essay however, Bacon discusses solely the construction of a literal garden. The detail and the length (seven pages, one of the longest) hint that Bacon had more than a passing interest in the topic. But, he does not describe a common garden; it is a thirty-acre extravagance:

> So I have made a platform of a princely garden partly by precept, partly by drawing, not a model, but some general lines of it, and in this I have spared for no cost. But it is nothing for great princes; that for the most part taking advice with workmen, with no less cost set their things together. . . . ("Of Gardens")

We see this habit of describing "prince-like" things exists also in "Of Masks and Triumphs" (an essay about entertainments, "But yet, since princes will have such things, it is better they should be graced with elegance than daubed with cost"); and in "Of Buildings" which begins:

> we will therefore describe a princely palace making a brief model thereof. For it is strange to see now in Europe such buildings as the Vatican and Escurial and some others be and yet scarce very fair room in them. ("Of Buildings")

The feature common to these five essays is the authorial rejection of the "common" and his appeal to the aristocratic. Our suspicion that Bacon may be trying to flatter the prince by discussing these types of masks, travels, gardens and buildings is strengthened by an anecdote Bacon uses in his new essay "Of Prophecies":

> The trivial prophecy, which I heard when I was a child, and queen Elizabeth was in the flower of her years was:
>
> When hempe is sponne
> England's done:
>
> whereby it was generally conceived that after the princes had reigned which had the principal letters of the word hempe (Henry, Edward, Mary, Philip, Elizabeth) England should come to utter confusion; which thanks be to God, is verified only in the change of the name; for that the King's style is now no more of England, but of Britain. ("Of Prophecies")

We see that Bacon deliberately makes an opportunity to praise the king. And such remarks probably did not endear Bacon to the middle class audience. (They were more inclined to agree with the prophecy.)

Yet these essays, while they may address the Court, do not reveal a concern for the "real" problems of the age which we have been suggesting colours some of the other essays which were also new in 1625.

Bacon's concern about religious controversy and the nature of warfare, both important topics in the Jacobean period and topics which Bacon has dealt with in

other essays we have examined, are further revealed in "Of Vicissitude of Things". Although the essay begins by contemplating the "winding sheets" of nature (earthquakes and deluges), the real focus of the essay is on the vicissitudes of society (religion and war). That Bacon does not encourage the growth of new religions suggests he is a preserver of the status quo. He dislikes certain religious sects because they bring out zealous behaviour in men, and, in some cases, challenge the authority of the king. (One recalls James' troubles in Scotland with the Presbyterians.) He recognizes, however that certain "heresies" exist, not because they have an inherent value, but, because certain abuses of the old religion exist:

> Surely there is no better way to stop the rising of new sects and schisms than to reform abuses; to compound the smaller differences; to proceed mildly and not with sanguinary persecutions; and rather to take off the principal authors by winning and advancing them than to enrage them by violence and bitterness. ("Of Vicissitude of Things")

As in "Of Unity of Religion" he offers practical advice for the resolution of religious conflict and the maintenance of social order. When Bacon speaks of war, we again see that he did not believe war must be avoided. Instead he pointed out that a strong state must not grow effeminate unless it wished to be preyed upon by its neighbours:

"So was it in the decay of the Roman empire, and likewise the empire of Almaigne after Charles the Great, every bird taking of a feather; and were not unlike to befall Spain, if it should break". The example, although it contains a contemporary reference to Spain, surely must have had an implicit message for the English reader. The nation must uphold its military strength or else it will weaken and fragment.

If we doubt that the counsel in "Of Vicissitude of Things" was primarily for the king we should not doubt that Bacon had this intention in "Of Seditions and Troubles". He repeatedly advises that the king is the source of order and authority:

> For the motions of the greatest persons in a government ought to be as the motions of the planets under primum mobile (according to the old opinion), which is that every of them is carried swiftly by the highest motion and softly in their own motion.[5]

And he cautions:

> For when the authority of princes is made but an accessory to a cause, and that there be other bands that tie faster than the band of sovereignty, kings begin to be put almost out of possession.

When the people are poor and discontented and have loyalties that do not include the king, the state is in trouble. This trouble is extreme if the nobility and the

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[5]Bacon has used a similar image in "Of Faction".

"commonality" can be united;

> there is in every state (as we know) two portions of subjects; the nobles and the commonality. When one of these is discontent, the danger is not great; for common people are of slow motion; if they be not excited by the greater sort; and the greater sort are of small strength, except the multitude be apt and ready to move of themselves. Then is the danger when the greater sort do but wait for the troubling of the waters amongst the meaner, but then they may decline themselves.

These are the conditions suitable for rebellion and sedition. The final comment of the essay should convince us that the essay was designed for the ruler of the state:

> Lastly, let princes, against all events not be without some great person, one or rather more, of military valour, near unto them for the repressing of seditions in their beginnings. . . . But let such military person be assured and well reputed of, rather than factious and popular, holding also great correspondence with the other great men in the state, or else the remedy is worse than the disease.

Social order is, ultimately, the result of proper management of the state. The state, in turn, runs smoothly if the king or prince not only knows himself, but also those men under him.

It is hoped that our study has convinced the reader that Bacon developed his essays in part by shifting the content towards a greater preoccupation with political and social issues and with effective government. We posit

that this "development" changed the appeal the Essays had for a general middle class audience. Bacon not only discusses matters that are specialized, but also gives advice which, if it is to have any impact, must be taken by readers who can influence government policy. The additions and emendations in the Essays that we have examined change the Essays from a simple commonplace book popular with everyone to a comprehensive guidebook written especially as a counsel for the King.[6]

If the reader will accept that the Essays have a particular focus on state management, we may then proceed to consider why Bacon might wish to evolve his pithy apophthegms in this direction. The first reason may be merely personal. Although Bacon may have claimed all knowledge as his province, we should not doubt that his career as a politician was especially important. He spent almost twenty years trying to acquire a meaningful appointment, and once favour was granted his way, he pursued that

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[6]The tradition of essays advisory to kings had been well established in Classical times. Aristotle, Xenophon, and Isocrates all wrote in this genre. We know that this tradition was continued throughout the Renaissance, especially on the continent. Two of the most famous works are Erasmus' Institutio principes Christiani and Machiavelli's Il Principe. In English there were such early works as John Gower's Confessio Amantis. During the sixteenth century Sir Thomas Elyot translated Isocrates' Ad Nicolem, The Doctrine of Princes (1584). James I himself indulged in this by writing Basilikon Doron (1599) for his son Henry. This work was imitated by John Cleland's

may be possible that these new Essays were meant to be counsels for the new king, offered in the hope that they might move the king to improve Bacon's position. Certainly past experience had shown Bacon that the monarchy could alter a person's favour and fortune.

The second reason why the essays focus on state management may be less ego-directed. Bacon, both as scientist and philosopher, cast himself in the role of the observer. In spite of his involvement with the Court until 1621, it would not have been difficult for Bacon to recognize that the monarchy and the state were in trouble. The division between it and the people must have been evident; and the radical response towards the monarchy exhibited by a growing number of people must have been alarming. From this point of view alone, Bacon may have attempted to present Charles with some observations and solutions designed to preserve that state and placate the people.

Aside from the particulars that Bacon has suggested, we must consider whether there is a dominant pattern to his advice. After several readings a particular authorial approach does emerge. Bacon counsels his reader to be moderate. For example in "Of Expense" (1597) Bacon suggests that spending should be done for "honour and good actions" but it should not be extravagant. By 1625, he has added:

> A man had need, if he be plentiful in some kind of expense, to be saving again in some other. As if he be plentiful in diet, to be saving in apparel. . . . For he that is plentiful in expenses of all kinds will hardly be preserved from decay.

The same notion of balance in spending applies to caring for the body:

> If you flie Physicke in health altogether it will be too strange for your body when you shall need it, if you make it too familiar it will worke no extraordinary effect when sicknesse commeth.
> ("Of Regiment of Health", 1597)

Extreme dependence on doctors is as beneficial as extreme independence -- worthless. "Measured behavior" should not only govern personal matters like money and health, it also should be considered in public affairs: "To bee governed by one is not good, and to be distracted by many is worse; but to take advise of some few friends, is ever honourable" ("Of Followers and Friends", 1612). In "Of Suspicion" he introduces suspicion as a negative quality, but then refutes this. He concludes: "Therefore ther is no better way to moderate suspicions then to account upon such suspicions as true and yet to bridle them as false" ("Of Suspicion"). Likewise in "Of Delays" Bacon's counsel is "the ripeness or unripeness of the occasion (as we said) must ever be well weighed". In "Of Innovations" we see the same judicious attitude. Time

progresses; therefore, change is inevitable. But, change should not be gratuitous or foolhardy:

> It is good also not to try experiments in states except the necessity be urgent, or the utility evident; and well to be ware that it be their reformation that draweth on change and not the desire of change that pretendeth the reformation.
> ("Of Innovations")

A classic example of Bacon's preference for the middle approach occurs in "Of Usury" (1625). In this essay, as we have observed earlier in chapter two, he sets before the reader the "discommodities" and "commodities" and rather than advocate the cessation of usury Bacon proposes certain reforms "for since there must be borrowing and lending and men are so hard of heart as they will not lend freely, usury must be permitted". Certainly in such essays as "Of Vicissitude of Things" and "Of Seditions and Troubles" we see Bacon's unwillingness to encourage radical action. Instead, he chooses a rational and deliberate course.

These essays that we mentioned are not only drawn from all three versions of the Essays, but they also deal with civil and moral topics. We may now wish to speculate on why Bacon seems to opt for the middle position in so many essays. The first reason pertains to the nature of the essay, itself. As we recall from chapter two, the essay is a weighing procedure. The topic is discussed in

pro and *contra* terms. The effect of this procedure may be to consider both the positive and negative aspects of a topic and then produce a conclusion which reflects a rational synthesis of these two positions. The second reason Bacon encourages moderation may be linked to the nature of the age in which he was writing as well as his personal beliefs. As we have noted in certain essays like "Of Religion", "Greatness of Kingdoms", "Of Judicature", "Of Vicissitude of Things", and "Of Sediton and Troubles" radical change is anathema to Bacon. Although he has advocated reform in learning and knowledge in other works, Bacon recoils from similar reform in society. For him, the king remains the *primum mobile* and each person and thing in society derives a sense of place from this premise. The advice that Bacon gives in the *Essays* suggests that he is, in political and societal terms, a preserver. Whereas such a message might be insignificant at other times in the early decades of the seventeenth century, moderation was a viable, if not praiseworthy, philosophical posture. The political turmoil of the times was such that violent attacks on the established order made from the left were meeting equally violent reactions from the right, and moderation was being offered and adhered to less and less.

Initially, moderation is an ideal way out of the skepticism that earlier marked the age. The skeptic may be caught between two courses of action. On the one hand, there is a danger of speculative paralysis; on the other hand, there is the problem of blind acquiesence. The search for and implementation of a *via media* offers a positive way of coping with this dilemma. One takes the best of things, sifts, considers, but in the end acts. It is slow progress forward; nonetheless, it is progress because there is a continual process of rejection, discovery and affirmation. It is affirmative action and not debilitating stasis.

The restraint that is implied in the *via media* which Bacon presents both looks ahead to the rationalism of the eighteenth century and also back to the teleocentrism of the sixteenth century. Man looks to Nature where God's wisdom is manifest. Although man cannot perceive this fully, he can determine the more obvious and tangible aspects of nature. Observation of nature has informed Bacon (as it has Hooker) that there is a rational arrangement of things. The Elizabethans and Jacobeans believed that man was acting in the proper way when he conformed to nature's pattern. To rebel against this pattern was to rebel against oneself and lapse into chaos.[7] Man must use

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[7] J. F. Danby, *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature*

reason and follow custom so that he may best enact nature's pattern. The shape of things will reveal itself over a long period of time. Therefore, it is important to understand oneself in the context of history as well as in the context of the environment. For this reason radical change is ignored by Bacon as a possible philosophy. In offering the *via media* Bacon conforms to the beliefs of his time. Man must fulfill his function in the pattern that is rational, benevolent, and ultimately moderate.

We have now noted that the *Essays* develop both in style and in content. We must now speculate on the relationship between these two aspects of the *Essays*. We suggest that the knowledge Bacon offers is the essence of the *Essays*. Nonetheless, Bacon is aware that if his advice is to have value it must be accepted by his reader. Hence, Bacon becomes the refined persuader and the *Essays* change from detached, aphoristic shells to unified, rounded arguments. His new style makes his writing more accessible and psychologically appealing to his audience. The use of grammar school structures may have a dual purpose. First, if we are correct to suggest a shift in readership these structures may be a kind of tribute or flattery to the sophistication of his new reader. Unlike the earlier reader,

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(London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 25.

this one does not need to be exhorted and instead must be reasoned with. The second reason is linked closely to the first. These structures give the Essays the appearance of logical argument, and as such may lead the reader to agree with the authorial opinion because it seems reasonable. The persuasive quality of these Essays is also developed by Bacon's use of images, examples, quotations and analogies which serve to support, colour, and sweeten his argument. Changes in form, then, were integral to both the popularization and specialization of his content. The Essays developed from commonplaces on life to counsels on state and from pithy commands to discursive debates because Bacon no longer wrote for the masses but for the elite.

CONCLUSION

In the preceeding chapters we have attempted to present an analysis of the changes that occur within the Essays and to offer reasons for these changes. It would seem that Bacon's Essays have their roots in several genres. The early Essaies resemble the commonplace books, and the later Essays are related to both the many types of courtesy literature and occasional literature. The diversity that exists in the Essays cannot be denied. In light of this diversity critics have had difficulty in forming a comprehensive and consistent view of the Essays. As we have seen, no critic has been successful in this effort. Fish provides the most interesting analysis; and his method works in a number of essays but not in every essay. While Vickers and Righter provide thoughtful and provocative comments they, too, are unable to provide an analysis that can be sustained in all the essays. The generalities of Bush and Knights are equally inadequate.

The fact remains then, that Bacon was a multi-faceted personality and nowhere is this better revealed than in the Essays. He is a lawyer, but surprisingly, at times he is a poet. All we need to compare is "Of Usury" and "Of Truth". His writing reflects the social and

political dilemmas of his age. His advice combines the pragmatism and the speculation of his age. It would seem that no one overview of the Essays will work. As readers of the Essays we must accept the complexity of the man and the prose. If we are to offer sound criticism of Bacon's Essays we must concern ourselves with specifics and abandon generalizations. And that method would probably make Bacon happy.

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