

THE COMMONPLACE BOOK:

A KEY TO SIR FRANCIS BACON'S PHILOSOPHY AND METHOD

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TO
MY WIFE
EVELYN

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PREFACE

The rhetorical theories in the philosophy of Sir Francis Bacon are a tantalizing idea in a day when instruction in composition seems to be directed from a modern Tower of Babel. The method of the commonplace book which served the dual purpose of aiding a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century student to discover and recover ideas and phrases is amply referred to in historical and educational literature. It was the germ idea back of this research to attempt to find if the 1597 edition of Sir Francis Bacon's Essays, those ten short compositions, is merely a reworking of a page or pages from the folios of his Promus of Formularies and Elegancies. Numerous allusions were made of the possibility, but no literature discovered indicated any unequivocal proof. Not even research into the original copy of Bacon's Promus (Harleian MS. No. 7017) confirmed such a direct connection. The author of this study first sought to pursue the research by making a broad foray into the educational philosophy of Renaissance England, especially as it related to rhetorical theories of composition. In the final steps of the study, he sought to isolate more precisely Bacon's attitude toward language. The influence of the commonplace book on Bacon's

early writings and their aphoristic and antithetical style is the most difficult part of the study because of the need to observe just what kind of revisions appear between the 1597 and the 1625 editions of the Essays, a clue to the development of Bacon's prose.

The influence of the commonplace book as a means of discovering and recovering worthwhile ideas was found to be incontrovertible. But the 1597 edition of the Essays was not discovered to be the result of the work of a zealous and eager printer who sought to make early merchandise out of pages of the Promus. The above statement does not minimize the Promus as Bacon originally intended it, but it does imply that its chief purpose was to stimulate Bacon's fertile mind and imagination to set down in concentrated doses the wisdom which his genius could convert to aphorisms. It is the opinion of this author that the Promus as rhetorical invention has a great deal to commend itself to the teaching of grammar and composition in the twentieth century.

Inasmuch as copies of the 1597 edition of Bacon's Essays do not appear in many volumes of his works, a typescript facsimile is included in the Appendix for the reader's (and writer's) convenience in observing the style of this early effort of Bacon. This facsimile of those first ten

essays is taken from an original 1597 edition owned by the Henry Huntington Library and Art Gallery in Los Angeles, California. Most editions of Bacon's Essays are the 1625 enlarged edition after the passing years had expanded his understanding of both his method and his subject.

Expressions of gratitude are in order to Dr. Charles E. Walton, a valued friend, teacher, and advisor, for his firm yet gentle encouragements in the pursuit of this study; to Mr. Richard L. Roahen for his assistance; to Mr. Robert Hampton and the staff of the William Allen White Library in securing a copy of the original manuscript of Bacon's Promus of Formularies and Elegancies from the British Museum, with the help of Dr. Theodore C. Owen, and the original edition of Bacon's Essays of 1597 from the Henry Huntington Library; and to Miss Vera Newcomer, Latin teacher of the El Dorado (Kansas) High School, who assisted in translating troublesome Latin quotations. Finally, I give special gratitude to my wife, Evelyn, who gave me invaluable assistance in typing the manuscript from an almost indecipherable copy, and to my three sons, who were patient and especially understanding while Dad was engrossed in this study. To all, who directly or indirectly contributed to this project, I offer my sincerest thanks.

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CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND FOR A STUDY OF BACON AND LITERARY COMPOSITION

Somewhat facetiously, one may say that all great writers are born, but not that all great writers are born made. Bacon is no exception to this jest. The full splendor of the writing abilities of great men is invariably the result of long periods of study, discipline, or apprenticeship. A student of Bacon's genius does well to attempt to ascertain the persons behind the scene who influenced the man and his art. Just who that person was or those persons were in young Bacon's case are not simple to identify. A careful study of various biographies of Bacon corroborates the view of this author that not a great deal is known of his early years. Heltzel, however, suggests that scholars are now able to identify Bacon's first tutor up to the time when Francis and his brother Anthony went to Trinity College, Cambridge.¹ He further notes that on October 5, 1578, a sermon was preached by a John Walsall at Paul's Cross and

¹Virgil B. Heltzel, "Young Francis Bacon's Tutor," MLN, LXIII (November, 1948), 483.

later published, in which a letter of dedication was directed to Lady Anne Bacon to whom Walsall wanted ". . . to make some outwarde shewe of mine inwarde heartie thanksgiving for the benefits bestowed upon, and the trust reposed in me your humble and faithful servant." Two of these manuscripts exist, one at Lambeth Palace and the other in the Bodleian Libraries. The dedication reveals:

And when I considered, that by my Lorde and your Ladyship I was first called from the universitie to teach your two sonnes (and those such children, as for the true feare of God, zealous affection to this word, obedience to their parents, reverence to their superiours, humility to their inferiours, love to their instructour, I never knewe any excell them) and also by the same meanes I was likewise first called from teaching of children, to enstruct men, verely I could not but dedicate the first fruites of these my so generall labours to some of that house, whence I was first sent out to be a poore labourer in the Lord's great harvest.²

Heltzel observes that the aforementioned John Walsall was reputed to be chaplain to Lord Keeper Bacon in 1569, but that the period of his employment began shortly after his graduation from Christ Church, Oxford, in June, 1566.³ At that time, Francis Bacon was only five or six years old.

²Quoted in ibid., p. 484.

³Loc. cit.

This employment likely continued until the end of 1569. Walsall was a student at Christ Church, Oxford, by 1563. He received his B. A. degree on June 25, 1566; his M. A. degree on July 9, 1568; and his D. D. degree on July 6, 1584. The sermon alluded to was the only work published so far as one may discover. The dedication was designed to please Lady Anne Bacon, who was highly learned and strictly pious, with doctrines and sectarian ideas which would have been welcome to her.⁴

Lady Anne Bacon, mother of Sir Francis, was a Puritan, interested in the religious controversies of the time as they raged in a theological triangle between Rome, Canterbury, and Geneva.⁵ One should remember that any instructor of her son needed to satisfy her strict Calvinist persuasions. The death of his father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, on March 9, 1579, placed Francis under the apparently indulgent care of his mother.⁶ The early death of Sir Nicholas dealt a great blow to the son's long range prospects for position in high places, inasmuch as young Bacon now had to work to gain his

⁴Ibid., p. 485.

⁵Catherine Drinker Bowen, Francis Bacon: The Temper of a Man, p. 57.

⁶Ibid., p. 42.

livelihood and assume his place at the very bottom of the patronage and preferment. In his Essay, "Of Great Place," he indicates that his dreams of a rise to position did not always materialize as he had wished. Perhaps, Lady Bacon's Puritan sympathies made it possible for her son to question the positions of the Elizabethan Reformation and the traditions which he came to regard as morally poverty-stricken and incapable of bettering man.

Heltzel reviews the various attempts made by scholars to determine who may have been the tutor of young Francis. For example, Eagle sought to prove that it was Sir Anthony Cooke (the father of Lady Bacon) who was the tutor. Thomas and Williams proposed the idea that Lady Anne Bacon (the mother) possessed both the interest and the competence to teach her two sons. But, according to Heltzel, neither theory has any proof.⁷ Not all scholars are of the opinion that Lady Anne Bacon remained so aloof to the tutorship of her sons. For example, Farrington, a student of Bacon's philosophy, states that Anne Cooke, daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, was one of three sisters famous for their scholarship and that the classical languages of Latin, Greek, and

⁷Heltzel, op. cit., pp. 483-484.

Hebrew were their specialities.⁸ Farrington is not sure whether she was proficient in Hebrew, but is certain that she could write a letter in Greek. Furthermore, in the Bacon family circle, Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne could dispute the rival merits of Cicero and Seneca. Sir Nicholas was an Anglican, and Lady Anne was a member of the first generation of fervent Protestants who established the habit of family worship. She was a Calvinist in theology and a Puritan in morals, and Bible reading and family worship were common in their home. She became overly protective, however, and censorious of her matured sons.⁹ As a devout Calvinist, she objected strenuously to the residence of Anthony in a section of London in the neighborhood of a theater.¹⁰ Perhaps, the most accurate picture of Bacon's earliest years is that which shows that he was educated at home, probably by private tutors, including John Walsall, his father, and his mother.¹¹ He was early taught Latin

⁸ Benjamin Farrington, Francis Bacon: Philosopher of Industrial Science, p. 20.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

¹⁰ Bowen, op. cit., p. 81.

¹¹ Adwin Wigfall Green, Sir Francis Bacon: His Life and Works, pp. 9-10.

Greek, and possibly Italian (his mother translated a number of sermons on predestination and the election of God from that language) and surely French, a popular language during Elizabeth's reign.¹² Studies of language were popular in the education of Elizabethan youth. Moreover, Bacon received strict indoctrination with Nonconformist zeal from his mother and a patriotic love of his Queen and country from his father.

If it is true that times make the man, one must consider the educational matrix out of which Bacon came, because the Renaissance was an age of change that reached deeply into academia. Bacon, subject to influence both religious and political, undoubtedly could not have resisted the educational renewals that marked this age. He was a product of his era.

In the sixteenth century, English education was profoundly altered by the two-pronged changes fostered by the Renaissance that had previously spread out from Italy and the Reformation to give a complete face-lifting to the religious life of all of Europe, England included. The Renaissance represented the first shock wave that swept

¹²Loc. cit.

across England from the English Channel. The whole new spirit of inquiry which characterized the onset of the Renaissance brought with it a decline in the entrenched conservatism that tended (and still tends) to mark the learning process. To call the Renaissance a rebirth of learning is to establish almost a misnomer, because learning in England was never dead.¹³ Leach explains that, through the introduction of Christianity into England, a study of Latin became the sum total of the best education of the finest schools of the day. Forward-looking educators of the late medieval years of English history were always searching for ways to improve the quality and the content of their education. With this vanguard of educators came the introduction of Greek and other classical subjects into the curriculum of the English secondary school, in the Renaissance tradition. But it can hardly be said that the introduction of the study of Greek or Hebrew or the refinement of the study of Latin brought with it the major reforms of the sixteenth century.¹⁴ The ordinary schools, however, were likely to have been little influenced by the new trends of the Renaissance.

¹³A. F. Leach, The Schools of Medieval England, p. 248.

¹⁴Loc. cit.

Curtis also agrees that the term, Renaissance, is a misnomer. He contends that Renaissance, as a rebirth of learning, is an inaccurate definition, because learning had never died out.¹⁵ Education in medieval times was rooted in church dogma. The learning of Latin was the main emphasis in medieval schools. The Latin authors that were read may have varied, because religious instructors could hardly have been interested in promoting some of the skeptical works of Horace and Juvenal, as they referred to the activities of the dying divinities of Greece and Rome. Curtis maintains that the great differences between the Middle Ages and the days of the Renaissance may be best described as a difference in attitude that may be summed up in one word, Humanism.¹⁶

Leach agrees with this view, as follows:

The true virtue of what is known as the Renaissance is much better expressed in the term Humanism. It is not the introduction of Greek or the imitation of Cicero, the preference for the study of grammar over dialectic, or for the details of philology instead of the niceties of logic, which constitute the Renaissance. It was the substitution of humanism for divinity, of this world for the next, as the object of living, and therefore of education, that differentiated the humanists from their

¹⁵Stanley James Curtis, History of Education in Great Britain, p. 73.

¹⁶Loc. cit.

predecessors. For a thousand years the attention of educated mankind had been concentrated on its latter end, or on what was feared to follow it. Not life but death had been the subject of culture. Not how to prepare for life but how to prepare for death was the sole object of education. The humanists' progress consisted in the adoption of the dogma, "The noblest study of mankind is man."¹⁷

Herein, lies the most obvious difference between the attitude of life of the Middle Ages and that of the Renaissance, an emphasis on this world or the next. One who reads history or the authors of the pre-Renaissance era must become aware of a preoccupation with religion, so that all of life contributed to the success of man's earthly probation in preparation for the next world. Humanism emphasized the "now" and insisted that education must help men to live, not prepare them to die. Perhaps, here is the clue to Bacon's succinct statement that knowledge is best used in "the relief of man's estate" and for "the benefit and use of man." Humanism left its mark on the mind of Bacon.

Schools of higher education or grammar of the sixteenth century were frequently thought of as Tudor inventions, although they were medieval in origin.¹⁸ This reputation involved the universities, as well as the cathedral schools,

¹⁷Leach, op. cit., pp. 248-249.

¹⁸Craig R. Thompson, Schools in Tudor England, pp. 3-4.

the collegiate schools, and the grammar schools. Thompson observes, moreover, that the grammar schools became the most popular during the early Tudor period and became an impressive factor in providing free education. Schools were no longer solely maintained by and for the church, because many grammar schools were established by laymen.¹⁹ Grammar schools were usually dedicated to supporting the standard medieval curriculum of the trivium and the quadrivium: the trivium of grammar, logic, and rhetoric; the quadrivium of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy.²⁰ This study is mostly concerned with the emphasis upon the study of Latin grammar, designed to help students in their reading of Latin, even though selections were quite circumscribed. Medieval teaching was oral teaching.²¹ Because of the absence or shortage of textbooks, the master read and explained a passage to his pupils, making them repeat after him. Pupils parsed, wrote, and repeated memorized sentences. This was standard method of studying language, especially Latin, by

¹⁹Loc. cit.

²⁰Foster Watson, The English Grammar Schools to 1660: Their Curriculum and Practice, pp. 2-4.

²¹Curtis, op. cit., p. 77.

the time the Renaissance was making its impact felt in England. This oral method was to change drastically, however, with the invention of printing. As books became more plentiful, teachers and pupils relied on them to a greater extent.²²

The main function of the grammar school was clearly defined and understood as the teaching of Latin.²³ The Renaissance added Greek and Hebrew in the sixteenth century; but, according to Thompson, the main purpose throughout seven years of grammar school consisted of a daily memorization and analysis of texts, an incessant practice of composition that included the mastery of reading, writing, and speaking Latin. This Renaissance theory of education was founded on the study of language. Grammar was defined by medieval masters as the art of interpreting poets and historians and of speaking and writing correctly.²⁴ There is little wonder that the Renaissance produced some of England's greatest writers.

As any teacher of Latin knows, teaching and drilling

²²Watson, op. cit., p. 5.

²³Thompson, op. cit., p. 15.

²⁴Loc. cit.

students in a language as highly inflected as Latin takes time. Moreover, almost every reputable sixteenth-century master followed the same route in accomplishing his purpose, that of memorizing, reciting, construing, and composing. In addition, every boy (for girls were not considered fit subjects to receive a grammar school education) had to keep a notebook or commonplace book in which to record and, then, learn Latin idioms, quotations, or figures useful in written composition or oratory. Much of the breadth of learning and impressive storehouse of quotation found in Elizabethan literature comes from these commonplace books.²⁵

As mentioned earlier, the last intellectual phase of the Renaissance was known as Humanism. It placed an emphasis upon the beauty of this world and human affairs, rather than upon the life to come. This new aspect of learning, with its emphasis on the "now," was regarded as that which taught mankind how to live most fittingly in the present. Humanists were not the first to reject the hard-core narrow "other-worldliness" of the Middle Ages and seek a joy in living and an inspiration for achievement in this life.²⁶ Graves

²⁵Ibid., p. 16.

²⁶Frank Pierrepont Graves, A History of Education during the Middle Ages and the Transition to Modern Times, p. 109.

notes that, with the writings of the Greeks and Romans as their models, humanists produced a literature of their own, a literature ornate and florid that had not existed since the most glamorous days of Rome. All types of literature began to flourish, and these writings, with their historical and social implications, ushered in the spirit of modern times.²⁷ One must remember that this legacy was also Bacon's, for he, in humanist fashion, was concerned about man. Since Bacon drank deeply of the humanist philosophy, as well as from general Renaissance attitudes, it is helpful to examine some theories concerning the teaching of language in Elizabethan England. These man-oriented theories of language and education may be observed, as well, in Bacon's own attitudes because of his wish to defeat the ignorance that was shackling humanity and his desire to conquer nature for the benefit of all mankind.

The greatest moving spirit in introducing the ideas of Humanism into England was a teacher from Holland by the name of Desiderius Erasmus, often referred to as the first great humanist. Erasmus was invited to lecture at Oxford, where

²⁷Loc. cit.

he became acquainted with many English scholars.²⁸ Later, he moved among Italian universities and absorbed much of the classics, Patristics, and general knowledge of Greece and Rome designed, as Graves points out, to dispel general ignorance. He edited books on Latin topics and a large number of Greek and Latin classics, making the sayings of the ancients familiar to many. Graves thinks that Erasmus's Adagia, so intriguing to Bacon, was for the most part a compilation of proverbs, maxims, and witty sayings in the manner of a commonplace book, selected for the main purpose of correcting church abuses. In his Colloquia, he arraigned the prevailing conditions in education, religion, and society. As a humanist, yet faithful to the church, he did not look upon religion as something distinct from the rest of man's training. In his world view, anything that illumined the individual and uplifted both him and his social order was idealistic, like piety, learning, moral duty, and manners.²⁹ His humanism is broadly conceived, concerned not only with a mere study of language and form, but with the grasp of ideas and content and with the methods of their

²⁸Ibid., p. 150.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 151-152.

acquisition. Generally, it represents an attempt at the synthesis of biblical training and the new education in the classics.³⁰

There is a remarkable similarity between Bacon and Erasmus. Because English humanists patterned much of their theories upon Erasmus's beliefs, Graves examines the educational ideals of the Dutch humanist. Erasmus believed that universal education should start in infancy with a mother's training her children in health, good habits, and self-control until the child is six or seven years old. Children should master the elements of reading, writing, and drawing by means of informal methods largely observed in their experiences with their mother. At seven, the responsibility for a boy's education should be assumed by the father or tutor with training in the Scriptures, Patristics, and Greek and Latin classics of sufficient scope to capture the spirit of the ancient authors. Grammar was merely an adjunct to literature and the classics. According to Erasmus, all education must illumine the classics.³¹ In his De Civitate

³⁰Ibid., p. 153.

³¹Ibid., p. 152.

Erasmus, as Graves shows, states his aim of education:

. . . the first and most important part is that the youthful mind may absorb the seeds of piety; next, that it may love and thoroughly learn the liberal arts; third, that it may be prepared for the duties of life; and fourth, that it may from the earliest years be straightway accustomed to the rudiments of good manners.³²

Again, there are echoes of Erasmus to be observed in Bacon.

For example, in his De Ratione Studii, Erasmus states that

. . . the fundamental end of elementary teaching is composition written and oral. It is to be attained through imitation of the best ancient models in each kind of composition. From these one learns the grammar, logic, and rhetoric requisite to composition. So each time one gets enough of systematic minima in grammar, logic, and rhetoric to begin to understand what these authors have done. He then learns directly from the concrete applications of the authors, not from the abstract principles of the theorists.³³

Thus, at each stage Erasmus provides for a preliminary minimum of theory, illustration from authors, and application in actual composition, both oral and written. In these exercises, the imitative application is the fundamental objective. Baldwin further explains that

. . . it should be noticed, also, that Erasmus makes two stages of these processes. In the first

³²Quoted in ibid., p. 151.

³³Quoted in Thomas Whitfield Baldwin, William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke, I., 92.

stage, the boy gets oral composition by memorizing phrases for all the ordinary operations of life, learns the simplest rules of grammar, studies simple authors as models for speaking and writing, and constructs simple themes as his written composition. In the second stage, the boy masters the more difficult rules of grammar.³⁴

From an evaluation of the views of Bacon and Erasmus, one gathers more than a coincidental agreement. Erasmus did not deplore the values of grammar. He merely was concerned with the timing and emphasis of grammatical studies in the course of a boy's education. For instance, in his De Ratione Studii, he explains his position rather fully, as follows:

But I must make my conviction clear that, whilst a knowledge of the rules of accidence and syntax is most necessary to every student, still they should be as few as possible. I have no patience with the stupidity of the average teacher of grammar, who wastes precious years in hammering rules into children's heads. For it is not by learning rules that we acquire the power of speaking a language, but by daily intercourse with those accustomed to express themselves with exactness and refinement, and by the copious reading of the best authors. Upon this latter point we do well to choose such works as are not only sound models of style, but are instructive by reason of their subject matter Some proficiency of expression being thus attained, the student devotes his attention to the content of ancient literatures. It is true, of course, that in reading an author for the purposes of vocabulary and style the student cannot fail to gather something beside. But I have in mind much more than this when I speak of studying "content."

³⁴Quoted in ibid., p. 93.

For I affirm that with slight qualification the whole of attainable knowledge lies included within the literary monuments of ancient Greece. This great inheritance I will compare to a limpid spring of whose undefiled waters it behooves all who truly thirst to drink and be restored.³⁵

Erasmus, to some extent, sounds rather modern, almost anticipating the rise of the "new grammar" of the mid-twentieth century. However, his view was of sixteenth-century vintage when one recognizes the great importance placed upon imitation in the practice of composition and oratory. A student not only was expected to master content; he also was urged to develop a vocabulary and imitate the style of the "best authors." By and large, this is the basic theory by which Bacon became a man of politics, philosophy, and letters. The reading of the "best authors" was recommended by Erasmus, who impatiently expressed his views concerning the practices of medieval grammarians who concentrate on rules rather than on daily reading of the work, of those who express themselves with exactness and good taste.³⁶

The Elizabethan method of providing for thematic material may also be traced to Erasmus. By Bacon's time,

³⁵Quoted in Graves, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

³⁶Kenneth Charlton, Education in Renaissance England, p. 109.

the skeleton system of theme writing (the apothegms, and the adages of Erasmus) was already in existence. Undoubtedly, this system was in vogue by the time young Bacon came under the influence of a formal English education.³⁷ A system based upon lecture, memorization, interpretation, parsing, repeating, and imitating was designed to stamp the thoughts of the best authors indelibly upon the minds of learned grammarians.³⁸ It is likely that Bacon's mind had been impressed with conventional construes similar to those practiced in the sixteenth-century grammar school.

The school which seemed to have been the most influenced by the Erasmus system of humanism and which eventually became a pattern for other schools throughout England was Eton. Sir Nicholas Bacon drew up statutes for St. Alban's under the date of May 17, 1570, in which he included "Articles to be recited to them that shall offer their children to be taught in the school." The curriculum at St. Alban's belonged to the Erasmus tradition of the Eton system.³⁹ Earlier, a reference was made to a skeleton system of theme

³⁷Baldwin, op. cit., II, 301.

³⁸Baldwin, op. cit., I, 681.

³⁹Ibid., I, 393.

writing. In the Eton system under Elizabeth, in the tradition of Erasmus, boys, by the third form, could string together enough sententiae to name the result a theme. In the fourth form, themes were still written in prose, as were the themes of the fifth form, but the boys were now adding a rhetorical polish.⁴⁰ According to Charlton,

. . . the two main virtues to be aspired to were copiousness of vocabulary and variety of style. The reading of Latin authors and the keeping of a commonplace book in which could be written down words and idiomatic phrases from "authoritative" sources to be used in the various written and oral exercises, formed the background to the main business of writing and speaking Latin.⁴¹

The matter of the writing themes and compositions was of paramount importance. Charlton adds that every student should have had some previous experience with theme writing based upon the habit of keeping commonplace books, a practice which was meant to give polish to his Latin, to give him a storehouse of words and phrases, and to elevate his style almost to the level of poetry.⁴² The objectives of this conventional system of instruction in logic and rhetoric had

⁴⁰Ibid., I, 370.

⁴¹Charlton, op. cit., p. 110.

⁴²Ibid., p. 143.

fair agreement among the schoolmasters. It was on the methods of presentation that they disagreed the most, men like Philip Melanchthon, Peter Ramus, Richard Brinsley, Johann Sturm, Thomas Elyot, Abraham Fraunce, Roger Ascham, Vives, and a host of other educators.⁴³ This system was part of Bacon's heritage.

The Humanist movement in England produced some outstanding treatises on education. One was Elyot's The Book Named the Governor (1531), described by some scholars as the first full-fledged portrayal of the Humanist point of view in the English language. Dedicated to King Henry VIII, the book has as its main theme (as stated in its Proem) the education of " . . . a gentleman which is to have authority in the public weal."⁴⁴ It deals with the threefold subject matter of political theory, education, and moral philosophy, and seeks to delineate a way of life for England's governing class and to prescribe the education necessary to prepare that class to perform its task well. It is the latter part of the first of the three sections which presents a program

⁴³Baldwin, op. cit., II, 28.

⁴⁴Sir Thomas Elyot, The Book Named the Governor (ed. by S. E. Lehmborg), p. xiii.

of education for both the minds and bodies of prospective governors.⁴⁵

What seems rather unusual about this book's portraying a humanistic education for England's princes and governors is its emphasis upon the physical pursuits and skill at arms, and training in such courtly niceties as music and dancing, as well as discipline for the growing mind. Elyot was less concerned with men's maneuvering their ways upward through the ranks of society into the high offices of state than he was in seeking to prepare the sons of England's gentry for a life of public service to which birth had destined them. Elyot stressed three essential aims in education: the development of a clear and refined speech, the importance of play in the early years of learning, and the ability to learn (speak and write) a foreign language, viz., Latin.⁴⁶ He believed in the teachable moment when a student was ready to receive proper instruction. He thought that the most common mistake of schoolmasters was that of introducing pupils to studies before they had arrived at the age wherein they could appreciate such learning. "Lord God, how many

⁴⁵Curtis, op. cit., p. 78.

⁴⁶Loc. cit.

good and clean wits of children be nowadays perished by ignorant schoolmasters!"⁴⁷ It is novel in a Renaissance treatise on education to place such an emphasis upon physical activities--outdoor sports such as wrestling, running, swimming, hunting, hawking, and archery above all. He adds that indoor recreation should include the game of chess, but warns of the perils of using dice.⁴⁸

Inasmuch as he was concerned with the nature of the study of language and composition, Elyot followed the humanist view that boys should make a thorough study of poetry in order to imitate the great deeds portrayed therein.⁴⁹ He considers this imitation to be of great import in his educational scheme, especially for composition and declamation, in the recognizable ideal of Erasmus. He maintained, however, a conservative tone, because the moral upheavals during the reign of Henry VIII were upsetting the stability of England's society. In his conservative manner, he sought to present an idea of a gentleman's responsibility in keeping

⁴⁷Elyot, op. cit., p. 57.

⁴⁸Curtis, op. cit., p. 79.

⁴⁹William Howard Woodward, Studies in Education during the Age of the Renaissance, 1400-1600, p. 283.

with the sixteenth-century concept of the Chain of Being, in which a prince was obligated to rule, and all men were unquestionably subject to the crown.⁵⁰ Without vastly upsetting the traditional pattern of education, Elyot suggested that a prince's education was dependent primarily upon the obtaining and retaining of a good tutor, without concern for the expenses involved. To Elyot, education properly directed would turn a young man into a leader and a governor of men.⁵¹

In spite of Elyot's conservatism, Baldwin thinks that his ideas " . . . in The Governor . . . are . . . a rather far cry from the grammar schools."⁵² Because of Elyot's exclusive concern for the education of England's gentry in a period of unstable times,

. . . grammar school masters faced a situation so different that . . . Sir Thomas could . . . have had but little if any influence on them. Fortunately for an English Renaissance, Erasmus and men of his mind had already determined the fundamental curriculum and the pedagogical processes and attitudes of the grammar schools, so that following his lead, the schoolmasters had quite

⁵⁰Joan Simon, Education and Society in Tudor England, pp. 152-153.

⁵¹Elyot, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

⁵²Baldwin, op. cit., I, 197.

early agreed upon what authors among the Latins were most worthy of imitation, and consequently used them for constructions in their more pragmatic and less Utopian, more "human" and less "heavenly" scheme of things.⁵³

Surely, Bacon was subject to some of the ideas expressed in The Governor, because of the gentility of the home into which he was born. After all, Elyot outlined a plan for the training of gentlemen. In spite of his advocacy of the learning of both Greek and Latin, he sought, throughout his life, to make the ideas and views of Renaissance Humanism available to Englishmen in their own vernacular.⁵⁴

Another important Renaissance book on education is Roger Ascham's The Schoolmaster. Ascham's distinctive method of instructing language was that of "double translation," a method that was probably used in the tutoring of Prince Edward. It was not altogether original, inasmuch as it was based upon the ideas of the German humanist, Joham Sturm, who, a Ciceronian in his style, became Ascham's model.⁵⁵ Ascham introduced written composition more fully into school

⁵³Ibid., I, 199.

⁵⁴Elyot, op. cit., p. viii.

⁵⁵Graves, op. cit., p. 166.

practice than did any other master of the time.⁵⁶ A study of The Schoolmaster shows that he required three books: one for written translations from Latin; one for a written re-translation of the English back into Latin; and one for a record of observations of the usage of classical writers in the idioms which the pupil was likely to want for his own Latin composition. The last served both as a copy book and a commonplace book. Watson thinks that Ascham was not really an educational reformer, but merely a spokesman in an age of an increase in the number of printed books.⁵⁷ Baldwin seeks to justify Ascham's method of double translation in the following way:

The fundamental lies in Ascham's particular theory of imitation. He, too, wishes to train his students to write like Cicero, but he argues that the way to do this is not by direct imitation of Cicero, or by studying how successful writers have imitated Cicero. Instead, one should study how Cicero has imitated the Greeks.⁵⁸

Erasmus also had proposed this same theory for imitation, although he did not formulate such a precise method of

⁵⁶Watson, op. cit., p. 186.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 187.

⁵⁸Baldwin, op. cit., I, 261.

application.⁵⁹ Ascham explains his plan of double translation as follows:

First, let him teach the child, cheerfully and plainly, the course and matter of the letter; then let him construe it into English, so oft as the child may easily carry away the understanding of it; lastly parse it over perfectly. This done, let the child by and by both construe and parse it over again, so that it may appear that the child doubteth in nothing that his master taught him before. The child must take a paper book, and sitting in some place, where no man shall prompt him, by himself, let him translate into English his former lesson. Then showing it to his master, let the master take from him his Latin book, and pausing an hour, at the least, then let the child translate his own English into Latin again, in another paper book. When the child bringeth it, turned into Latin, the master must compare it with Tullie's book, and lay them both together. . . .⁶⁰

Ascham's plan simply means that one paper book held the student's translation of the Latin into English, and another, the English back, again, into Latin. The third book became the storehouse of words, phrases, and sentences that the student could use, if he desired, in his own compositions.

Ascham believed that the greatest error in educational practices consisted of requiring a student too soon to

⁵⁹Ibid., I, 262.

⁶⁰Roger Ascham, "The Schoolmaster," The Works of Roger Ascham, III, 90.

attempt the writing of Latin compositions, a practice which he thought formed bad linguistic habits difficult to change.⁶¹ He adhered rather closely to his Ciceronian model, Johann Sturm, in outlining this program.⁶² Baldwin describes Ascham's curriculum in which a boy at the age of seven will spend nine years in grammar school and five in advanced work, being thus considered fully prepared to assume the duties of citizenship at twenty-one. In the first three years, or until he is nine or ten, the boy memorizes precepts and their illustrations. In his fourth year, among other things, he seeks out commonplaces, figures of speech, and examples of arguments. In his fifth year, he is to spend some time gathering words and accumulating formulas of sententiae. In his sixth year, he will be occupied with an understanding of more ornate rhetorical precepts. In his seventh year, he will mix dialect with rhetoric, using Aristotle as his guide. In his eighth year, he will continue his study of Aristotle, with an emphasis upon practice rather than precept, thus to be freed from systematic theory, but in formal Aristotelian logic.⁶³

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 88-89.

⁶²Curtis, op. cit., p. 79.

⁶³Baldwin, op. cit., II, 23-26.

Baldwin also notes that Ascham condemned a too heavy reliance upon epitomes which ignored the imitation of authors, knowing that some schoolmasters used moral precepts and rules as the sententiae with which to instruct in grammar and phrasing. Ascham does not object, however, to commonplace books, because they revealed method and supplied a nucleus of information.⁶⁴ Anything which fell short of a clear imitation of Cicero, however, was anathema to him.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Ascham falls under the censure of Bacon, who explains,

So that these four causes concurring, the admiration of ancient authors, the hate of the schoolmen, the exact study of languages, and the efficacy of preaching, did bring in an affectionate study of eloquence and copy of speech, which then began to flourish. This grew speedily to an excess; for men began to hunt more after words than matter; and more after 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 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

⁶⁴Ascham, op. cit., p. 201.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 204.

Then grew the learning of the schoolmen to be utterly despised as barbarous. In sum, the whole inclination and bent of those times was rather towards copy than weight.⁶⁶

In spite of Bacon's disapproval of Ascham's doctrine of composition, the latter's basic principle of imitation must command respect, because it compelled the student to compare his work with approved models and to apply the lessons of such study to his own writing. Ascham did not consider imitation to be circumscribing or unoriginal. In his philosophy, he considered all of Nature's works to be examples for imitation and study. He believed sincerely that careless writing came from a disordered mind.⁶⁷ Such an attitude may sound strange to a modern student of language, but it is representative of the attitude of the sixteenth century toward the form and matter of language. Bacon may have disapproved of some of Ascham's methods, but the stamp of Ascham's ideas was on him, nevertheless.

With all of this emphasis upon Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, one wonders about the study of English in the English grammar

⁶⁶R. L. Ellis and James Spedding (eds.), The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon, p. 54. (This is the edition of Bacon's works which has been used in this study; hereafter, called Works.)

⁶⁷Ascham, op. cit., pp. 210-212.

schools. English literature was not studied in these schools (the English language was not even spoken in most of them), but, somehow, there was a transfer value from Latin to English. The one educator who stressed the necessity of including the study of English in the curriculum was Richard Mulcaster in his Elementarie (1582). This work really does not represent a typical Elizabethan educational point of view, but it is an important document, because it came from one of Tudor England's most successful schoolmasters whose long experience gave it authority.⁶⁸ In his two books, the Positions and the first part of the Elementarie, he develops an idea of the use of the English vernacular far in advance of the age. He defends his writing in English by stating that he wanted to reach the uneducated who understood only English, but whose chances of information were fewer.⁶⁹ Even though Mulcaster was a realistic humanist, he was unique in being an ardent advocate of the use of the English tongue. He resisted the fetish of the times to believe that

⁶⁸Thompson, op. cit., p. 25.

⁶⁹Richard Mulcaster, Positions Wherein Those Primitive Circumstances Be Examined, Which Are Necessarie for the Training Up of Children Either for Skill in Their Booke, or Health in Their Bodie, p. 2.

a formal education could be accomplished only through the study of classical languages of the grammar school. In his Elementarie, he was one of the first educators to question whether too many people were receiving an education for the country to use to good advantage. One detects the influence, again, of the Chain of Being when Mulcaster poses the question of whether it is proper for a person to receive an education through which he will not fulfill his function in the proper place, a function and a place of dignity and of usefulness in service to the whole. He believed that all should have an elementary education, but that only fit persons should be chosen for a classical education. All should have an elementary education in the reading and writing of English, and in art and music, including singing and playing upon a musical instrument. In the Elementarie, he confessed, "I love Rome, but London better; I favor Italy, but England more; I honor the Latin, but I worship the English."⁷⁰ He believed that a child should be able to read and write English long before he should think of Latin grammar. He gave special emphasis to primary training, which utilized

⁷⁰Richard Mulcaster, The Elementarie Which Entreateth Chefelie of the Right Writing of Our English Tung, p. 269.

English as a means of instruction. Mulcaster even suggested that the best teachers be employed in this elementary instruction and that they be paid well for their work. In the Elementarie, he wrote, "I do not think that any language is better able to utter all arguments either with more pith or greater plainness than our English tongue"71 He was never convinced of Ascham's doctrine that the only way in which to learn English was through a study of Latin and the Greek; that there was so much to be had in the learned tongues.72

Mulcaster wished to educate the ordinary Englishman; Ascham wished to educate the youth of station. Ascham's language is as precise as the Latin of Cicero; Mulcaster's own example of English composition almost imperils his thesis that the English is as precise and harmonious as Latin.73 Mulcaster is the unpolished spokesman of a new order who sees the old problem in a new way. He has shaken himself free of the traditional platitudes of classical

⁷¹Ibid., p. 274.

⁷²Baldwin, op. cit., I, 419-420 (Cf. Elementarie, p. 282, and The Schoolmaster, p. 56.)

⁷³A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (eds.), The Cambridge History of English Literature, III, 494.

education.⁷⁴ Both of his books, the Elementarie and the Positions, present consistent ideas for using the English vernacular, discouraging travel as a means of education, establishing training schools for teachers, and educating women so as to fit them for their stations in life.⁷⁵

Mulcaster also had his own ideas about spelling, and in the Elementarie he wants to regularize it; however, the English never submitted to any official academy regulation as did the French.⁷⁶ Bacon apparently could not entirely adopt Mulcaster's view on the use of the English vernacular, because he hoped to perpetuate his writings for all times by translating them into Latin. But he wrote many of his works in English. This task he never finished.

Other educators of the Renaissance sought to make their marks on the educational systems of England, and some were more or less successful in their attempts. One of the most unique features common to their sixteenth-century views of language and composition was their use of imitation as a means of enhancing what the rhetoricians called invention.

⁷⁴Ibid., III, 495.

⁷⁵Robert H. Quick, Essays on Educational Reformers, pp. 90-102.

⁷⁶Thompson, op. cit., p. 26.

The commonplace book met, rather effectively, two needs of grammar school education, that of assisting the development of a proper orthography, and the occasion and material of imitation and invention in composition. For example, John Brinsley in his Ludus Literarius, in typical humanistic fashion, explains that he wanted certain imitative exercises upon invention before boys came to the theoretical parts of rhetoric. He considered the commonplaces to be "heads of Invention," and insisted that "all schollers who come to any ripenesse, are necessarily to be acquainted with them" ⁷⁷ Baldwin further notes that basing a student's epistolary style on imitations of classical writers, especially Cicero, was well known and well used in the early sixteenth century. Brinsley hoped, almost fondly, in this system of imitation, "that nothing may appeare stolne, but wittily imitated." ⁷⁸ Francis Bacon himself recognized, even to the Queen, that "there was a systematic felony of sentences and conceits from the classics generally, but especially from Cicero." ⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Quoted in Baldwin, op. cit., II, 12.

⁷⁸ Quoted in ibid., II, 261.

⁷⁹ Ibid., II, 262.

Brinsley preferred to have students "heap up" loose sententiae to use as raw materials for composition, as Baldwin observes.⁸⁰ One would not need to do much fitting to prepare a beautiful essay on a commonplace subject. As described above, this method of writing themes, for the most part, was advocated by Ascham, especially the matter of imitating Cicero, a tradition that can be traced to Erasmus. In the composition of essays, these sententiae resulted in a disconnected style, as in the early Baconian essay, and illustrated the structural method. Brinsley suggested that the student make a collection of good moral sententiae on any commonplace subject, then, put it together in good rhetorical form so as to fashion his masterpiece.⁸¹ Brinsley and other schoolmasters who relied on this method found that the printing of books and the gathering of anthologies provided more sources for commonplaces. Charlton notes that anthologies, including ancient and modern prose and poetry, were being published. Printed commonplace books gradually transformed themselves into books of contemporary poetry or books of essays that set the mood for the appearance of

⁸⁰Ibid., II, 304.

⁸¹Ibid., II, 306.

Bacon's Essays of 1597.⁸² Many collections of materials for themes were available and were likely to be found in many school libraries. Hoole, another prominent schoolmaster of the sixteenth century, explained how to use these materials, showing that boys were to gather suitable materials from library source books, both in subject or theme and words and phrases. Then, they were to weave all materials together, "stuffing" and adorning the different parts of the theme with figures of speech and other eloquences.⁸³ Basically, this method is similar to that which was advocated by Erasmus.

Invention was also a vital matter. Baldwin says that Hoole, in New Discovery (1660), instructed all boys in the fifth form to keep a large commonplace book, in which they wrote topics included in a rhetorical index and busied themselves in collecting adages, witty sentences, and other matters so that they might be used in themes. Hoole proposed that all of this work was for the sake of having a store of matter for "invention" ready at hand, far beyond what the wit of the boys themselves could conceive, either

⁸²Charlton, op. cit., p. 244.

⁸³Baldwin, op. cit., II, 292-293.

in ideas or good words and phrases. A single good sentence was the building block of a theme which was composed of two or more sentences on the same subject put together.⁸⁴

Even after the days of Bacon, efforts were still being made to distinguish themes and essays. For example, Ralph Johnson in 1665 tried to define the essay in the following manner:

An essay is a short discourse about any vertue, vice, or other commonplace. Such be Learning, Ignorance, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, Drunkenness, Usury, Love, Joy, Fear, Hope, Sorrow, Anger, Covetousness, Contention, Labour, Idleness, Riches, Poverty, Pride, Humility, Virginitie, and others.⁸⁵

Obviously, Johnson was thinking of the Baconian essay, a kind of specialized school theme. In his The Scholar's Guide from the Accidence to the University (1665), he stated that making the type of essay he described required an attempt to express the whole nature of a subject in good and choice language.⁸⁶

The writing of themes and essays even in American Colonial times was aided by methods similar to those used

⁸⁴Ibid., II, 289-290.

⁸⁵William G. Crane, Wit and Rhetoric in the Renaissance: The Formal Basis of Elizabethan Prose Style, p. 224.

⁸⁶Loc. cit.

during sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. For example, Cotton Mather tells of the custom of keeping copy books during Colonial times. These copy books served a dual purpose: first, that of fixing material in the memory of the keeper of the book and aiding faulty memory; and, secondly, that of providing practice for penmanship. Cotton Mather even invented methods of commonplacing.⁸⁷ One can readily see that the New England Primer bears a remarkable resemblance to the commonplace book, since it was to serve not only as a primer for the teaching of reading, but also as an instrument of moral instruction.

Epigrams became the nuclei for thematic material.⁸⁸ The actual methods of using the epigram in school are revealed in several sixteenth-century documents. In general, according to Hudson, the methods are twofold: first, in establishing a "theme,"

. . . a proverb or phrase . . . to be given restatement, application, or comment; second, paraphrase or variation of a complete epigram from the . . .

⁸⁷David J. Winslow, "Folklore in the Chester Commonplace Book," Southern Folklore Quarterly, XXX (September, 1966), 236-248.

⁸⁸Hoyt Hopewell Hudson, The Epigram in the English Renaissance, p. 148.

anthology . . . or from some . . . classical author.⁸⁹

Readers acquainted with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature will recognize how this procedure left its mark, especially on poetry. Much poetry, and even prose, was headed by a phrase or proverb, often in Latin, which established the theme to follow. Comments upon this theme apparently were a school exercise encouraged by this unique use of the epigram.⁹⁰ Even Romantic writers of nineteenth-century America, especially Poe, placarded Latin epigrams at the beginning of written pieces, probably because of the influence of a grammar school education patterned after that of earlier centuries.

In the late sixteenth century in England, rhetorical theory was becoming more concerned with creating a literature of its own, inspired by classical examples as well as those of the modern vernaculars of Europe.⁹¹ Rauh proposes that Elizabethan literary critics and poets also insisted

⁸⁹Loc. cit.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 149.

⁹¹Sister Miriam Joseph Rauh, Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time, p. 5.

upon the importance of precepts and theory in the creation of literature.⁹² The grammar school curriculum included, first, the learning of precepts, then, the art of employing them as tools of analysis in reading, and finally their utilization as guides in composition. It is also significant that much of the reading in almost all of the forms was selected with a view toward furnishing moral and religious instruction.

The modern user of language must seriously ask whether it is more than coincidental that English as a language of literature flowered under the methods of grammar, logic, and rhetoric of the sixteenth century. One wonders if history is providing a possible answer to modern instructional dilemmas in the use of the English language.

CHAPTER II

BACON AND LANGUAGE

Bacon repudiates the tendency of his times to place an emphasis on copy rather than on weight, an inclination which he termed "barbarous." In spite of all that has been written concerning Bacon's distrust of too much of an emphasis upon discourse, one discovers that Bacon does have a high regard for language. He has high respect for the process of invention and the collection of commonplaces. He himself had his Promus, which in all probability is a commonplace book, in which he jotted down, from time to time, all kinds of materials--words, phrases, proverbs, and antithetical ideas that were attractive to his mind. This Promus is the result of his invention or of his personal reading, his private storehouse of ideas and phrases to aid him in discovering that which he wished to communicate. The real purpose of the commonplace book was to promote the discovery or recall of ideas for writing or speaking.

Bacon advises any student of language to consider three primary sources of commonplaces: nature or human beings in action, books, and ordinary conversation. He suggests that an observation of nature in general is especially germane to

the formulation of commonplaces.⁹³ He emphasizes the power of observation strongly, because he believes that the general is implicit in the particular. He insists that a habit of observing particular instances and of studying particular examples has a value greater than the sum total of the instances and examples, and that it also enables one to understand fundamental causes, to formulate generalizations, and to evaluate the utterances of others.⁹⁴ Bacon recommends the abundant use of conversation with expert men.⁹⁵ In his essay, "Of Discourse," he promises that ". . . he that questioneth much shall learn much" and argues that one should ". . . apply his questions to the skill of the persons whom he asketh."⁹⁶ He further notes in the same essay that, before one may profit by conversation, he needs to study in order to know what to ask.

Bacon advises study in order to gain broad general knowledge.⁹⁷ In his essay, "Of Studies," he outlines

⁹³Karl R. Wallace, Francis Bacon on Communication and Rhetoric, p. 77.

⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 77-78.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 79.

⁹⁶Works, p. 776.

⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 797-798.

aphoristically the values of being a student not only of books, but of nature itself so that one can derive his own commonplaces. He thinks that if one does not observe nature but merely reads and jots down ideas from classical authors, the student falls into the error typical of discourse, to talk much and to know little. To Bacon, the basis of invention is a broad and deep general knowledge. The use of commonplaces alone, according to his essay, "Of Discourse," unless they were the product of his own observation of nature, produced a kind of invention that lacked variety and uniqueness.⁹⁸ Furthermore, in De Augmentis Scientiarum, he scorns a too-early reliance upon the commonplace book, because the logic and rhetoric behind its use are beyond the capacity of children.⁹⁹ Wallace observes that Bacon sought, through his conception of the inventive process, not only to find thoughts and ideas, purely and simply, but also the discovery of striking analogies and sentences which may be used in speaking or writing. He believes that invention includes both discovery and recovery, with a major

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 775.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 424.

emphasis on recovery.¹⁰⁰ Bacon learned remarkably well how to use the aphoristic mode of expression, a form which only the strongest minds can use, and became a master of thesis and antithesis, the dialectical quality of combining opposites.¹⁰¹

Bacon is concerned about the pitfalls and the errors which can be characteristic of all discourse. He knows that a scientist cannot interpret nature correctly until he recognizes the dangers and the errors of all discourse; rather, he must be aware of the ways in which words can be juggled often so as to destroy the efficacy of reason. In De Augmentis Scientiarum, he categorizes these errors of the human mind--errors to which every human mind is susceptible--as fallacies, which he then sub-divides into three parts--sophistical fallacies, fallacies of interpretation, and false appearances (or idols).¹⁰² Whether these distinctions are completely valid may be debatable, but Bacon draws them, nevertheless.

¹⁰⁰Wallace, op. cit., p. 85.

¹⁰¹J. G. Crowther, Francis Bacon: The First Statesman of Science, p. 97.

¹⁰²Works, p. 515.

To Bacon, sophistical fallacies are merely inferences which, on the surface, appear correct, but do not really prove to be so when examined. Their use impresses listeners and readers with their great wisdom.¹⁰³ The gravest error of sophistical fallacies lies, not only in incorrect analysis, but also in a nebulous or even an ambiguous use of words. These ambiguities of terminology are fallacies of interpretation. In De Augmentis Scientiarum, he comments as follows:

For common and general notions enter necessarily into every discussion; so that unless care be taken to distinguish them well at the outset, all the light of disputations will be strangely clouded with darkness by them, and the matter end in disputes about words. For equivocations and false acceptances of words (especially of this sort) are the sophisms of sophisms.¹⁰⁴

Bacon implies that ambiguous words comprise the most basic and most frequent tool of tricky reasoning. Ambiguity in terminology to Bacon occurs whether a person wants it to happen or not; it is deliberate deception or equivocation.

Bacon's third fallacy of false appearances necessarily results from the inaccuracy or fallibility of the human mind

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 516.

¹⁰⁴Loc. cit.

in receiving and reporting impressions. He shows that the simple parlor game of "Gossip" provides ample proof of the degeneration of truth into real whoppers, merely because the human mind, receiving impressions, immediately begins to detract or to embellish. Again, in De Augmentis Scientiarum, he comments:

. . . idols are the deepest fallacies of the human mind. For they do not deceive in particulars, as the others do, by clouding and snaring the judgment; but by a corrupt and ill-ordered predisposition of mind which . . . perverts and infects all the anticipations of the intellect. For the mind of man . . . far from being a smooth, clear, and equal glass (wherein the beams of things reflect according to their true incidence), is rather like an enchanted glass, full of superstition and imposture.¹⁰⁵

Bacon, in the introduction to the Instauratio Magna, further explains

. . . as an uneven mirror distorts the rays of objects according to its own figure and section, so the mind, when it receives impressions of objects through the sense, can not be trusted to report them truly, but in forming its notions mixes up its own nature with the nature of things.¹⁰⁶

The human mind possesses the very infirmities which engender and perpetuate errors inimical to the purest interpretation

¹⁰⁵Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 250.

of nature.

Before discussing Bacon's treatise on the limitations of the mind in using language, one may profit from a study of the etymology of the word, idol. The OED lists idol as a derivative of the Latin word, idolum, which means an image, form, spectre, apparition. The Greek word, eidolon, has the meaning of image, phantom, idea, fancy, likeness. The OED further reveals that

. . . the order of appearance of the senses in English does not correspond to their original development in Greek, where the sequence was apparently: appearance, phantom, unsubstantial form, image in water or a mirror, mental image, fancy, material image or statue, and finally, in Jewish and Christian use, image of a false god.

The OED adds that " . . . in English this last was, under religious influence, the earliest, and in Middle English the only sense." The OED lists the sixth definition as a mental fiction, a fantasy or fancy. The definition applying to logic considers an idol as a false mental image or conception; a false or misleading notion; a fallacy. It is evident, then, that Bacon gives the name of idol to every bias of human understanding, by which one may be misled and confused by error. In keeping with Bacon's idea of antitheses (as practiced in his Essays), idol is antithetical to idea.

Nowhere does he refer to the modern meaning of the word, viz., the image of a false god.

Bacon asks why the mind of man should be so inclined to err and to satisfy itself in superficial notions. He answers his own question in his famous doctrine of the four idols found also in his aphoristic points in the Novum Organum, a recognition of which is vital to the proper operation of Bacon's new method of induction. The doctrine of idols is, perhaps, one of the most persistent ideas in Bacon's writings. The first of Bacon's false notions, the Idols of the Tribe (or Nation), arises from the general characteristics of the human mind. In one's process of observation, the senses not only give false information, but sometimes miss details. Bacon is no psychologist, but he is aware of the mind's penchant to rationalize the beliefs that it already holds. Possibly, the mind tends to believe what it wishes were true. This false notion has its foundation in the equally false assertion that the sense of man is the measure of all things. It is a false idea, because, according to Bacon, sense perceptions are the measure of man's mind rather than of the universe. Bacon makes the following comment in his aphoristic point No. 52 of the Novum Organum about generalizations based on inadequate facts:

Such then are the idols which I call Idols of the Tribe; and which take their rise either from the homogeneity of the substance of the human spirit, or from its preoccupation, or from its narrowness, or from its restless motion, or from an infusion of the affections, or from the incompetency of the senses, or from the mode of impression.¹⁰⁷

He shows that this fallacy is the direct result of an inadequate functioning of the mind itself when it confuses its own nature with the nature of things.

The next of Bacon's false notions, the Idols of the Cave, is similar to his Idols of the Tribe in that both deal with the nature of man's mind. The major difference lies in the idea that the Idols of the Cave are determined by man's peculiar mental equipment and conditioned by his environment. In this idea, Bacon is alluding to the allegory in the seventh book of Plato's Republic. In the Advancement of Learning, he says:

. . . certainly if a child were continued in a grot or cave under the earth until maturity of age, and came suddenly abroad, he would have strange and absurd imaginations; so in like manner, although our persons live in the view of heaven, yet our spirits are included in the caves of our own complexions and customs; which minister unto us infinite errors and vain

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 267.

opinions, if they be not recalled to examination.¹⁰⁸

Again, in the Novum Organum, (No. 53), he explains:

The Idols of the Cave take their rise in the peculiar constitution, mental or bodily, of each individual; and also in education, habit, and accident. Of this kind there is a great number and variety; but I will instance those the pointing out of which contains the most important caution, and which have most effect in disturbing the clearness of the understanding.¹⁰⁹

Crowther points out that Bacon also warns against the riding of hobbyhorses and urges one to guard against the Idols of the Cave by being suspicious of one's favorite ideas.¹¹⁰ In the borrowing of a Platonic metaphor, Bacon suggests that every man has a cave or den of his own, fashioned by his own individual nature, by his education and communication with others, by the reading of books, by discourse with friends, or by other personal experiences.

Bacon's third Idols are those of the Market-Place, a fallacy imposed upon men from without. It is a limitation arising from man's social being rather than from the nature of man's mind. It is the false notion most frequently

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 268.

¹¹⁰Crowther, op. cit., p. 103.

associated with the problems of semantics, because it most concerns the use of words. Since words are the coin of ideas, they must be adapted to the understanding of common men if they are to be circulated freely. Farrington sees that Bacon is broadly hinting that the more empty a word is of meaning, the more widely it is used. Hence, Bacon decides that words that can be heavily freighted with meaning are the only safe vehicles of communication for science.¹¹¹ Men gather many false notions by mere association with others who are so prejudiced and led astray by characteristic errors.

In the Novum Organum, Nos. 59 and 60, Bacon has the following to say about the Idols of the Market-Place:

But the Idols of the Market-Place are the most troublesome of all: idols which have crept into the understanding through the alliances of words and names. For men believe that their reason governs words; but it is also true that words react on the understanding . . .¹¹²

Bacon shows that words are unsafe for use in philosophy and science because they are subject to meanings belonging to common understanding. This semantic weakness is the clue

¹¹¹Farrington, op. cit., p. 103.

¹¹²Works, p. 269.

to disputes among learned men about words and names, viz., definitions. Bacon continues:

Yet even definitions cannot cure this evil in dealing with natural and material things; since the definitions themselves consist of words, and those words beget others: so that it is necessary to recur to individual instances, and those in due series and order¹¹³

Mathematicians can resort to the safety of definitions to reduce semantic disputes. Learned men in philosophy and science are not able to be so accurate in definition, because words used by the mass of people lose their specific meanings.

The idols imposed by words on the understanding are of two kinds. They are either names of things which do not exist . . . , or they are names of things which exist, but yet confused and ill-defined, and hastily and irregularly derived from realities.¹¹⁴

Bacon believes that this class of idols is rather easy to eradicate, because one needs only to reject the theories or fantasies that are so named.

But the other class, which springs out of a faulty and unskillful abstraction, is intricate and deeply rooted.¹¹⁵

¹¹³Loc. cit.

¹¹⁴Loc. cit.

¹¹⁵Loc. cit.

Bacon uses the example of the word, humid, which has a variety of denotations, none of which is absolutely safe to communicate the real meaning desired by science. He continues:

There are however in words certain degrees of distortion and error. One of the least faulty kinds is that of names of substances, especially of lowest species and well-deduced . . . ; more faulty kind is that of actions . . . ; the most faulty is of qualities Yet in all these cases some notions are of necessity a little better than others, in proportion to the greater variety of subjects that fall within the range of the human sense.¹¹⁶

Words that are the most concrete in meaning or in quality are least likely to be distorted or erroneous. The measure of error or distortion runs through the spectrum from the most concrete to the most abstract. The Idols of the Market-Place produce errors which arise from a social need to use inadequate words to express ideas. Bacon warns that false notions emerging from poorly chosen words are the most exasperating of all, for the mind is likely to engage in futile and sterile discussions of semantics rather than in a consideration of the idea or matter which the word represents. He also thinks that words are coined for common

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 270.

discourse rather than for communication of philosophical or scientific ideas. Therefore, he is certain that words are not precise enough for such weighty matters. Hence, it is sheer folly to expect a one-ton word to carry a twenty-ton load. Bacon also believes that indefinite names for substances and their properties hinder the study of science. He wants to know what heat and cold, light and dark, and weight mean. He feels that these terms have such inadequate and imprecise definitions that their real nature is thereby nebulous.

Finally, Bacon calls the fourth kind of false notions the Idols of the Theater, which are fantasies perpetuated by the adoption of philosophical ideas that are erroneously demonstrated as ultimate reality. They are only stage plays, nothing more than creations of the mind of philosophers. In Novum Organum, Bacon judges that ". . . all the received systems are but so many stage-plays, representing worlds of their own creation after an unreal and scenic fashion."¹¹⁷ Herein, he sees grave danger, in that all received systems can be wrong, and in that a keen mind can propound wrong systems with dramatic facility. Crowther

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 264.

suggests that Bacon was troubled about the human capacity for intellectual pride in enforcing laws dealing with the discovery of knowledge, some men spelling out definitively what is perfect truth and others denying that anything can surely be known. Such attitudes produced either a fierce dogmatism or a fatalistic despair of ever finding truth and anything worthwhile.¹¹⁸

In the Novum Organum, Nos. 61 and 62, Bacon elaborates upon his concept of the Idols of the Theater:

But the Idols of the Theater are not innate, nor do they steal into the understanding secretly, but are plainly impressed and received into the mind from the play-books of philosophical systems and the perverted rules of demonstration.¹¹⁹

Actually, this false notion is not an inherent fault of the mind itself. Man can protect himself against its error by not adopting wrong systems of thought which have the pernicious ability to compound their own errors. Bacon adds:

. . . the question between them and me being only as to the way. For as the saying is, the lame man who keeps the right road outstrips the runner who takes a wrong one. Nay, it is obvious that

¹¹⁸Crowther, op. cit., pp. 104-105.

¹¹⁹Works, p. 270.

when a man runs the wrong way, the more active and swift he is the further he will go astray.¹²⁰

His revealed aim, Bacon continues, is to lessen the need for sharp wits and keen intelligence by bettering the method of scientific discovery or placing " . . . all wits and understandings nearly on a level."

Idols of the Theater, or of systems, are many, and there can be and perhaps will be yet many more In general, however, there is taken for the material of philosophy either a great deal out of a few things, or a very little out of many things; so that on both sides philosophy is based on too narrow a foundation of experiment and natural history, and decided on the authority of too few cases¹²¹

In the same discussion, Bacon identifies three types of received philosophies: the sophistical (or rational), the empirical, and the superstitious. He shows that the rationalist snatches more or less random samplings of ordinary experiences and overstimulates the mind to inventive reasoning, as he also accuses Aristotle of doing. In the Advancement of Learning, he condemns an over confidence in this kind of reasoning as follows:

Another error hath proceeded from too great a reverence, and a kind of adoration of the mind

¹²⁰Loc. cit.

¹²¹Loc. cit.

and understanding of man; by means whereof man have withdrawn themselves too much from the contemplation of nature and the observations of experience, and have tumbled up and down in their own reason and conceits. . . . by continual meditation and agitation of wit do urge and as it were invoke their own spirits to divine and give oracles unto them¹²²

The empiricist is one who jumps at conclusions formed by careful experiments in a few cases and who, thereafter, squeezes all other facts into the mold of his own method and prejudice. In the Advancement of Learning, Bacon considers the real cause of premature systematizing of knowledge to be a mistaking of the real purpose of learning:

. . . the greatest error of all the rest is the mistaking or misplacing of the last or furthest end of knowledge. For men have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge, sometimes upon a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite; sometimes to entertain their minds with variety and delight; sometimes for ornament and reputation; and sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction; and most times for lucre and profession; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason, to the benefit and use of men¹²³

The superstitious philosopher mixes his religion (theology and tradition) with his philosophy. The result of such a mixture is a kind of Arabian Nights' episode with magic

¹²²Ibid., p. 59.

¹²³Ibid., p. 60.

carpets and genii abetting the pursuit of scientific investigation. Bacon is not opposed to religion, but he firmly believes in the separate and distinct roles played by faith and reason, all a part of his repudiation of Aristotelian logic and the views of the Schoolmen. To Bacon, as Crowther understands him, mixing the human and the divine produced not only fantastic philosophy, but also a heretical religion.¹²⁴

In the Novum Organum, No. 68, Bacon sums up his doctrine of the idols as follows:

So much concerning the several classes of idols, and their equipage: all of which must be renounced and put away with a fixed and solemn determination, and the understanding thoroughly freed and cleansed; the entrance into the kingdom of man, founded on the sciences, being not much other than the entrance into the kingdom of heaven, whereinto none may enter except as a little child.¹²⁵

Bacon indicates, so Wallace suggests, that the chief value in the four idols lies in their initial recognition and their final circumvention.¹²⁶ In the Novum Organum, No. 69, Bacon summarizes the process which leads from sense to an

¹²⁴Crowther, op. cit., p. 105.

¹²⁵Works, p. 274.

¹²⁶Wallace, op. cit., p. 106.

interpretation of nature.¹²⁷ The logic of Aristotle, to Bacon, made the world the bondslave of thought, and thought the bondslave of words. He outlines a four-step process which recapitulates the inherent faults of man's contemplations of nature. First, sense impressions are deceptive and faulty; things are not always what they seem. Secondly, man's interpretations of sense impressions are imprecise and ill-defined; they must be definite and clear. Thirdly, induction to determine basic principles of science is erroneous or inaccurate. Finally, proofs can demonstrate these wrong basic principles, a condition which compounds error and curses science.

Bacon demonstrates that he was not most precocious as a scientist, or even as a philosopher. He proves, however, that he was the master of an expository prose whose aphoristic, even epigrammatic, style, with its terse and colorful phrases, served to popularize the beginnings of a new science. His attitude toward language was forged in the heat of his basic mistrust of the florid eloquence so popular in the sixteenth century. If man is going to be master of nature, he will have to become more skillful in

¹²⁷Works, p. 274.

the precise handling of the language by which he interprets nature and communicates his interpretation. When one recognizes Bacon's paramount concern to avoid false ideas that thwart the study of philosophy and science, the commonplace book, with its efforts toward clarity and precision, takes on new significance.

CHAPTER III

BACON AND THE COMMONPLACE BOOK

Bacon was deeply influenced by the conventions of the commonplace. In spite of this influence, however, it is questionable whether he adopted all of the conventional practices without any kind of negative reaction for the classical orientation of the commonplace in Ciceronian rhetoric and Aristotelian logic. The concept of the commonplace in Elizabethan times, as revealed in the writings of a selection of authors, was derived from the general usage of Greece and Rome, although some practical aspects had been changed. The commonplace was used in the treatment of broad, universal topics, predominantly including the praise of virtue and the anathema of vice. The typical Elizabethan commonplace lent itself well both to the florid sententiousness of certain writers and to the headings and arguments of the humanists more lacking in embellishments of style. Whereas the ancient users of topics, mostly orators, thought of the commonplace as an argument, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century man considered the commonplace as an accumulation of wisdom in a book, where thoughts could be manipulated like words in a game of Anagrams or

Scrabble. Lechner contends that if a modern reader does not properly understand this kind of rhetorical training, his insights into Elizabethan literature will remain dimmed.¹²⁸ This type of manipulative use of the commonplace aids in the illumination of Bacon's method of developing his essays and even his major and later writings.

Perhaps, the most thorough work on the rhetorical methods of Bacon is Wallace's study. Dealing at length with Bacon's theory of invention, he proposes that Bacon designated a digest of commonplaces as a main aid to invention.¹²⁹ He points out that in the Advancement of Learning and the De Augmentis Scientiarum, Bacon states that a digest of commonplaces enables a student to arrange and classify knowledge, to aid his memory, and to improve his invention and judgment.¹³⁰ In the Advancement of Learning, concerning the use of commonplaces as aids to the memory, Bacon writes:

The custody or retaining of knowledge is either in Writing or Memory For the disposition and collocation of that knowledge which we preserve in

¹²⁸Sister Joan Marie Lechner, Renaissance Concepts of the Commonplaces, p. 236.

¹²⁹Wallace, op. cit., p. 63.

¹³⁰Loc. cit.

writing, it consisteth in a good digest of commonplaces; wherein I am not ignorant of the prejudice imputed to the use of commonplace books, as causing a retardation of reading, and some sloth or relaxation of memory. But because it is but a counterfeit thing in knowledges to be forward and pregnant, except a man be deep and full, I hold the entry of commonplaces to be a matter of great use and essence in studying; as that which assureth copie of invention, and contracteth judgment to a strength. But this is true, that of the methods of commonplaces that I have seen, there is none of any sufficient worth; all of them carrying merely the face of a school, and not of a world; and referring to vulgar matters and pedantical divisions without all life or respect to action.¹³¹

Spedding in his edition of Bacon adds a footnote to the effect that

. . . the only help of memory which is mentioned is writing; concerning which, after remarking that without this help the memory cannot be trusted to deal with matters of length and requiring exactness, especially such as the interpretation of nature, he insists upon the value of a good digest of commonplaces even in the old and popular sciences¹³²

In De Augmentis Scientiarum, Bacon, once again, deals with the digest of commonplaces as an aid to the memory, as follows:

The great help to the memory is writing; and it must be taken as a rule that memory without this

¹³¹Works, p. 120.

¹³²Loc. cit.

aid is unequal to matters of much length and accuracy; and that its unwritten evidence ought by no means to be allowed But not to speak of the interpretation of nature, which is a new doctrine, there can hardly be anything more useful even for the old and popular sciences, than a sound help for the memory; that is a good and learned Digest of Common-places. I am aware indeed that the transferring of the things we read and learn into commonplace books is thought by some to be detrimental to learning, as retarding the course of the reader and inviting the memory to take holiday. Nevertheless, as it is but a counterfeit thing in knowledge to be forward and pregnant, except a man be also deep and full, I hold diligence and labour in the entry of common-places to be a matter of great use and support in studying; as that which supplies matter to invention, and contracts the sight of the judgment to a point. But yet it is true that of the methods and frameworks of commonplaces which I have hitherto seen, there is none of any worth; all of them carrying in their titles merely the face of a school and not of a world; and using vulgar and pedantical divisions, not such as pierce to the pith and heart of things.¹³³

He is aware of the abuses inherent in the method of using commonplaces. As an aid to the memory, they are unsurpassed; however, commonplaces can create the impression of one's having a great faculty of wit when one is only a shallow rearranger of another's work. Bacon also recognizes that a school can create stereotypes in students through a biased selection of commonplace materials used in its instruction

¹³³ Ibid., pp. 518-519.

so that alumni wear the stamp of their alma mater rather than that of the world. Nevertheless, he advocates the use of digests of commonplaces as a method of study and an aid to memory.

Bacon continues in De Augmentis on the importance of commonplaces as an aid to the memory:

The Art of Memory is built upon two intentions: Prenotion and Emblem. By Prenotion I mean a kind of cutting off of infinity of search. For when a man desires to recall anything into his memory, if he have no prenotation or perception of that he seeks, he seeks and strives and beats about hither and thither as if in infinite space. But if he have some certain prenotation, this infinity is at once cut off and the memory ranges in a narrower compass; like the hunting of a deer within an enclosure. And therefore order also manifestly assists the memory; for we have a prenotation that what we are seeking must be something which agrees with order. So again verse is more easily learned by heart than prose; for if we stick at any word, we have a prenotation that it must be such a word as fits the verse. And this prenotation is the principal part of artificial memory. For in artificial memory we have the places (topics) digested and prepared beforehand; the images we make extempore according to the occasion. But then we have a prenotation that the image must be one which has some conformity with the place; and this reminds the memory and in some measure paves the way to the thing we seek.¹³⁴

By "prenotion," he means that one who wishes to remember must have some general idea of what he wishes to recall, or

¹³⁴Loc. cit.

else he will hunt for the proverbial needle in the hay stack. Moreover, poetry assists memory because of the aid of versification, and the commonplace reminds the memory of the idea which one seeks. Bacon, next, cites the emblem as an aid to memory, showing that the emblem is simply the concrete image which is more easily recalled than any abstraction, because sense impressions are not so dependent upon the intellect.

Emblem, on the other hand, reduces intellectual conceptions to sensible images; for an object of sense always strikes the memory more forcibly and is more easily impressed upon it than an object of the intellect; insomuch that even brutes have their memory excited by sensible impressions, never by intellectual ones. And therefore you will more easily remember the image of a hunter pursuing a hare, of an apothecary arranging his boxes, of a pedant making a speech, of a boy repeating verses from memory, of a player acting on the stage, than the mere notions of invention, disposition, elocution, memory, and action.¹³⁵

In neither of the cited passages does Bacon elaborate on the nature of the commonplace, other than to comment at length on their value as an aid to the memory. The student of Bacon's writings, however, can safely conclude with Wallace that Bacon considers

¹³⁵Loc. cit.

. . . that "commonplace" may be a class name applicable to any idea which either recurs often, or is likely to recur often, during a speaker's career, and whose repetition, accordingly, justifies cataloguing it together with related ideas, for future reference any idea likely to recur and to prove useful in a rhetorician's lifetime.¹³⁶

A distinct type of Bacon's use of the commonplace is the Colours of Good and Evil, a collection which appeared with the publication of the first edition of the Essays in 1597. The Colours makes a statement about the nature of good and evil, apparently true, but really not. It usually includes a refutation of the error in keeping with Bacon's unique doctrine of the idola mentis, especially the Idols of the Market Place. Bacon himself says in the Advancement of Learning,

Colour is when men make a way for themselves to have a construction made of their faults or wants as proceeding from a better cause, or intended for some other purpose . . . , that a vice will often hide itself under the shadow of neighboring virtue¹³⁷

Another kind of commonplace which Bacon considers an aid to invention is antitheta, or pros and cons, which are likely to prove useful in the consideration of any subject.

¹³⁶Wallace, op. cit., p. 64.

¹³⁷Works, p. 160.

In the Advancement of Learning, he defines antitheta as follows:

Antitheta are Theses argued pro et contra; wherein men may be more large and laborious: but (in such as are able to do it) to avoid prolixity of entry, I wish the seeds of the several arguments to be cast up in some brief and acute sentences; not to be cited, but to be as skeins or bottoms of thread, to be unwinded at large when they come to be used; supplying authorities and examples by reference.¹³⁸

In De Augmentis, he lists forty-seven anthitheta along with their pros and cons, not in the sense that they are exact opposites, but because they are arguments for and against, perhaps even to the point of exaggeration, for the purpose of stirring the mind to fresh lines of thought, if possible. He concurs, however, with Cicero that the orator must ". . . have commonplaces ready at hand, in which the question is argued and handled on either side" ¹³⁹ In the same discussion he adds the following:

And the best way of making such a collection, with a view to use as well as brevity, would be to contract those commonplaces into certain acute and concise sentences; to be as skeins or bottoms of thread which may be unwinded at large when they are wanted.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸Ibid., pp. 129-130.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 545.

¹⁴⁰Loc. cit.

As an illustration of this concept, Bacon treats "Learning" as an example of an antithesis, as follows:

XXVI. Learning

For

If books were written about small matters, there would be scarce any use of experience.

In reading a man converses with the wise, in action generally with fools.

Sciences which are of no use in themselves are not to be deemed useless, if they sharpen the wit and put the thoughts in order.

Against

In colleges men learn to believe.

What art ever taught the seasonable use of art?

To be wise by rule and to be wise by experience are contrary proceedings; he that accustoms himself to the one unfits himself for the other.

Art is often put to a foolish use, that it may not be of no use at all.

Almost all scholars have this--when anything is presented to them, they will find in it that which they know, not learn from it that which they know not.¹⁴¹

One discovers at least a general association between this set of pros and cons in Bacon's "Of Studies." There is evidence to show that approximately twenty-three of these antitheta became the theme for as many essays in the edition of 1625. The forty-seven antitheta were probably written before 1623.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 552.

¹⁴²Wallace; op. cit., p. 71.

In the Advancement of Learning, Bacon refers to another aid to rhetorical invention as "Formulae" and in the De Augmentis as "Lesser Forms." In the Advancement of Learning, he defines formulae as

. . . decent and apt passages or conveyances of speech which may serve indifferently for differing subjects; as of preface, conclusions, digression, transition, excusation, etc. For as in buildings there is great pleasure and use in the well-casting of the stair-cases, entries, doors, windows, and the like; so in speech the conveyances and passages are of special ornament and effect.¹⁴³

In the Advancement, he makes an imaginative further distinction between antitheta and formulae, as follows:

. . . the furniture of speech and readiness of invention . . . appeareth to be of two sorts; the one in resemblance to a shop of pieces unmade up, the other to a shop of things ready made up; both to be applied to that which is frequent and most in request: the former of these I will call Antitheta, and the latter Formulae.¹⁴⁴

In De Augmentis, he identifies the "Lesser Forms" as

. . . those parts of speech which answer to the vestibules, back doors, ante-chambers, withdrawing-chambers, passages, etc., of a house; and may serve indiscriminately for all subjects in a speech these accessory and interstitial passages (if they be handsomely and skilfully

¹⁴³Works, p. 130.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 129.

fashioned and placed) add a great deal both of ornament and effect to the entire structure.¹⁴⁵

The "formulae," then, are colorful words and phrases that serve to ornament a speech or a written composition. The Promus of Formularies and Elegancies, as a Baconian aid to invention, meets some of the descriptions of "formulae."

Bacon also lists as other aids to invention the apothegm and the analogy. He defines the apothegm as "pointed speeches," words or sayings that have the quality of repartee, that cut, that goad, that season like salt which may be used with discretion for better flavor.¹⁴⁶

Wallace sees the analogy, not used as a commonplace by Bacon, as an illustration of his fondness for comparison, a creative and imaginative effort to show the relationship that may exist between two unlike objects or qualities, especially found in Bacon's use of myths.¹⁴⁷ Bacon discusses the analogy in the Novum Organum.¹⁴⁸

Having established what he understood by rhetorical invention, Bacon also would give suggestions on the procedure

¹⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 557-558.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 439.

¹⁴⁷Wallace, op. cit., p. 75.

¹⁴⁸Works, p. 333.

for collecting materials for future use, as well as sources of materials. As this study previously concluded, he advises the gathering of materials from observations of nature, from conversation with men, and from the reading of books, viz. observation, listening, and study. As a student of nature who wished to refine the inductive method of study, Bacon recommends observation greatly, because of his accepted premise that the general is discovered through the particular. He counsels in the Advancement of Learning on the matter of Negotiation or Business that

. . . there is a wisdom of counsel and advice even in private causes, arising out of an universal insight into the affairs of the world, which is used indeed upon particular cases propounded, but is fathered by general observation of causes of like nature.¹⁴⁹

He further advises the use of conversation, especially in the Essay, "Of Discourse," when he says that ". . . he that questioneth much shall learn much."¹⁵⁰ He adds the qualification that conference is most reliable with expert men and that one should ". . . apply his questions to the skill

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 776.

of the persons whom he asketh."¹⁵¹ He suggests the validity of study as another means of garnering material for compilation for future use. In his Essay, "Of Studies," he portrays in aphoristic style the values of that method to expand the understanding and to aid the memory.¹⁵² It is almost impossible to understand Bacon's ideas in "Of Studies," unless one is thoroughly aware of all of his views about rhetorical invention, a procedure by which he apparently means the making of notes of that which one discovers and wishes to recall later.

Bacon adds some warnings about the misuse or abuse of the commonplace. In "Of Studies," he cautions that reading by proxy is somewhat dangerous, although one may calculate which books can have material collected by others. He believes that notes or commonplaces collected by others are of little value as a rule. The strong encouragement is to preserve the originality of the commonplace book. Libraries of Bacon's day were likely rather replete with commonplace books, ". . . carrying the face of a school, and not of a

¹⁵¹Loc. cit.

¹⁵²Ibid., pp. 797-798.

world."¹⁵³ In "Of Discourse" Bacon scorns those who " . . . have certain commonplaces and themes wherein they are good, and want variety; which kind of poverty is the most part tedious, and when it is perceived, ridiculous."¹⁵⁴

Much of Ben Jonson's theory of literary composition compares quite favorably with that of Bacon, a fact which Craig considers noteworthy.¹⁵⁵ Jonson, according to Craig, found it best to cultivate good writing by reading the best authors, then by exercising his own style, and finally by studiously revising what he previously had written. Jonson recognized the early English essays (among which were Bacon's) distinct from Montaigne's, as a few loose sentences, a collection of discreet sententiae gathered loosely under some theme after the fashion of the grammar schools. Plutarch and Seneca, to Jonson, represented the ideals of the type.¹⁵⁶

In the matter of invention in literary composition, Bacon " . . . must have believed that education ought to be organized upon the basis of society's gradual accumulating

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 775.

¹⁵⁵Hardin Craig, The Enchanted Glass, pp. 169-170.

¹⁵⁶Baldwin, op. cit., II, 303.

a knowledge of nature and imparting it to all pupils at every stage, as far as they could comprehend it."¹⁵⁷ In the Advancement of Learning, Bacon recognizes the dynamic nature of rhetoric when he writes that ". . . the duty and office of rhetoric is to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will."¹⁵⁸

Bacon's concept of rhetorical invention was rather broad, wider than that of Cicero and other classical writers, even that of the Scholastics.¹⁵⁹ He was concerned not only with finding broad ideas and thoughts but also with the compilation of sentences which could be used in his speaking and writing in their entirety. Wallace agrees that, to Bacon, invention, the first of the four intellectual arts of rhetoric, meant two things: discovering new knowledge heretofore undiscovered, and the recovering or resummoning knowledge already known through a system of gathering and cataloguing for easier recall. The emphasis, however, Bacon places on the process of recovery.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷Graves, op. cit., pp. 265-266.

¹⁵⁸Works, p. 127.

¹⁵⁹Wilbur Samuel Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700, p. 367.

¹⁶⁰Wallace, op. cit., p. 85.

Concerning Elizabethan rhetorical methods, Craig makes the following evaluation:

Rhetoric must have been, because of its connection with literature and because of its relation to public affairs, indeed because of its brightness in comparison with other subjects in the curriculum, a school discipline of great value when taught by cultured and judicious masters. In any case, it played a large part in the education of . . . Bacon.¹⁶¹

Nevertheless, Bacon regretted that logic and rhetoric were being simplified to the capacities of children, for, as Baldwin points out, he believed that children had learning or experience to profit by such teaching, that a premature exposure to the study of logic and rhetoric produced affectation and superficiality.¹⁶²

The embryo of Bacon's works, then, are his collections of commonplaces, those compilations which he gathered during fertile moments of reading and meditation. Perhaps, the most fruitful source of his sententious and lucid style is the Promus of Formularies and Elegancies, a collection begun on December 5, 1594, or even earlier, and continued for an unknown period. At least, the former date is specifically

¹⁶¹Craig, op. cit., p. 167.

¹⁶²Baldwin, op. cit., II, 361.

noted in folio 85 of the Promus, as is a later date of January 27, 1595, in folio 114.¹⁶³

The original copy, presumably in Bacon's own handwriting, is preserved in the British Museum as a part of the Harleian Collection (No. 7017). The pagination of the handwritten manuscript is in modern form, although it is questionable that Bacon himself was concerned about the matter of numbering pages. The handwritten folio sheets are numbered 83 to 132 and were probably written sometime between the above dates. One suggests that the problem of pagination be explained either by a loss of material before or after the folios were preserved or by an attempt to collate the Promus with other miscellaneous material. According to Edwin Durning-Lawrence in his Preface to the Promus of Formularies, it is likely that the latter explanation is more nearly correct.¹⁶⁴

The word, promus, is a Latin term of the kitchen, translated as a larder or a storehouse. Its meaning is in itself an indication of Bacon's intention to use it as a storehouse of words and phrases in the production of future literary

¹⁶³Francis Bacon, The Promus of Formularies and Elegancies, (reproduced from original Harleian MS. 7017).

¹⁶⁴Edwin Durning-Lawrence, Bacon Is Shakespeare, pp. 187-189.

works. The term itself was used by Bacon in the Advancement of Learning, a term which commended itself to his fertile mind.¹⁶⁵ In his bid for power in the court of Queen Elizabeth, not all went well. It was during this time while he was waiting for the favor of a promotion that he likely amused himself during the Christmas vacation of 1594 by beginning his Promus.¹⁶⁶

The Promus is a collection of some original ideas, salutations and compliments, transitional words, mere words and phrases, and aphorisms which are ripe with meaning, stated or implied. These collections are written mostly in Latin and are likely written from memory because of the freedoms taken in their quotations, or because Bacon himself was a victim of faulty recall which he sought to correct. On the other hand, intentional variations in the quotations may well have served his purposes by preserving his originality and rendering the words and phrases more useful in the unique ways to which he wished to put them. It is a commonplace book, arranged largely at random and sometimes

¹⁶⁵Works, pp. 136-137.

¹⁶⁶William Aldis Wright (ed.), The Advancement of Learning by Francis Bacon, Preface, p. xiv.

according to relationships between topics and ideas. It consists of about fifty folio pages containing about 1,680 collections from over three hundred authors from both classical times and Bacon's own era, according to Green.¹⁶⁷ For the most part, Green believes that Bacon kept his scrapbook with no particular or immediate purpose in mind.

The Promus clearly indicates that Bacon was serious about taking all knowledge for his province. The manner in which he puts together striking philosophical insights, courtly phrases, whimsical expressions, wise sayings, sometimes vulgar ideas is remarkably similar to the loose stream-of-consciousness method of modern writers.¹⁶⁸ There are many thoughts on all matters of human relationships, seeds of his Essays. Interspersed among the entries of his own invention are apothegms, proverbs, verses from the Bible, lines from Latin poets, all set down in random order which gives the reader the impression that Bacon was trying to remember as many worthwhile ideas from his reading and observation exactly as they happened to present themselves to his mind. In one section, for example, there is ample

¹⁶⁷Green, op. cit., p. 79.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 81.

quotation from the Bible, especially from the Psalms and the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, followed by choice selections from the New Testament, mostly from the Latin Vulgate. Added to this group are proverbs and epigrams taken from various contemporary European writers in French, Spanish, Italian, as well as in English.¹⁶⁹ Spedding does not recognize much that is original in it, but he is certain that Bacon expected to make use of this random compilation if, when, and where the occasion arrived.¹⁷⁰

The most thorough work on the Promus has been done by Pott in 1883, who tried to prove the connection between the Promus and the plays of Shakespeare. In spite of much scholarly disagreement with her work, she has made a valuable contribution to one's knowledge of some of the secrets of Bacon's writing. She notes that Bacon's gigantic power with language is largely found in his efforts to perfect the niceties of the language and to experiment with analogy and antithesis, two elements which portray his special literary force.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹Francis Bacon, Promus (Harleian MS. 7017).

¹⁷⁰George Walter Steeves, Francis Bacon: A Sketch of His Life, Works, and Literary Friends; Chiefly from a Bibliographical Point of View, p. 30.

¹⁷¹Constance Mary Pott, The Promus of Formularies and Elegancies by Francis Bacon, (Preface by Edwin Abbott), p. xi.

Bacon selected proverbs and phrases from the Vulgate, Virgil, Ovid, Seneca, and Erasmus, but for what reasons? In analyzing the meanings of the host of proverbs and phrases selected from antiquity and from the great humanist, Erasmus, one notes that Bacon was fond of those with ambiguities or some metaphysical conceit, in short, with some element that tantalized or teased the mind into new areas of thought.¹⁷² To mine the gems in writings of great authors and to give the mind some worthwhile and new thoughts surely is of considerable merit.

The name, Promus of Formularies and Elegancies, was taken by Spedding from a heading of one of the folio sheets, who also took the liberty of identifying the folios by this name, because it illustrates the manner of Bacon's working, which he describes in the Advancement of Learning and De Augmentis Scientiarum.¹⁷³ However, because she notes a paucity of quotations from Promus in the Essays, Pott warns that

. . . it would be hazardous to assert that these entries were made in preparation . . . with a definite view to any of Bacon's writings. It

¹⁷²Ibid., p. xii.

¹⁷³Ibid., p. 3.

appears more probable that notes of this class were originally made by him in order to improve himself, to discipline his own mind, and to assist his cogitations on many deep subjects connected with the mind and heart of man. It is easy to see what a help it would be to his memory and to his "invention" to look back in later days to these notes, which would recall the studies of the past, whilst at every glance they suggested new trains of thought and more varied images and turns of expression.¹⁷⁴

Of the more than 1,600 entries in the Promus, for the most part mixed and in some kind of confusion, there are four or more definite categories. Perhaps, the most obvious group is that consisting of proverbs, Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian. Pott has discovered that all of the English proverbs are either taken from Heywood's epigrams published in 1562, or are translations of other proverbs or derivations from the Bible.¹⁷⁵ One observes that it is not unusual for Bacon to select a proverb and rework its phrasing so that it will perform a new function in his writing. By changing some word or altering a phrase, he frequently creates an entirely new image. He was trying to perfect language, not to fossilize it. Metaphors and similes, favorite Baconian devices, are liberally collected in the Promus and are widely

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 17.

used in his prose works. Many of these metaphors and similes are found in the Promus only in a germ form which Bacon's mind then could nurture and preserve into a part of his work which was to endure for all time. Pott proposes that many of the figures of speech are also found in the writings of John Lyly.¹⁷⁶

Bacon's collection of single words are closely related to figures of speech, but he is evidently interested in gathering them because of the enrichment of his diction or his vocabulary. Many of the single words used in the Promus are usually of Latin or foreign extraction which Bacon sought to introduce into English likely because of their rich connotation and verbal history. It is the opinion of the present author that Bacon wishes primarily to discipline himself as a user of language.

One of the most unusual folios in Promus is that which contains various forms of morning and evening salutations. A true gentleman should know the varieties of such common greetings, a courtesy which Bacon must have considered to be one of the greatest charms of social manners. Perhaps, his stay at the French court had made him more aware of the

¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. 39.

gentilities inherent in such matters of address. The Promus is filled with a miscellany of words, phrases, or sentences which have the capacity of beautifying the language with imagery and sense.

The issue of how much Bacon used his Promus is still moot. For example, Spedding adopts the viewpoint that Bacon himself did not use these materials in a verbatim sense in his own acknowledged sentences. On the other hand Williamson believes that

Bacon considered the Promus as a collection of formulae or appropriate phrases for recurrent situations The editors of Bacon's Essays have found his own sentences (antitheta) frequently cited therein, and their suggested use may remind us how aphorisms were developed rhetorically for Bacon.¹⁷⁷

Williamson further believes that " . . . the familiar battery of sentence, similitude, or example is implicit in these requirements, and is copiously illustrated in his Promus of Formularies and Elegancies."¹⁷⁸

One technical item related to the problem that possesses an element of mystery is Bacon's method of marking his entries. Some have slant lines (/) across the writing,

¹⁷⁷ George Williamson, The Senecan Amble, p. 165.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 167.

while others have marks similar to the capital letters T, F, and A placed at the ends of lines. What these marks signify is not clear, but one thinks it is safe to say that they indicate that Bacon made use of the Promus in some manner.

The 1597 edition of Essays contains the following ten selections: "Of Studies," "Of Discourse," "Of Ceremonies and Respects," "Of Followers and Friends," "Of Sutes," "Of Expence," "Of Regiment of Health," "Of Honour and Reputation," "Of Faction," and "Of Negotiating." When Bacon published this first book of essays, he was thirty-six years old and probably at the peak of his intellectual capacity.¹⁷⁹ The heartaches and reversals of his later life were yet to color his attitudes and modify his ambitions. By this time his active mind, prodded by his share of human difficulty, had much opportunity to gather the material in the Promus and other mnemonic matter, some of which he might have utilized in the composition of his Essays. The volume was so small that it was supplemented by lesser works entitled Colours of Good and Evil and Sacred Meditations. It is the Essays, however, that are the most memorable.

¹⁷⁹Steeves, op. cit., p. 98.

Shortly after Bacon completed his Promus in 1597, he further consoled himself by publishing his small volume of ten Essays, which may have been written some time earlier and which were already being circulated in manuscript form, apparently regarding the publication date as being premature.¹⁸⁰ In his Dedication to the 1597 Edition to his brother Anthony, he gives the following explanation concerning his reasons for publishing the collection:

Loving and beloved Brother, I do now like some that have an orchard ill neighbored, that gather their fruit before it is ripe, to prevent stealing. These fragments of my conceits were going to print; to labor the stay of them had been troublesome, and subject to interpretation; to let them pass had been to adventure the wrong they might receive by untrue copies, or by some garnishment, which it might please any that should set them forth to bestow upon them. Therefore I held it best discretion to publish them myself as they passed long ago from my pen, without any further disgrace, than the weakness of the Author. As I did ever hold, there might be as great a vanity in retiring and withdrawing men's conceits (except they be of some nature) from the world, as in obtruding them: so in these particulars I have played myself the Inquisitor, and find nothing to my understanding in them contrary or infectious to the state of Religion, or manners, but rather (as I suppose) medicinable. Only I disliked now to put them out because they will be like the late new half-pence, which though the Silver were good, yet the pieces were small. But since they would not stay

¹⁸⁰Wright (ed.), op. cit., p. xv.

with their Master, but would needs travel abroad, I have preferred them to you that are next myself, dedicating them, such as they are, to our love, in the depth whereof (I assure you) I sometimes with your infirmities translated upon myself, that her Majesty might have the service of so active and able a mind, and I might be with excuse confined to these contemplations and studies for which I am fittest, so commend I you to the preservation of the divine Majesty. From my Chamber at Gray's Inn, this 30th of January, 1597.

Your entire loving brother,
Francis Bacon

This dedication makes it obvious that this first volume of ten short essays, printable on ten small pages, was published by Bacon himself so as to forestall an unauthorized publication undertaken by others, proof of the high esteem in which his wisdom was beginning to be held.¹⁸¹

The germs of these Essays are primarily to be found in the forty-seven "Antitheses of Things" which Bacon includes in his Advancement of Learning. A study of these Antitheses and a comparison with the Essays reveals what Bacon meant to imply by an "essay." As he admits, it was an " . . . attempt, a trial, an estimate of pros and cons, a kind of debate to determine worth of either qualities or

¹⁸¹Farrington, op. cit., p. 50.

characters."¹⁸² In spite of the fact that these Essays show some influence of his moral distinctions, their spirit is much too preoccupied with self-interest, or with the spirit of Machiavelli, whom Bacon quoted frequently, to suit the morality of modern days. For example, in "Of Simulation and Dissimulation," Bacon writes: "The best composition and temperature is, to have openness in fame and opinion; secrecy in habit; dissimulation in seasonable use; and a power to feign if there be no remedy."¹⁸³ The attitude toward morality in Bacon's Essays was quite utilitarian, or even Machiavellian.¹⁸⁴ Readers sometimes feel that both sides of a question are balanced so equally that Bacon arrives at no single position. Some excoriate him, because they feel that he places expediency as a rule of conduct before any other consideration. Falsehood and related evils, by this rule, can sometimes be justified.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸²Clark Sutherland Northup (ed.), The Essays of Francis Bacon, (Introduction), p. xxiii.

¹⁸³Works, p. 742.

¹⁸⁴Will J. Durant, The Story of Philosophy, p. 126.

¹⁸⁵Gordon Haight (ed.), Essays and New Atlantis, (Introduction), p. xv.

In an inventory of Bacon's manuscripts made in 1608, Zeitlin indicates there is evidence that there were four note-books, thus throwing an interesting light on Bacon's method of work. In one, Bacon apparently jotted down an idea as it occurred to him; in another, he copied as many of these kinds of reflections as time had proved to have value; in a third, he entered excerpts from his readings without a sense of order; and in a fourth, he arranged excerpts and original ideas under specific headings.¹⁸⁶

Thus, Zeitlin's study brings one to the very heart of the Baconian essay. For example, one sees that the fourth kind of commonplace book is the likely source of the strings of sentences comprising the Essays of 1597. An eager copyist or overzealous amanuensis may have begun to circulate them, thereby causing Bacon to hasten to publish them authentically, although prematurely. This situation further suggests to Zeitlin and other scholars just how appreciative sixteenth-century men were of the moralistic and didactic sententiousness that formed the style of essay-writing, of which style Bacon was the greatest representative.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶Jacob Zeitlin, "Commonplaces in Elizabethan Life and Letters," JEGP, XIX (January, 1920), 64.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., p. 65.

An examination of the form of the Essays indicates to what extent Zeitlin may be correct. In the Appendix to this present study is to be found a copy of the Essays of 1597 with abundant evidence of the presence of Bacon's use of the sententious aphorism in each essay. For example, one sees that each sentence comprises a "paragraph" of its own, a matter of style that indicates an almost total lack of transitional material and that underscores the antithetical nature of many of the sentences, a method that resembles that of the debate. Certainly, the heads show planning, but the quotations from some of the hidden sources, usually from Bacon's memory, are sometimes found to be so modified and so inaccurate that some critics have accused Bacon of trying to improve upon the expressions he has quoted.¹⁸⁸ The method of the commonplace obviously has been carried over into the form of the 1597 Essays, but it is difficult to determine if the content of the Promus is still clearly recognizable in the Essays. Perhaps, the Essays may have been written before the Promus was even completed. There is little proof to be offered in support of either theory. The Essays were published in 1597, but not necessarily written in this year.

¹⁸⁸Northup (ed.), op. cit., p. xxv.

Could Bacon have used some Promus-like source to aid his memory and invention?

It may appear to be a digression at this point to consider a matter as subjective and ephemeral as that of Bacon's prose style. It is, however, necessary that one consider this aspect of Bacon's writing in order to calm somewhat the furore concerning his place in the Ciceronian-Senecan stylistic controversy, inasmuch as criticism of Bacon's writings are two-fold, taking into consideration his unique style and content, although the matter of content is of little concern, here.

Montaigne's Essais had appeared in 1580, and the influence of Montaigne upon Bacon remains with a tenacious grip in the minds of many critics. The distinct stylistic quality of Montaigne's writing, as Williams sees it, is that of an elaborate literary form, perhaps more after the style of John Lyly's Euphues, with a certain quality of whimsical thought, and most specifically a display of idiosyncrasies of Montaigne's personal character. Montaigne's personality is reflected in his own writings; however, Bacon's forcible plain English really gives one little information about his personal life. Williams claims that Bacon seeks to communicate " . . . wisdom written down with . . .

a crispness."¹⁸⁹ In comparing the styles of both authors, however, one concludes that Montaigne's influence on Bacon's essay-writing was insignificant, both from the viewpoint of style and content.¹⁹⁰

In spite of the necessity for the premature publication of Bacon's first ten essays because of a wholesale borrowing of his ideas contained therein, not all Elizabethans appreciated Bacon's sententious style. Hoskins, for example, describes what Bacon's first essays pretended to be:

If it be a matter of short direction for life and action, or notes for memory, I intend not to discredit this new trick. But otherwise, he that hath a long journey to walk in that pace is like a horse that overreacheth and yet goes slow.¹⁹¹

The gait of horses was a common metaphor of the time. On the other hand, on this side of the Atlantic and a century later, Emerson considered Bacon primarily to be a stylist and a man of action, advising his brother Edward in Washington also to keep a journal of exciting political

¹⁸⁹Orlo Williams, "Francis Bacon's Good Sense," National Review, CXIV (March, 1940), 372.

¹⁹⁰Jacob Zeitlin, "The Development of Bacon's Essay-- With Special Reference to the Question of Montaigne's Influence upon Them," JEGP, XXVII (October, 1928), 496-500.

¹⁹¹Quoted in Williamson, op. cit., p. 102.

events and ideas in Bacon's manner.¹⁹² Emerson himself learned from Bacon (as well as from Montaigne) how to shape his journal notes into a rounded form.¹⁹³ A reading of Emerson's essays reveals an epigrammatic style that has some similarities to that of Bacon's.

Bacon himself, however, was not too concerned with taking sides in the stylistic debate of the time; rather, he was concerned more with matter than style; hence, his use of aphorisms as the best means of dealing with matter. In the Advancement of Learning, concerning writing in aphorisms, he explains:

For first, it trieth the writer, whether he be superficial or solid: for Aphorisms, except they should be ridiculous, cannot be made but of the pith and heart of sciences; for discourse of illustration is cut off; descriptions of practice are cut off; so there remaineth nothing to fill the Aphorisms but some good quantity of observation: and therefore no man can suffice, nor in reason will attempt, to write aphorisms, but he that is sound and grounded. . . . Methods are more fit to win consent or belief, but less fit to point to action; for they carry a kind of demonstration in orb or circle, one part illuminating another, and therefore satisfy; but particulars, being dispersed, do best agree with dispersed directions. And lastly, Aphorisms,

¹⁹²Vivian C. Hopkins, "Emerson and Bacon," American Literature, XXIX (January, 1958), 410.

¹⁹³Ibid., p. 411.

representing a knowledge broken, do invite men to enquire farther; whereas Methods, carrying the shew of a total, do secure men, as if they were at furthest.¹⁹⁴

He views aphorisms as the best method in which to rely entirely upon content, a good inductive method which belonged to essay writing. He believes that methods persuaded, but aphorisms tantalized the mind.

Both the Ciceronian and the Senecan cults of style suffer under Bacon's condemnations.¹⁹⁵ For example, he considers attempted eloquence, in any form, to be a hindrance to the advancement of learning, but not to the use of learning. Both cults, he feels, set words above matter and rhetoric above philosophy. But, to Bacon, the first vanity in learning is that of Ciceronian imitation, which he calls hunting "more after words than matter."¹⁹⁶ But, like his contemporaries, he constantly cites both the ancients and moderns in support of his statements. His Promus itself offers an abundant evidence. He turns back from the exuberant stylistic milieu of the late Renaissance to the

¹⁹⁴Works, p. 125.

¹⁹⁵Williamson, op. cit., p. 153.

¹⁹⁶Works, p. 54.

methods of the ancient rhetoricians and their mnemonic devices, a reorientation which has an abundant effect on his style.¹⁹⁷ Thus, Bacon is an exponent and a practitioner of a new prose style.¹⁹⁸ Is it mere coincidence, therefore, that a change from the medieval philosophy of certainty to the Renaissance philosophy of skepticism occurs at the same time as a change of styles of writing? Schuster argues that Bacon avoided the use of the periodic sentence, because it was appropriate only for enhancing the knowledge of the masses. For scientific purposes, eloquent periods too quickly satisfied a reader or hearer, rendering the device inadequate.¹⁹⁹

Bacon commends the stylistic moderation of Tacitus in De Augustis, and Benjamin has analyzed the influence of Tacitus on Bacon, discovering that it is most marked in the first period of Bacon's active life (1585-1607), the years of the publication of the first version of the Essays and

¹⁹⁷Sister Mary Antonia Bowman, "The English Prose Style of Francis Bacon," DA, XXIV (May, 1964), 4674-4675.

¹⁹⁸Sister Mary Faith Schuster, "Philosophy of Life and Prose Style in Thomas More's 'Richard III' and Francis Bacon's 'Henry VII,'" PMLA, LXX (June, 1955), 476.

¹⁹⁹Loc. cit.

the Advancement of Learning before Bacon had set his sights so much on science.²⁰⁰ Bacon also writes favorably of Seneca, Lipsius, Machiavelli, and Guicciardini. Scholars have long allied Bacon with the anti-Ciceronian movement, noting his use of brevity in the first edition of Essays; his attack upon the "flowing and watery vein" of the Ciceronians in his Advancement of Learning;²⁰¹ and his development of a loose prose style. His demand for matter over words eventually finds him settling for a plain style which he advocates allegorically in The New Atlantis.²⁰² Do the Essays of 1597 follow the style of Seneca or Tacitus? The aphoristic style of the first Essays certainly do present knowledge without order and connection, fitting the style of the Tacitean sentence. Benjamin believes that Bacon is more sympathetic with the linguistic theories of the followers of Tacitus, who wrote with a kind of obscurity that was inclined to hide the higher wisdom from the reach of the ordinary man. The writings of Tacitus were probably

²⁰⁰Edwin B. Benjamin, "Bacon and Tacitus," Classical Philology, LX (April, 1965), 102.

²⁰¹Works, p. 54.

²⁰²Ibid., pp. 731-732.

influential, even though Bacon does not mention them to any great extent, but links Tacitus with Machiavelli as the master of practical, capsule wisdom.²⁰³

Williams, in editing a variety of English essays, observes that Bacon's laconic style suggests the word, assay, which depicts the process of panning for gold in which all dirt is washed away until there is nothing left except a few flashing specks of gold.²⁰⁴ Bacon's aphorisms with their brilliant images are the result of his deliberate effort to be both tacit and moral. But no man of flesh and blood ever withstands the forces of change. Even Bacon's writing was subject to new forces at work within his own genius and within his own intellectual climate.

As Bacon himself was subject to the changes within his society and within himself, his Essays reflect these changes. When the first ten Essays of 1597 appeared, they were unique writings, little more than collections of sententiae transferred from a commonplace book with little enlargement and no transitional material. To some extent, the first edition

²⁰³Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 107-109.

²⁰⁴W. E. Williams (ed.), A Book of English Essays, pp. 11-12.

represents Bacon's departure from the formal styles of Elizabethan writers whose methods and floridness Bacon considers a hindrance to the advancement of learning. One may investigate, perhaps fruitlessly, to determine whether Bacon's pattern was that of Seneca, of Lipsius, even Montaigne, or maybe Tacitus. Because Bacon maintained that writing should give expression to an idea in the manner in which the mind comes to grips with it, he chose the device of the aphorism which rejected the traditional embellishments by which Renaissance rhetoric tended to carry the idea even beyond the obvious. This mode of expression Bacon uses throughout the whole of the Novum Organum. When, however, he wrote the Advancement of Learning, he must have seen that a more methodical and persuasive style was necessary for the best communication. It is this development in the thinking and experience of Bacon that provides some insight into the style of the later Essays of 1612 and 1625, revealing a modification of his aphoristic manner of 1597.²⁰⁵ Gone now are the paragraph markings which indicate that each sentence should be taken as a separate entity. Gone also are the transitionless gaps between the sentences.

²⁰⁵Helen C. White, Ruth C. Wallerstein, and Ricardo Quintana (eds.), Seventeenth-Century Verse and Prose: 1600-1660, I, 44.

To reveal the difference that twenty-eight years of experience and intellectual and stylistic development made in Bacon's style, both the 1597 and 1625 editions of the essay, "Of Studies," are given hereafter in parallel columns:

1597 Edition

Studies serve for pastimes, for ornaments & for abilities. Their chiefe 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 fittest to judge or censure.

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 the Scholler.

They perfect Nature, and are perfected by experience.

Craftie men contemne them, simple men admire them, wise men use them: For they teach not their owne use, but that is a wisdome without them: and above them

1625 Edition

Studies serve for Delight, for Ornament and for Ability. Their Chiefe Use for Delight, is in Privatnesse and Retiring; For Ornament, is in Discourse; And for Ability, is in the Judgement and Disposition of Businesse. For Expert Men can Execute, and perhaps Judge of particulars, one by one; But the generall Counsels, and the Plots, and Marshalling of Affaires, come best from those that are Learned. To spend too much Time in Studies, is Sloth; 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: For Naturall Abilities, are like Naturall Plants, that need Proyning by Study: And Studies themselves, doe give forth Directions too much at Large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty Men Contemne Studies; Simple Men Admire them; and Wise Men Use them: For they teach not their owne Use; But that is a Wisdome without them, and above them, won by

wonne by observation.

Reade not to contradict, nor to believe, but to waigh and consider.

Some bookes are to bee tasted, others to bee swallowed, and some few to bee 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.

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 have a present wit, and if he reade little, he had neede have much cunning, to seeme to know that he doth not.

Histories make men wise, Poets wittie: the Mathematickes subtle, naturall Phylosophie deepe: Morall grave, Logicke and Rhetoricke able to contend.²⁰⁶

Text: 1597

Observation. Reade not to Concradict, and Confute; Nor to Belceve and Take for granted; Nor to Finde Talke and Discourse; But to weigh and Consider. Some Bookes are to be tasted, Others to be Swallowed, and Some Few to be Chewed and Digested: That is, some Bookes are to be read onely in Parts; Others to be read but not Curiously; And some Few to be read wholly, and with Diligence and Attention. Some Bookes also may be read by Deputy, and Extracts made of them by Others: But that would be, onely in the lesse important Arguments, and the Meaner Sort of Bookes: else distilled Bookes, are like Common distilled Waters, Flashy things. Reading maketh a Full man; Conference a ready Man; and Writing an Exact Man. And therefore, If a Man Write little, he had need have a Great Memory; If he Conferre little, he had need have a Present Wit; And if he Reade little, he had need have much Cunning, to seeme to know that, he doth not. Histories make men Wise; Poets Witty; the Mathematicks Subtill; Naturall Philosophy deepe; Morall Grave; Logick and Rhetorick Able to Contend. Abeunc studia in Mores. Nay

²⁰⁶Francis Bacon, Essayes, Religious Meditations, Places of Persuasion and Discourse. (Reproduced by Huntington Library)

there is no Stand or Impedi-
 ment in the Wit, but may be
 wrought out by Fit Studies;
 Like as Diseases of the Body,
 may have Appropriate Exer-
 cises. Fowling is good for
 the Stone and Reines;
 Shooting for the Lungs and
 Breast; Gentle Walking for
 the Stomacks; Riding for the
 Head; And the like. So if a
 Mans Wit be Wandering, let
 him Study the Mathematicks;
 For in Demonstrations, if his
 Wit be called away never so
 little, he must begin again:
 If his Wit be not Apt to dis-
 tinguish or find differences,
 let him Study the Schoolemen;
 For they are Cymini sectores.
 If he be not Apt to beat over
 Matters, and to call up one
 Thing, to Prove and Illus-
 trate another, let him Study
 the Lawyers Cases: So every
 Defect of the Minde, may have
 a Speciall Receipt.²⁰⁷

Text: 1625

One readily sees how the aphoristic, transitionless style of the 1597 edition was expanded in the 1625 edition. If one follows Bacon's idea that a florid style which embellishes an idea is a hindrance to the advancement of learning, he realizes at once that Bacon did not consider his early ideas as being complete and beyond the need for

²⁰⁷Quoted in White et al., op. cit., pp. 45-46.

improvement. In the 1625 edition, he adds more transitional material, more illustrations and examples indicative of the growth of his experience and the mellowing of his attitudes toward an aphoristic style. Perhaps, Bacon knew that his life was passing so swiftly that it was now time for him to make final some ideas which he formerly had sought to improve. He did improve them, and by this improvement, in his Essays earned a place for himself among the world's great. In all of the ten essays contained in the 1597 edition, one observes a very simple and concise style with no embellishments. Here, Bacon is not concerned about the fine details and polished literary finish, but sought to express ideas in the least exalted mood. In both his second and third editions, however, he reaches a higher level of style and mood as well as a greater insight into the character of the subjects he treats. No longer does he consider merely the home-spun subjects of everyday life, but he now deals with philosophic subjects of a more elevated nature.²⁰⁸

Although Spedding recognizes only three editions (1597, 1612, and 1625), he notes that there have been innumerable

²⁰⁸Northrup (ed.), op. cit., p. xxiv.

others.²⁰⁹ From the first year of their appearance to Bacon's final edition of 1625, he was constantly correcting and emending.²¹⁰ The later editions indicate that his thoughts were less concise and his language more ornate, although he never lost completely the magnificent succinctness and brevity that help to maintain their "chewy" quality.²¹¹ With the expansions and the additions of the later versions comes an increase in the discursive style unknown in the earlier editions.²¹²

In the 1612 edition, Bacon omits essay eight of the original ten ("Of Honour and Reputation") but adds twenty-nine new ones. In the 1625 edition, he restores "Of Honour and Reputation" and adds nineteen more. Only "Of Studies," "Of Ceremonies and Respects," "Of Faction," and "Of Negotiating" appear in all three editions, all in an altered and expanded form. One discerns this mellowing of attitudes in Bacon's Epistle Dedicatory affixed to the edition of 1625, hereafter given in complete text:

²⁰⁹Works, p. 733.

²¹⁰Loc. cit.

²¹¹Steeves, op. cit., p. 99.

²¹²David Daiches, A Critical History of English Literature, I, 487.

To the Right Honourable my very good Lord, the Duke
of Buckingham his Grace Lord High Admiral of England.

Excellent Lord.

Salomon says, A good name is as a precious ointment; and I assure myself, such will your Grace's name be with posterity. For your fortune and merit both have been eminent. And you have planted things that are like to last. I do now publish my Essays: which, of all my other works, have been most current; for that, as it seems, they come home to men's business and bosoms. I have enlarged them both in number and weight; so that they are indeed a new work. I thought it therefore agreeable to my affection and obligation to your Grace, to prefix your name before them, both in English and in Latin. For I do conceive that the Latin volume of them (being in the universal language) may last as long as books last. My Instauration I dedicated to the King; my History of Henry the Seventh (which I have now also translated in Latin), and my portions of Natural History, to the Prince; and these I dedicate to your Grace; being of the best fruits that by the good increase which God gives to my pen and labours I could yield. God Lead your grace by the hand.

Your Grace's most obliged and faithful servant,
FR. ST. ALBAN²¹³

This dedication makes clear that the purpose of Bacon's expansions and alterations, both in the length and in the number of essays, was to form a part of some greater work. Because of the similarity in content, it is likely that the enlargements were inspired by discussions of the moral and civil knowledge of the Arrangement of Learning, a work that later served as part of the Instauration Magna. Many of the

²¹³Works, p. 735.

broad subjects discussed in the Advancement of Learning (fortune, nobility, prosperity, adversity riches, and the like) and in De Augmentis Scientiarum became titles for later essays. If the enlargements of the 1625 edition were influenced by the Advancement of Learning, it appears that the Promus is more influential to the Advancement of Learning than to the Essays. Zeitlin lends his support to the idea that the basic reason for Bacon's changes in the Essays was the influence of the author's working with the Advancement of Learning, a factor which is more marked in the edition of 1612 than that of 1625.²¹⁴ The subjects of the 1612 Essays were likely those areas of truth which Bacon wished to treat in the Advancement of Learning. Zeitlin believes it is in keeping with Bacon's method to prepare experiments for the illustration of his theories.²¹⁵

Of the apparent differences between the Essays of 1597 and those of 1612, the most noticeable is that of style with its greater elaborateness, fluency of expression, its freedom,

²¹⁴Jacob Zeitlin, "The Development of Bacon's Essay-- With Special Reference to the Question of Montaigne's Influence upon Them," JEGP, XVII (October, 1928), 507.

²¹⁵Loc. cit.

and the use of examples and illustrations. Zeitlin finds a new aspect, however, presenting itself in the twenty-nine new essays of 1612, that of a new devotion to moral ideals, a higher moral tone that dislikes all that is in disagreement with his observations.²¹⁶ In fact, one tends to have the impression that there were two spirits that fought for the control of Bacon's soul, one of a moralized view of conduct completely divorced from his own practical advice and one saturated in a calculating pragmatism. His essay, "Of Simulation and Dissimulation," supports this idea. Herein is reflected the uncertainty of Bacon's character. The secular attitudes of Bacon's mind apparently were the stronger because the worldly considerations seem more powerful and are colored by some suggestions and advice that are of questionable morality. Zeitlin claims that Bacon's moral tone of 1612 was supplanted by a growing worldliness, a quality engendered by his personal experiences between 1612 and 1625.²¹⁷

The differences in style are obvious, as well as are some elements of content. For example, Davis notes that

²¹⁶Ibid., p. 508.

²¹⁷Ibid., p. 513.

" . . . the late essays indicate a shift from the dry aphoristic style which cut off 'discourses of illustration' and 'recitals of examples' to a more highly embellished hortatory style--and an imagistic one."²¹⁸ Davis is convinced that in content Bacon shifted from a pragmatic to an ethical view of his topic by use of images and support by allusions.²¹⁹ Williamson suggests that Bacon in his later life may have mellowed in his attitude toward methods, that Bacon surrendered aphorisms for methods.²²⁰ Originally he thought aphorisms the proper way in which to verbalize ideas that did not pretend finality. In his later life, his increased use of concreteness and organization modified his aphoristic style. Williamson contends that Bacon changes his style where it would contribute to his plan of constant improvement; i. e., in the new essays of later editions.²²¹ This change is facilitated by the addition of connectives and illustrations, two elements that are most representative

²¹⁸Walter R. Davis, "The Imagery of Bacon's Late Work," MLQ, XXVII (June, 1966), 163.

²¹⁹Loc. cit.

²²⁰Williamson, op. cit., p. 180.

²²¹Ibid., p. 180.

of traditional rhetorical methods. Bacon has added the finishing touches which relax the style and soften the stark antithetical balance of his former work.

Observation of Bacon's change in manner and style will receive further enlightenment when one reads anew essay No. 50, "Of Studies," from the edition of 1625. A student will see that the beginning and development of Bacon's essays can be explained best by understanding the character of Bacon's thought and the circumstances of his career. Grenier illustrates this matter by noting that the phrase, "writing maketh an exact man," takes on new meaning when one discovers that Bacon is writing about effective reading procedures.²²² Grenier adds that Bacon also suggests that writing and collecting of notes, digests, commonplaces, and other such exercises, based upon material having been read and studied, is the basis of a fruitful reading/writing program.

Herein lies the secret both of Francis Bacon's philosophy and his method--the commonplace book which served as an aid to the imagination. Bacon utilized the commonplace book to

²²²Francis J. Grenier, "Bacon's Portrait of the 'Exact Man': Reading with Pen in Hand," American Notes and Queries, V (September, 1933), 4-5.

stimulate his memory to the discovery and the recovery of thoughts and ideas in an aphoristic style to aid in the advancement of learning and ushering in the great renewal he envisioned. The Promus of Formularies and Elegancies, although not precisely the source of Bacon's Essays or other of his writings, is an indication of the method he used in gathering the ideas that would germinate and develop into his ambitious Great Instauration. Promus-like materials filled with proverbs, antitheses, significant words and phrases, figures of speech, analogies, and quotations from the Scripture are the materials out of which he fashioned his philosophical works. Like the fruit of science and philosophy to which he often referred, the fruit of his own intellect needed the benefit of experience for mellowing and ripening. The Essays are a pertinent illustration of that process.

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APPENDIX

ESSAYS

RELIGIOUS MEDITATIONS
PLACES OF PERSWASION AND
DISSWASION

Seene and allowed.

AT LONDON,

Printed for Humfrey Hooper, and are
to be sold at the blacke Beare
in Chauncery Lane.

1597

ESSAYS

1597

Of Studies.

Studies serue for pastimes, for ornaments & for abilities. Their chiefe vse for pastime is in priuatenes and retiring; for ornaments is in discourse, and for abilities is 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 them, wise men vse them: For they teach not their owne vse, but that is a wisdom without them: and about them wonne by obseruation.

Reade not to contradict, not to belieue, but to waigh and consider.

Some bookes are to bee tasted, others to bee swallowed, and some few to bee 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.

Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exacte man. And therefore if a man write little, he had neede haue a great memorie: if he conferre little, he had neede haue a present wit, and if he reade little, he had neede haue much cunning, to seeme to know that he doth not.

Historics make men wise, Poets wittie: the Mathematickes subtle, naturall Phylosophie deepe: Morall graue, Logicke and Rhetoricke able to contend.

Of Discourse.

Some in their discourse desire rather commendation of wit in being able to holde all arguments, than of iudgement in discerning what is true, as if it were a praise to know what might be said, and not what should be the part. Some haue certaine Common places and Theames wherein they are good; and want varietie, which kinde of puerilitie is for the most part tedious, and some and then ridiculous.

The honourablest part of talke, is to guide the occasion, and againe to moderate & passe to somewhat else.

It is good to varie and mixe speech of the present occasion with argument, tales with reasons, asking of questions, with telling of opinions, and iest and earnest.

But some thinges are priuiledged from iest, namely Religion, matters of state, great persons, any mans present businesse of importance, and any case that deserveth pittie.

He that questioneth much shall learne much, and content much, specially if hee applie his questions to the skill of the person of whome he asketh, for he shal giue them occasion to please themselues in speaking, and himselfe shall continually gather knowledge.

If you dissemble sometimes your knowledge of that you are thought to knowe, you shall bee thought another time to know that you know not.

Speech of a mans selfe is not good often, and there is but one case, wherein a man may commend himselfe with good grace, and that is in commending vertue in another, especially if it be such a vertue, as whereunto himselfe pretendeth.

Discretion of speech is more then eloquence, and to speake agreably to him, with whome we deale is more the' to speake in good wordes or in good order.

A good continued speech without a good speech of interlocution sheweth slownesse: and a good reply or second speech, without a good set speech sheweth shallownesse and weaknes, as wee see in beastes that those that are weakest

It is a good precept generally in rec. find another: yet to adde somewhat of ones owne; as if you will grant his opinion, let it be with some distinction, if you will follow his motion, let it be with condation; if you allow his counsell, let it be with alleadging further reason.

Of Followers and Friends.

Costly followers are not to be liked, leastwhile a man maketh his traine longer, hee make his wings shorter, I reckon to be costly not them alone which charge the purse, which are wearysome and importune in sutes. Ordinary following ought to challenge no higher conditions then countenance, recommendation and protection from wrong.

Factious followers are worse to be liked, which follow not vpon affection to him with whome they raunge themselues, but vpon discontentment conceiued against some other, whereupon commonly insueth that ill intelligence that we many times see between great personages.

The following by certaine States answerable to that which a great person himselfe professeth, as of Souldiers to him that hath beene imployed in the warres, and the like hath euer beene a thing ciuile, and well taken even in Monarchies, so it be without too much pompe or popularitie.

But the most honorable kind of following is to bee followed, as one that apprehendeth to aduance vertue & desert in all sortes of persons, and yet where there is no eminent oddes in sufficiencie, it is better to take with the more passable, then with the more able. In gouernment it is good to use men of one rancke equally, for, to countenance some extraordinarily, is to make them insolente, and the rest discontent, because they may claime a due. But in fauours to vse men with much difference and election is good, for it maketh the persons preferred more thankfull, and the rest more officious, because all is of fauour.

It is good not to make too much of any man at first, because one cannot holde out that proportion.

To be gouerned by one is not good, and to be distracted with many is worse; but to take a daise of friends is euer

Honorable: For lookers on many a day see more than a gangsters,
And the vale best discourageth the ill.

There is little friendship in the world, and least of all betweene equals, which was wont to bee magnified. That that is, is betweene superiour and inferiour, whose fortunes may comprehend the one the other.

Of Sutes.

Manie ill matters are vndertaken, and many good matters with ill mindes. Some embrace Sutes which neuer meane to deale effectually in them, But if they see there may be life in the matter by some other meane, they will be content to winne a thanke or take a second reward. Some take holde of Sutes onely for an occasion to crosse some other, or to make an information wherof they could not otherwise haue an apt precept, without care what become of the Sute, when that turne is serued. Nay some vndertake Sutes with a full purpose to let them fall, to the ende to gratifie the aduerse partie or competitor.

Surely there is in forte a right in euerie Sute, either a right of equitie, if it be a Sute of Controuersie; or a right of desert, if it bee a Sute of petition. If affection leade a man to fauour the wrong side in iustice, let him rather use his countenance to compound the matter then to carrie it. If affection lead a man to fauour the lesse worthy in desert, let him doe it, without deprauing or disabling the better deseruer.

In Sutes a man doth not well vnderstand, it is good to referre them to some friend of trust and iudgement, that may reporte whether he may deale in them with honor.

Suters are so distasted with delaies and abuses, that plaine dealing in denying to deale in Sutes at first, and reporting the success barely, and in challengin no more thanks then one hath deserued, is growen not onely honourable but also gracious.

In Sutes of fauour the first comming ought to take little place, so far forth consideration may bee had of his trust, that if intelligence of the matter could not

otherwise haue bene had but by him, advantage be not taken of the note.

To be ignorant of the value of a Sute is simplicitie, as well as to be ignorant of the right thereof is want of conscience.

Secrecie in Sutes is a great meane of obtaining, for voicing them to bee in forwardnes may discourage some kinde of suters, but doth quicken and awake others.

But tyming of the Sutes is the principall, tyming I saye not onely in respect of the person that shoulde graunt it, but in respect of those which are like to crosse it.

Nothing is thought so easie a request to a great person as his letter, and yet if it bee not in a good cause, it is so much out of his reputation.

Of Expence.

Riches are for spending, and spending for honour & good actions. Therefore extraordinarie Expence must bee limited by the worth of the occasion; for voluntarie vndoing may bee as well for a mans countrie, as for the kingdome of heauen. But ordinarie expence ought to bee limited by a mans estate, and gouerned with such regard, as it be within his compasse, and not subiect to deceite and abuse of feruants, and ordered to the best shew, that the Bills maye be lesse then the estimation abroad.

It is no basenes for the greatest to descend and looke into their owne estate. Some forbear it not vpon negligence along, but doubting to bring themselves into Melancholy in respect they shall finde it broken. But Woundes cannot be cured without searching.

Hee that cannot looke into his owne estate, had neede both choose well those whom he employeth, yea and change them after. For new are more timorous and lesse subtle.

In clearing of a mans estate, hee may as well hurt himselfe in being too suddaine, as in letting it runne on

'too long, for fustle calling it commonly an absolute public as interest.

He that hath a state to repaire may not be too small things; and commonly it is lesse dishonourable to charge petty changes then to stoop to petty greatness.

A man ought wisely to begin changes, which once begunne must continue. But in matters that recurre not he may be more magnificent.

Of Regiment of Health.

There is a wisdom in this beyond the rules of Physicke. A mans owne observation what he findes good of, and what he findes hurt of, is the best Physicke to preserve health. But it is a safer conclusion to say, this agreeth well with me, therefore I will continue it, then ths I finde no offence, of this therefore I may use it. For strength of nature in youth persech over many excesses, which are owing a man till his age.

Discerne of the coming on of yeares, and thinke not to doe the same things still.

Beware of any suddain change in any great point of diet, and if necessitie inforce it, hit the rest to it.

To be free minded, and chearefully disposed at bowers of meate, and of sleepe, and or exercise, is the best precept of long lasting.

If you flie Physicke in health altogether, it will be too strange to your body, wher you shall see it, if you make it too familiar, it will worke no extraordinarie effect when sicknesse cometh.

Despise no new accident in the body, but aske opinion of it.

In sicknesse respect health principally, and in health action. For those that put their bodies to indure in health, may in most sicknesse which are not very sharpe, be cured sweltye with diet and tending.

Physitians are some of them so pleasing and conformable to the humours of the patient, as they presse not the true cure of the disease; and some other are so regular in proceeding according to Arte for the Disease, as they respect not sufficiently the condition of the patient. Take one of a middle temper, or if it may not bee found in one man, compound two of both sorts & forget . . . (Note: last line not reproduced from the Huntington Library original)

Of Honour and Reputation.

The winning of Honour is but the revealing of a mans vertue and worth without disadvantage, for some in their actions doe affect Honour and reputation, which sort of men are commonly much talked of, but inwardly little admired: and some darken their vertue in the shew of it, so as they be vnder-valewed in opinion.

If a man performe that which hath not bene attempted before, or attempted and giuen ouer, or hath bene atchieued, but not with so good circumstance, he shall purchase more Honour then by effecting a matter of greater difficultie or vertue, wherein he is but a follower.

If a man so temper his actions as in some one of them hee doe content euerie faction or combination of people, the Musicke will be the fuller.

A man is an ill husband of his Honour that entereth into any action, the failing wherein may disgrace him more then the carrying of it through can Honour him.

Discreete followers helpe much to reputation.

Enuie which is the canker of Honour, is best extinguished by declaring a mans selfe in his ends, rather to seeke merite then fame, and by attributing a mans successes rather to diuine prouidence & felicitie then to his vertue or pollicie.

The true Marshalling of the degrees of Soueraign honours are these. In the first place are Conditors, founders of States. In the second place are Legislatores Lawgiuers, which are also called second founders, or Reparatoprincipes, because they gouerne by their ordinances after they are gone.

In the third place are Libertatores, such as compound the long miseries of ciuill warres, or deliver their Countre from seruitude of strangers or tyrants. In the fourth place are Propagatores or Procuratores imperii, such as in honourable warres enlarge their territories, or make noble defence against Inuaders. And in the last place are Patres patria, which raigne iustly and make the times good wherein they liue. Degrees of honour in subjects are first Participes curarum, those upon whome Princes doe discharge the greatest waight of their affaires, their Right handes (as wee call them.) The next are Duces belli, great leaders, such as are Princes, Lieutenants, & do them notable seruices in the wars. The third are Gratiosi, fauorites, such as exceede not this scanting to be a sollace to the Soueraigne, and harmlesse to the people. And the fourth Negotii pares, such as haue great place vnder Princes, and execute their places with sufficiencie.

Of Faction.

Manie haue a newe wisdomed, indeed, a fond opinion; That for a Prince to gouerne his estate, or for a great person to gouerne his proceedings according to the respects of Factions, is the principal part of pollicie. Whereas contrariwise, the chiefest wisdomed is either in ordering those things which are generall, and wherein men of seuerall Factions doe neuerthelesse agree, or in dealing with correspondence to particular persons one by one, But I say not that the consideration of Factions is to be neglected.

Meane men must adheare, but great men that haue strength in themselues were better maintaine themselues indifferent and neutrall; yet euen in beginners to adheare so moderatly, as he be a man of the one Faction, which is passabliest with the other, commonly giueth best way.

The lower and weaker Faction is the firmer in coniunction.

When one of the Factions is extinguished, the remaining subuiuideth which is good for a second Faction. It commonly seene that men once placed, take in with the contrairie faction to that by which they enter.

The Traitor in Factions lightly goeth away with it, for when matters haue sticke long in ballancing, the winning of some one man casteth them, and hee getteth all the thankes.

Of Negotiating.

It is generally better to deale by speech than by letter, and by the mediation of a thirde then by a mans selfe. Letters are good when a man woulde draw an answer by letter backe againe, or whe' it may serue for a mans iustification afterwards to produce his owne letter. To deale in person is good when a mans face breedes regard, as commonly with inferiours.

In choyce of instrumēt's it is better to choose men of a plainer sorte that are like to doe that that is committed to them; and to reporte backe againe faithfully the successe, then those that are cunning to contriue out of other mens businesse somewhat to grace theselues, and will helpe the matter in reporte for satisfactions sake.

It is better to found a person with whome one deales afarre off, then to fal vppon the point at first, except you meane to surprise him by some shorte question.

It is better dealing with men in appetite then with those which are where they would be.

If a man deale with an other vppo conditions, the starte or first performance is all, which a man can not reasonably demaunde, except either the nature of the thing be such which must goe before, or else a man can perswade the other partie that he shall still neede him in some other thing, or else that he bee counted the honestest man.

All practise is to discouer or to worke: men discouer themselues in trust, in passion, at vnwares & of necessitie, when they would haue somewhat donne, and cannot find an apt precept. If you would worke any man, you must either know his nature, and fashions and so leade him to his ends, and so winne him, or his weakenesses or isauantages, and so awe him, or those that haue interest in him and so gouerne him.

In dealing with cunning persons, we must never consider their ends to interpret their speeches, and it is good to say little to them, and that which they least look for.

FINIS.