

Interpretation

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The Empire of Progress: Bacon's Improvement Upon Machiavelli

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I. BACON, MACHIAVELLI, AND THE *ESSAYS*

Many commentators have wondered whether Francis Bacon's complicated projects are somehow traceable to Machiavelli's simpler if ruthless novelty. Recent students of the Baconian political writings incline to say yes. That answer leads to new questions. How could scientific method and a humane utopianism rest upon a foundation so apparently incompatible? That question guides this study. I examine with care the four explicit treatments of Machiavellian doctrines in *Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral* and conclude that Bacon relies on Machiavelli's fundamentals, but attempts improved measures.

There is another difficulty that some contemporary scholars raise; they doubt that Machiavelli's works contain any very original or extensive plan. How can one measure Bacon against Machiavelli's innovations if Machiavelli merely advocates an old classical republicanism, as Zera Fink contends, or a typically civic and republican humanism, in J.G.A. Pocock's variation on an influential formulation? A little consideration of these views will provide a glancing introduction to Machiavellian fundamentals and Bacon's revisions.¹

Fink simply interprets Machiavelli as a Renaissance republican, a new advocate of the old mixed government set forth by Aristotle, Polybius, Cicero, and others. She thus simply abstracts from the differences. Her arguments neglect the primacy of moral virtue and of philosophy for Aristotle (but not for the "utilitarian spirit" of Machiavelli), the primacy of execution and effectual princes and republics for Machiavelli (but not for Aristotle), the difference between Aristotle's mixed regime (which is partly attuned to diversity of ethical character) and Machiavelli's republican state (which sets diverse passions of fear, gain, and ambition into managed conflict), and, among many other important differences, Aristotle's recommendation of a small city (for quality of political life) and Machiavelli's of an expanding republican empire (for security abroad and managing faction within).

Pocock's historical synthesizing is much more a self-conscious and complex theory of historical development. Machiavelli and his fellow Florentine intellectuals are said to advance an Aristotelian account of the "political nature of

man" under special Christian circumstances which deny the possibility of secular fulfilment; the resulting "civic" humanism is not simple classicism. Pocock is brief, not to say enigmatic, about the core of this humanism. He mentions "balanced government," "dynamic virtue," and "the role of arms and property" in shaping the civic "personality." He is clearer about its future: the achievement was clearly epochal. This Florentine theorizing constituted a "Machiavellian moment" which influenced the "Atlantic" tradition; in particular it provided a formative civic republicanism that was hostile to the capitalism and commercialism of the liberal and individualist tradition.

These complications contain more difficulties than Fink's simplicities. No more than Fink does Pocock confront the differences between Aristotle's doctrines and Machiavelli's, and his historicist theorizing gives us less of Machiavelli's obvious counsels and more evasions and distortions. Pocock alludes slightly to the contention that Machiavelli challenges the "great tradition" of political philosophy (he probably refers to conclusions in Leo Strauss's *Thoughts on Machiavelli*); he does not expound or confront this argument. While summarizing *The Prince's* chapters, he neglects the passage most important for his purpose: the critique, in chapter 15, of "imaginary" republics and principalities and of an orientation by the good rather than necessity. It is a critique that seems directed at philosopher-kings and government by gentlemen and at the Aristotelian doctrines that a city comes into existence from necessity but exists for the good. Similarly, while reviewing chapter 3 Pocock skips over Machiavelli's introductory formulations of his own foundation: "it is a very natural and ordinary thing to desire to acquire"; and only if men fail are they to be accused of "error and blame." Machiavelli legitimates acquisitiveness. It is the key step shared by the later and capitalistic versions of individualism. It is the step that should be absent, by definition, from the civic neoclassicism that Pocock attributes to Machiavelli. Also, Pocock misreads the character and importance of Machiavelli's republicanism. He continually inserts an "ideal" of active citizen participation into Machiavelli's advocacy of a republic that mixes peoples and elites in a way that protects liberty reinterpreted as a warrant for individual striving. He then overstates Machiavelli's devotion to republicanism. He has to elude or explain away the advice to princes on how to acquire, destroy, or make use of a republic. In general, any impartial reader must have doubts about an interpretation that rests upon Pocock's bristling and explicit array of assumptions and presumptions, not least the enormous assertion, a decayed Hegelianism, that the "Florentine mind" created its own concepts according to the "Hellenic intellect" it inherited, and thus, like a self-inflated and self-directed blimp, with passengers anesthetized within, came to dominate the future.

Bacon's own comments on Machiavelli's thought suggest that it was a turning point. Machiavelli and other such writers are decisively correct. "We are much beholden to Machiavel and others that write what men do, and not what they ought to do."² This much-quoted phrase is no aside, and its portent is

crucial. It occurs in the midst of Bacon's comprehensive development of moral science in the *Advancement*; it encapsulates Machiavelli's profound revolution in morality or, rather, away from morality. When in *The Prince's* chapter 15 Machiavelli confronted the ancient political philosophers' orientation by what is good, he called it imaginary and advanced a new orientation, by success in managing the forces that really move men. "For it is so far from how one lives to how one should live that he who lets go of what is done for what should be done learns his ruin rather than his presentation."³ This is what Strauss called Machiavelli's "clarion call" of modernity: the announcement of a novel foundation, finally in fear, for a new organization of human affairs, to provide not least for self-preservation. This is far from Bacon's only allusion to Machiavelli. According to Richard Kennington, Bacon's open references are unprecedented among political philosophers; no other seventeenth-century philosopher published during his lifetime so much as *one* mention. In *Advancement* alone Bacon refers to Machiavelli ten times, almost always favorably.⁴

Commentators have noted the family resemblance. Edwin Abbott in the last century, N. Orsini, Felix Raab, Howard White, Paolo Rossi, Jonathan Marwil, and Anthony Quinton in this, are among many impressed with the hard-nosed opportunism informing Bacon's writings on practical affairs. Bacon was "more Machiavellian than Machiavelli," according to Orsini. Abbott thought the *Essays* "greatly influenced by Machiavelli," as are "the whole of Bacon's political writings," and added an impressive observation: all the writings exhibit a "pre-occupation with vast schemes" that leads to "neglect of rules of morality."⁵ Such writers suggest that Bacon follows Machiavelli in discarding traditional scruples and ends, and some, such as Abbott, even apply this thought to truth, the end of science.

Still, other writers have seen that Machiavelli's influence on Bacon cannot be so simply affirmed. Even the explicit deference to Machiavelli on the status of morality, in the *Advancement*, is accompanied by qualification: we should attend to what men do and not what they ought to do, if only because "it is not possible to join the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove, except men be perfectly acquainted with the nature of evil itself." The qualification might seem in the spirit of the Bible, even if the final counsel, that men devote themselves to perfect knowledge of evil ways, gives pause.

Such differences cloud the question of Bacon's Machiavellianism, and there are more massive differences. Bacon's important works and the general tone of all his works differ visibly from anything Machiavelli ever wrote. The works on method, to take the obvious case, have no Machiavellian parallel. Supposing the descriptions of experimental method to be Bacon's chief contribution, James Spedding dismissed Abbot's contentions rather airily.⁶ Spedding's example and biography have often been followed. Also, precisely the famous Baconian features of the idea of progress are absent from Machiavelli's plans. Chapter 15 of *The Prince* had turned to "what men do" and away from "the orders of

others,” who had “imagined principalities and republics that have never been seen or known to exist in truth.” Yet Bacon’s *New Atlantis* advances an imagined land of future health, peace, affluence, and parentlike care, a technological heaven on earth that had not been seen or known to exist. Even if Machiavelli might be thought to hide a prescription for new modes and orders beneath descriptions of historical examples, there are conspicuous differences between his prescriptions and Bacon’s. The surface of Bacon’s more practical works lacks the ruthlessness for which *The Prince* and the *Discourses* are infamous. On the contrary, the *Essays* counsel humanity, appear businesslike and respectable, and are filled with quotations from traditional authorities. None of Bacon’s works exhibits Machiavelli’s preoccupation with the strategy and metaphor of war. Nor do they exhibit Machiavelli’s characteristic themes: ruthless princely decisiveness, reminiscent of Cesare Borgia or Julius Caesar, and liberty, *patria*, and popular republicanism, reminiscent of the ancient Roman republic.

In short, Bacon defers to Machiavelli in ways that some consider fundamental, and yet differs from him in ways that others consider fundamental. This essay addresses the difficulty by investigating a selected number of the Baconian references to Machiavelli. I look at the references in the *Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral* alone, which allows me the luxury of close examination in a work that is nevertheless of broad scope, and I attend only to references to Machiavelli by name. The price of these restrictions is real. A complete account would weigh the express references to Machiavelli in other works. And what of the tacit allusions, not least in the *Essays*? In particular, why does Bacon not mention Machiavelli by name in the most visibly Machiavellian essay, “Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates” (no. 29)? This is one of the two central essays (if we count the 58 essays that Bacon included in the definitive 1625 edition) and the longest one, and its very examples are often drawn from *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*. Bacon prescribes a rather popular republic, unscrupulously warlike, with middle class and native militia encouraged and nobles and clergy reduced, and bent on growth in wealth, population, and naval empire. However one may explain Bacon’s reticence, there and elsewhere, I confine myself to the four essays in which Bacon provides explicit references. I can ponder progress of reasoning, selection of detail, and subtle differences of doctrine. The result seems to vindicate the experiment.

To summarize: all four references use the authority of Machiavelli to deal with matters of religion or sects, three times directly and once indirectly. All occur amidst crucial discussions of fundamentals—of “Goodness and Goodness of Nature” (no. 13), “Of Sedition and Troubles” (no. 15), “Of Custom and Education” (no. 39), and “Of Vicissitude of Things” (no. 58). All take issue with Machiavelli, the last two expressly, although on the basis of a fundamental agreement. With Machiavelli, Bacon seems impressed with the imperial

glory that attends the head of a conquering sect. The thinking man should be the comprehensively calculating political man, not the comprehensively contemplative philosopher; not truth or virtue, but the glory that ensures preservation, is his end. Yet Bacon corrects Machiavelli's calculations about the sect that will glorify. Essay 13 advises the adoption of a humane cause that retains an aura of Christian charity. Essay 15 encourages kings to be parental, rather than partisan. Economic development, and in general a management of hopes more than fears, is the way to undermine an old order and engender a new. Essay 39 criticizes Machiavelli's bloody words, suggesting instead revolution through the customs of a civil society that affords opportunities, especially in business. The last essay, number 58, links Bacon's vision of scientific progress to a series of growing and businesslike nation-states. Together such new nations can spread an imperial sect and overcome the Christianity that Spain, especially, upheld in Bacon's time. Bacon thought that his combination of civil nation-state with visionary progress appeals more broadly than Machiavelli's mixture of republican empires with modes of rising and safety, better hides its founder's ambition, and better imitates the successful Christian vision of an other-worldly provider. It incorporates Machiavellian *realpolitik* in a subordinate place within a Baconian movement of enlightenment.

II. THE POLICY OF HUMANITARIANISM

“And one of the doctors of Italy, Nicholas Machiavel,”
“had the confidence to put in writing, almost in plain terms,
”That the Christian faith had given up good men in prey to
those that are tyrannical and unjust”

(“Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature,” no. 13).⁷

Bacon's first introduction of Machiavelli in the *Essays* is as a theological authority. The irony barely glosses—in fact it accentuates—a telling blow at Christianity. The original indictment occurs in Dr. Machiavelli's *Discourses*, II, 2.⁸ It is startlingly ruthless. The passage celebrates democratic liberty and democratic “ferocity” toward nobles and contrasts the freedom of ancient warlike peoples with modern servile peoples. Machiavelli traces the difference to the “magnificent,” “ferocious,” and “bloody” sacrifices in pagan religion, which celebrated worldly glory, as opposed to the delicate equivalents in “our religion,” which glorifies humble, abject, and contemplative men. Number 13 does not celebrate peoples, liberty, or pagan ferocity; neither does the *Essays* as a whole, except quietly, as in numbers 15 and 29. True, Machiavelli indicates repeatedly that liberty is but a means to growth in population and private acquisitions, and that a conquering republic is a tyrannical ruler. He plans a calculated liberty and a regulated populace. But these suggestions come only after bold praise of bold militancy.

Bacon veils his militancy. He follows his display of Machiavelli's scandalous indictment, typically, by his own respectable-sounding explanation: "Which he spake, because indeed there was never law or sect or opinion did so much magnify goodness as the Christian religion doth." Apart from identifying "the Christian religion" as, at best, a mere "sect" (he develops this in essays 16 and 17), Bacon appears to withdraw from Machiavelli's charge—if the reader has missed his substitution of goodness for charity and his identification of Christianity with goodness rather than Christ. The essay begins with this sly identification, moves on to say that goodness "answers to" the theological virtue charity—for those who don't ask questions—and then says that charity admits of no excess, except error. That big qualification of the goodness of goodness becomes thematic after Bacon turns "to avoid the scandal and the danger both." Bacon will avoid the scandal of Machiavelli's way and the danger of Christianity's way. He proceeds in an indirect way characteristic of all but a few essays.

Essay 13 exemplifies both Bacon's humanitarianism and his hard-nosed Machiavellianism and shows how each is revised to support the other. According to Howard White's seminal study humanitarianism was part of Bacon's moderation of the imperial and acquisitive spirit of Machiavelli's politics and science. Yet White's accounts neglect essay 13, the *locus classicus* of Baconian humanitarianism. It turns humanitarianism toward self-reliance, on one's own acquisitions, and toward a social tool of political acquisitiveness. In fact White senses and portrays this development, even if he does not make it thematic. He eventually defines Baconian charity uncharitably, as "a political weapon" to recruit followers and as "depersonalized charity," the "unwitting charity of the spirit of capitalism."

Essay 13's first description of *philanthropia* abstracts from the distinctively Christian name of charity and from its pious spirit: care for those sharing a divine soul. Bacon's restatements move first to compassion for common bodily needs and then very delicately to self-advancement as the means of providing. Then Bacon cautions against regard for men's "faces" or "fancies," for precious gifts, and for equal distribution of things. That is, one should disregard what men appear to wish or say they wish, or their rare needs, or mere inequalities. Regard instead the basic needs satisfied by common and basic supplies, like food, or perhaps seed, such as "barley-corn."

Bacon then slips in self-regard as a limit upon regard for others. The language is biblical, but the words are profound blasphemy. Having revamped the second commandment, Bacon replaces the first and fundamental commandment with a foundation in the self. "For divinity maketh the love of ourselves the pattern: the love of our neighbors but the portraiture." Love of neighbor for God's sake has been replaced by provision for human necessities for one's own, and love of God, by love of self.

The revolutionary implications of the lord thyself are quickly developed:

advancement, not love, is the point. Concentrate on providing for oneself by a “vocation”: “for otherwise in feeding the streams one driest the fountain.” It is Machiavellian, this criticism of both Aristotelian liberality and Christian charity as ineffectual, and this movement toward an unChristian charity, as Clifford Orwin has called Machiavellian humanity.¹⁰ But Bacon’s insinuations, quiet restatements, and focus on economic needs and attitudes are some way from chapter 17 of *The Prince*. Essay 13 lacks that chapter’s spectacular theme: men must be governed more by cruelty than by humanity, because more by fear than by hope. Bacon relies more indirectly than Machiavelli on fear and more directly on hope, while managing both with a show of humanity.

Essay 13 contains a fearsome passage so hidden by its show of humanity that few commentators note it and even fewer weigh it. The message is that great politic selves are not good but bad by nature. Whatever be the “habit” or “disposition” of some toward goodness, nature tends most clearly toward “a natural malignity.” A deeper sort of malignancy is inclined to envy, and the deeper sort of envy is inclined to slander things established (“Of Envy,” no. 9) and to engage in mere mischief. “Such men in other men’s calamities are, as it were, in season.” These “dispositions are the very errors of human nature”—so deeply does the error of goodness go—“and yet they are the fittest timber to make great politics of; like to knee timber, that is good for ships, that are ordained to be tossed; but not for building houses, that shall stand firm.” Bacon is what Richard Hooker called Machiavelli, a “wise malignant.” He advances both humanity and malignity, and both have a place in his politics. While humanity has the conspicuous place, malignity is the foundation that shapes the other and their relation. Malignity accounts for the leader’s humanity.

The profoundly evil teaching that barely breaks the surface of essay 13 appears as muffled effects on earlier essays. “He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises either of virtue or mischief.” Yet “Of Marriage and Single Life” (no. 7) discusses coolly various advantages of marriage; “wife and children,” for example, “are a kind of discipline to humanity.” The politic man can use family life for social control. Similarly, “A man shall see the noblest works and foundations have proceeded from childless men.” Yet Bacon encourages a democratic or individualistic family, not austere and hierarchical but rather equal and indulgent. Children generally should be bred to engage in “vocations” and “courses”—today, the word might be “careers”—rather than “dispositions” of character or ways of the Lord. Upbringing is reshaped to foster mutually useful vocations and roles (“Of Custom and Education,” no. 39). Depersonalized charity is social policy, especially the policy of channeling desires to provide for needs.

The occasional, more open statement appears outside of the civil *Essays*. *Advancement’s* discussion of “active good,” as opposed to passive good, becomes especially blunt. The active good turns out to be private domination on the grandest scale. Bacon equates this with divine power (“the true the-

omachy”), which is a gigantic passion to form the world for oneself—although Bacon finally issues a foggy qualification (which “we have determined”) on behalf of “society.”

Neither hath this active good any identity with the good of society, though in some case it hath an incidence into it. For although it do many times bring forth acts of beneficence, yet it is with a respect private to a man’s own power, glory, amplification, continuance . . . For that gigantine state of mind which possesseth the troublers of the world, such as was Lucius Sylla and infinite other in smaller model, who would have all men happy to unhappy as they were their friends or enemies, and would give form to the world, according to their own humors (which is the true theomachy), pretendeth and aspireth to active good, though it recedeth furthest from good of society, which we have determined to be the greater. (*Advancement*, II xxi 1, ed. Wright)

The conclusion of essay 13 shows how one who would be politic can use the good of society. It may hint at Bacon’s own use. The topic: what goodness, in its new sense of regard for others’ real needs, “shows” about “a man.” Bacon mentions various aspects (or exhibitions) of goodness: courtesy to strangers and compassion toward the afflictions of others, easy pardon and remission of offenses, gratitude for small benefits, and, a peculiar phrasing of “St. Paul’s perfection,” a “wish to be an *anathema* from Christ for the salvation of his brethren.” The complex prose twists a New Testament passage to require, as a test of goodness, a condemnation of Christ. This confirms Bacon’s procedure in essay 13, indeed in the *Essays* as a whole. The first line of the first essay quotes Christ’s killer, Pilate, and jests at Christ’s claim to be witness to the truth.

A very elliptical conclusion of essay 13 may intimate a new, humanitarian, faith: the place of goodness in building houses after tougher men have established a foundation. “If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shows he is a citizen of the world, and that his heart is no island cut off from other lands, but a continent that joins to them. If he be compassionate toward the afflictions of others. . . .” The language could remind of the hospitality to strangers afforded on the island of Bensalem, in Bacon’s *New Atlantis*, by Stranger’s House and Solomon’s House. Christian Europeans, cast ashore, are converted from their old faith by the humanity of new ways: the hospitality, the medicines and hospitals, the affluence and parentlike provision of a civil land infused with humane science and technology. It is probably not coincidence that Bacon once calls his comprehensive advancement of science a “citizen of the world.”¹¹

The founder of Bensalem’s scientific establishment, Solamona, had laid down the way of dealing with strangers to progress: “join humanity and policy together.” Humanity is conspicuous. There are intimations that policy governs. The governor-father of the benevolent scientific establishment is first shown in a parade that the cool narrator sees to be a “shew.” While the great figure

appears compassionate, Bacon's description singles out the appearance: he has "an aspect as if he pitied men." The hint of artifice is stronger in a similar phrase from an earlier Baconian work, the *Refutation of Philosophies*. Bacon never published this pungent little piece, perhaps, as Paolo Rossi suggests, because he had yet to master the envelopment of daring plans in the mantle of tradition and the half-light of insinuation. A philosopher addressing an international convention of "sages" shows a face which "had become habituated to the expression of pity."¹²

Like Machiavelli, Bacon was impressed by Christ's worldly success. Like Machiavelli, he traces the success to Christ's promise of satisfaction, an indirect and future satisfaction of the strongest passion, fear of death. Unlike Machiavelli, Bacon can supply an analogous vision of future satisfaction. Not fear but hope, he writes elsewhere, "is the most useful of all the affections."¹³ The management of wishes for the future is the deepest art of the politics of progress. "Certainly, the politic and artificial nourishing and entertaining of hopes," Bacon says in the essay on "Seditious and Troubles" (no. 15), "and carrying men from hopes to hopes, is one of the best antidotes against the poison of discontentments." Like many an antidote, it can also serve its turn as a poison.

III. SEDITION BY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Also, as Machiavel noteth well, when princes, that ought to be common parents, make themselves as a party and lean to a side, it is as a boat that is over-thrown by uneven weight on the one side; as was well seen in the time of Henry the Third of France, for first himself entered league for the extirpation of the Protestants; and presently after the same league was turned upon himself. ("Of Seditious and Troubles," no. 15)

Bacon praises Machiavelli for a statement I cannot find in *The Prince* or *Discourses* and for a neutrality that misses Machiavelli's conspicuous recommendation of princely decisiveness. Essay 15 suggests that great sedition and great authority can come from a teaching that displays the means of satisfaction or, at least, of hope. Thus princes might appear as "shepherds of people," the essay's first words, or like the Aristotelian prime mover, also used as metaphor for a prince. That is, one can appropriate for one's own glory the roles of benevolent god and mover of nature. The essay shows the new political science: the formula for transforming irreconcilable human divisions of class and sect into a mutually useful division of labor and advancement.

The analogous Machiavellian passages suggest that one should deal with a disunited city by killing or putting by the leaders of the parties (*Discourses* III, 27); do not remain neutral in wars among your neighbors but take a side and join the war (*Prince*, 21). True, each of these counsels is quietly qualified. One

suspects Machiavelli of leading on, perhaps over a brink, a preliminary wave of more established (and less Machiavellian) allies. *Discourses* II, 21 and 25, on the other hand, are closer to Bacon's point. A prince dealing with a disunited free city may hold it as a benefactor by being an arbitrator between the parties, especially between plebs and nobles. Thus he will not drive them to union and may favor the weaker so as to weaken both. Yet these discourses recommend a prudent adoption of both sides, if only as expedient and to weaken both, and do not obviously deal with religious sects.

"Of Seditious and Troubles," by contrast, sets forth a sect. It is from start to finish about seditious slanders and envies which are eventually shown to be products of human speeches. The sign of tempests in states is libels and licentious discourses (*fraudesque* in the Latin saying Bacon supplies), or females of sedition as Bacon calls them. A Virgilian origin of fame, the rebellion of earth against the gods, is identified by Bacon as the origin of seditious. Sedition is inevitable or natural; it is self-assertion of one's name against what dominates, the guise of gods being but a form of domination by men's fame. Tempests in states, Bacon says, are greatest "when things grow to equality"; the greatest is when the most honorable, sacred, or authoritative acts of a state "are taken in ill sense, and traduced." That summarizes what the earlier essays attempted. Bacon reduces the established hierarchy toward an equality; he reduces to exploitation and illusion the old order's devotions to divinity and nobility, truth and goodness. The previous essay ("Of Nobility," no. 14) took note of certain "democracies" that do not need a nobility; "utility is their bond, and not respects."

Essay 15 follows its first diagnosis, of sedition by slander, with a first prescription: relax. When confronting alien teachings, a prince ought to avoid "too much severity" and too much "disputing." Is this a pacifier? If Bacon can encourage royal and episcopal passivity, despite attacks upon the supports of royalty and religion, he accomplishes sedition under cover of prevention. In the sequel, he notes both that open discords signal that "reverence of government is lost" and that "reverence is that wherewith princes are girt from God." He had already insinuated a fundamental heresy or sedition; the topic is tempests of state, rather than blasphemies against God or treason against king and estates. But how can kings and estates be made so dumb as to be so passive? Bacon will suggest two ways: blandness of speech to veil sedition and economic development to insinuate it.

Just in this context Bacon corrects Machiavelli. Machiavelli had guided rulers to expand by war, and those ambitious for rule to advance by hidden war. Machiavelli's discourse on conspiracies (III, 6), the longest in the *Discourses*, corresponds to Bacon's "Of Seditious and Troubles." It turns quickly from defending princes to encouraging conspiracies, often violent conspiracies against princes. Machiavelli returned only briefly to urge upon princes a doubtful passivity: let them postpone action until they obtain full knowledge.

Bacon writes more euphemistically of “seditions and troubles,” and his demeanor throughout the essay is of a counsellor preventing troubles, not of a rebel stirring them up. His counsel is of unity, not violence; a prince should be common parent and avoid being a religious partisan. This counsel, nevertheless, would separate kings from support of their supports. from aristocracy, and church. The rest of the essay follows suit. Bacon lists religion, justice, counsel, and treasure as the four “pillars of government,” then sets forth a general diagnosis and “general preservatives” that, in effect, restructure the old pillars into supports for a new civil order.

Essay 15 discusses the materials, the causes and motives, and the remedies of sedition. The crucial “matter” is neediness, less of the articulate few than of the many, and “discontentment,” vaguely stated as “fears.” Bacon does not enter upon the justice or injustice of discontents or even their strength: a “prince, or state,” should anticipate dangerous forces and inevitable forces. While Machiavelli puts political men in motion in fear of inevitable war, Bacon fosters a vague insecurity and vague hopes for victories in a war on poverty. He quickly acknowledges a long list of “causes and motives” of sedition, which now omits the justice mentioned before, but includes “general oppression” and “advancement of unworthy persons” as central. He acknowledges slyly that a “just cure” must answer to the “particular disease,” yet he sets forth “general preservatives”: a general solution that may not solve particular problems of particular states. This prescription departs in principle from the Aristotelian diagnosis of civil strife in the fifth book of the *Politics*, which had examined especially strife between democrats and oligarchs and had commended different remedies for different regimes and circumstances. Instead, Bacon advances a now familiar revolution in civilization. General preservatives turn out to be the general institutions of a progressive economy and movement, institutions that promise to encompass everywhere both the many and the few.

Of nine “general preservatives,” the first four encourage economic growth and regard for democracy, the fifth prescribes “moderate liberty,” and the last four a politic nourishing of hope, especially in the most ambitious men.

The first three preservatives treat “the material cause of sedition” and consist in organizing an economy to conquer “want and poverty in the estate.” Bacon waxes enthusiastic in praise of trade, population growth, and manufactures and attacks idleness and waste. The political agenda of his political economy surfaces: he attacks “the multiplying of nobility and other degrees of quality,” “an overgrown clergy, for they bring nothing to the stock,” and an excess of “scholars.”

Bacon spells out the premise of this attack upon leisurely or pious activities: great industry produces great gains, for “materiam superabit opus.” Work is superior to the material and, the Baconian conclusion, “enricheth a state more.” It is a worthy slogan for the political economists to come, as well as for natural scientists bent on conquering nature. Essay 15 uses an example of a democratic

republic recently freed from Christian Spain: the Low Countrymen have “the best mines above ground in the world.” They are the same democracies alluded to in essay 14.

The third preservative draws a political conclusion. “Above all things” keep the “treasure and monies” of a state from “few hands.” The reason is worthy of an investment-oriented Lord Keynes: “money is like muck, not good except it be spread.” Machiavelli himself had so praised republics: free peoples and liberated acquisitiveness encourage growth in wealth and population. According to Bacon, however, economic growth can itself be an object of royal patronage and thus a means to republics. A growing middle class and a corresponding democratization can evolve as if by chance, and reformers can avoid the risks of war. Bacon rarely mentions democracies or republics and discusses the possibility of warring for liberty only with the greatest reticence (no. 29). This, despite his clear awareness that the breakup of the old empire, Spanish or Christian, will occasion great wars (no. 58).

Later, thematically economic essays develop Bacon’s plan. They nourish the hopes of various new parties who can advance themselves, and their new order, without becoming independent of the mutual system of exchange and the middle class. “Of Expense” (no. 28) encourages self-made men, who, if frugal, can breed riches from their vocations. “Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates” (no. 29) encourages small farmers and merchants, as well as “strangers” or immigrants who can perform more delicate manufactures. “Of Plantations” (no. 33) prescribes colonies of the very plain and the very industrious, devout barely in name, lacking gentlemen, and given over to production. Bacon encourages the rich, especially nobles, to invest their money in such foreign ventures. “Of Usury” (no. 41) encourages the monied to become financiers of trade and manufactures, not least of young merchants and of new arts and improvements. New hopes and new discoveries can enliven a new economy and new men. That is a theme in “Of Riches” (no. 34). Riches are not for leisure, redistribution, or pleasure; they are capital for producing further riches. The beginning of the essay plays with moral and religious strictures on wealth-getting; the remainder shows how really to pile it up. Among the means: “The fortune in being the first in an invention or in a privilege doth cause sometimes a wonderful overgrowth in riches; as it was with the first sugar man in the Canaries. Therefore if a man can play the true logician, to have as well judgment as invention, he may do great matters, especially if the times be fit.” Even the judgment of kings may be thus won to patronize the new logic of science as well as the new science of economics. “Of Empire” (no. 19) notes that kings, discontented even in their security, are moved to patronize “toys” that will distinguish them and bring them fame. Perhaps Bacon’s new science can be made to appear such a project. Essay 58 calls it a “toy” (compare “Of Empire,” no. 19, and the Letter Dedicatory to the *Great Instauration*). Kings

may patronize the economic and technical powers that undermine kingly power.

Preservatives four through nine deal with “removing discontentments”—those, one might say, other than poverty. The fourth quietly advances on political grounds another anti-aristocratic policy: the few are chiefly to blame for strife between “noblesse, and commonaltie.” This shows, we are told, “how safe it is” for monarchs to seek “the good will of the common people.”

Bacon sets forth the last five preservatives quickly and elliptically, perhaps because their revolutionary import is hard to hide. “Moderate liberty” is the central prescription, which qualifies his preliminary elevation of democracy. It also replaces moderation, virtue, and religion in general, the general preservatives advanced by traditional political philosophy and theology. Bacon elaborates more how hopes can be managed to regulate liberty. “And it is a certain signe, of a wise government, and proceeding, when it can hold men’s hearts by hopes, when it cannot by satisfaction, and when it can handle things, in such manner, as no evil shall appear so peremptory, but that it hath some outlet of hope.” Essay 15 stops there, reserving the revamping of visionary hope for “Of Prophecies” (no. 35) and *New Atlantis*, and of ordinary hope for discussions of economic and political advancement, such as “Of Riches” (no. 34), “Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates” (no. 29), and *History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh*.

The three final preservatives deal with the managing of extraordinary hopes. They slip from preventing unity of the hopeful beneath an enemy of the state, to avoiding sharp speeches that cut off the hopes of followers for their own dictatorships or places, to a prince’s need for a valiant defender. The prose is terse. The last shows that Bacon, despite his more pacific counsel of unity, follows Machiavelli in understanding his crusade as a war. “Princes” need a “military person” who can repress seditions against “the state” and keep correspondence with “other great men in the state.” Perhaps Bacon is that “great person,” a shepherd of peoples who also can aid enlightened kings with valorous speeches like the ensuing essays. Essays 16 and 17 take on Christianity under cover of a skirmish with atheism and superstition. Bacon keeps enemy factions, such as king, nobles, and admirers of ancient philosophy, from a unity beneath the Church of England, such as the theologian Richard Hooker had sought in the 1590s. Bacon also keeps up correspondence with leaders of a like state of mind, including great scientists, enlightened kings, and comprehensive chiefs such as Machiavelli. In “Of Followers and Friends” (no. 48), Bacon presents a crucial saying of Machiavelli as an example of the advice to be taken from a few friends. Machiavelli’s sharp speeches, however, drive from him the followers whom Bacon’s project can satisfy, advance, and keep in hope. Immediately after taking Machiavelli’s advice, Bacon concludes that friendship is only between “superior and inferior, whose fortunes may compre-

hend, the one the other.” Bacon means to comprehend Machiavelli’s civil crusade within his progressive movement.

IV. CUSTOM AS THE BUSINESS OF REGULATED OPPORTUNITY

And therefore, as Machiavel well noteth (though in an evil-favored instance), there is no trusting to the force of nature nor to the bravery of words, except it be corroborate by custom. His instance is, that for the achieving of a desperate conspiracy, a man should not rest upon the fierceness of any man’s nature, or his resolute undertakings; but take such an one as hath had his hands formerly in blood. But Machiavelli knew not of a Friar Clement, nor a Ravillac, nor a Jauregay, nor a Baltazar Gerard; yet his rule holdeth still that nature, nor the engagement of words, are not so forcible as custom. (“Of Custom and Education,” no. 39)

This third reference is the first to criticize Machiavelli explicitly. Bacon criticizes not a prince’s impiety and immorality, but the inefficacy of bloody impiety and immorality. Bloody conspiracies are not said to be evil; they are, however, “desperate.” In welcoming assassins as a matter of course, rather than as a desperate measure, Machiavelli had underestimated the power of other-worldly assassins. The four that Bacon names were all Catholic assassins of politic kings. Friar Clement, for example, murdered the politic Henry III of France, the very king Bacon mentioned in essay 15 when he used a similar “noteth well” to criticize a policy of siding with a sect. Nevertheless, Bacon relieves Machiavelli of responsibility and approves his general rule as to the force of custom. Still, Machiavelli erred about the force of devotion, a consequence of his error about the force of hope. Bacon develops this implicit criticism by correcting Machiavelli’s rule to extol the force of “custom.”

In his quick and quiet way Bacon has involved us in one of the nastiest passages from a writer known for nastiness. Machiavelli calls not exactly for different customs, but for men tried, experienced (*isperimentati*), in bloody deeds. Murdering a revered man, especially a religious man, is difficult; it is hard to be altogether bad. The context is again the discussion of conspiracies in *Discourses*, III 6. Since even accustomed killers are often bewildered by the “majesty” and “reverence” of some great target, the job requires men “experienced” in such murders. Machiavelli has more in mind, namely, accustoming men by speech. Confusion of brain can also cause foolish speech, such as “Traitor!”, which warns the victim. The turn to words is important; experience in murdering the revered is hard to come by and the first such murder hard to account for. Besides, Machiavelli immediately turns to conspirators who are moved by words to attack a number of tyrants. The examples include two disciples of Plato, and Pelopidas, who liberated his “native land” from ten tyrants with the aid of one Chiron, adviser to tyrants. People may become

experienced or accustomed by ruthless words about bloody deeds, but the words must be shrewdly chosen so as not to alarm. Machiavelli's writings, which combine advice to republican conspirators and tyrants, will help and harden the variety of followers to come, not least in overcoming an otherworldly empire.

Bacon fears superstition more than does Machiavelli and hopes for more from his special replacement, the prediction of progress. Perhaps his fear and hope reflect a greater estimate of the power of custom. He seems to describe "nature in men" as but body with passion or force (no. 38, immediately before "Of Custom and Education"); it may be the same as the universal nature described in the Plan for the *Great Instauration* and in the *New Organon*. If so, all that appears distinctly human is wholly invented, including speech or reason. If our deeds are not products of impulse, they are but the effect of someone's calculation or custom. *Advancement of Learning* is explicit as to Bacon's enlarged estimate of custom compared to Aristotle's (II xxii 8). The ambiguous beginning to "Of Custom and Education" may imply as much: "Men's thoughts are much according to their inclination; their discourse and speeches according to their learning and infused opinions; but their deeds are after as they have been accustomed."

The problem for Bacon is how to institute suitable customs, which Machiavelli failed to solve. He follows his criticism of Machiavelli thus: "superstition is now so well advanced, that men of the first blood are as firm as butchers." Five examples of custom's "reign or tyranny" follow, all examples of disdain by the religious for even their own deaths. Bacon reduces religious disputation and zealotry to a discussion of custom. He even says, since custom (not God) "is the principal magistrate of man's life, let men by all means endeavor to obtain good customs." While other essays prescribe what customs are useful, essay 39 indicates chiefly how to make them effective: start young, and rely on mutual interaction—what we and he call "society." Bacon may originate the usage. Effective custom is "custom copulate and conjoined and collegiate," because "there example teacheth, company comforteth, emulation quickeneth, glory raiseth." After thus hinting at the secrets of the church (and of the roots of goodness), Bacon dwells on the role of "societies well ordained and disciplined." Governments and commonwealths depend on seeds otherwise planted. What societies Bacon has in mind are left obscure in this essay, except for an implicit dig at the churches: "the most effectual means, are now applied, to the ends, least to be desired."

One suspects that Bacon wishes associations for gain: businesses. Useful pursuits can discipline a people. In various places *Essays* commends merchants, manufacturers, and financiers, and the word "business" recurs incessantly. This suspicion is heightened by *New Atlantis*, in which a Jewish merchant is the most prominent civil figure among the Bensalemites.

Nevertheless, the essays on custom (no. 39), making one's fortune (no. 40),

and economic science (no. 41) say little about companies or enterprises. What association is based on wary and anxious neediness (“Of Superstition,” no. 17), is rather democratic and has the bond of utility (“Of Nobility,” no. 14), and fosters a self-reliant opportunism? Bacon, I suggest, advances businesses less than a world of business. Businesses can discipline us in a world of business that he calls “society.” If this is true, then much of Bacon’s reformulation of religion, ethics, economics, and politics is designed to promote what we often take for granted as society or civil society. Perhaps later intellectuals slight the artifice involved in the invention and preservation of society.

“Of Fortune” (no. 40) exhibits the chief opinion to be infused with social custom: the mold of a man’s fortune is in his own hands. Self-reliance should be customary. Bacon intimated this as he transformed “goodness” (no. 13). Here he elaborates the difference between Baconian self-reliance and any sense of goodness. A number of “virtues, or rather faculties and customs,” make men fortunate, and two are crucial: do not be too devoted to country or master, do not place one’s thoughts too far outside oneself. Like Machiavelli, Bacon replaces virtue with ability to succeed. Bacon encourages customs that do not scandalize, however, and do not lead toward wars that the politiques are likely to lose. They have “a slide and easiness,” as “Of Fortune” puts it. The *Essays* are popular, the dedication says, because they come home to men’s business and bosoms.

The next two essays explore the systematic connections between individualism and businesslike society. One connection is the art or science of economics. “Of Usury” (no. 41) shows how the author of an art can advance himself by showing others how to advance themselves. It begins by rebutting seven arguments, religious and moral in tenor, against lending at interest. The rebuttal is an argument from the “necessities” of borrowing and lending. Bacon then “invents,” strictly from the viewpoint of economic progress, disadvantages and advantages of lending at interest. Among the disadvantages are the damping of “industries, improvements and new inventions”; among the advantages, the encouragement of “young merchants” and of “industrious and profitable improvements.” Before our eyes, yet with a slide and easiness that come from transforming a necessity into a priority, Bacon overturns moral and religious distaste for moneylenders and invents a comprehensive custom for civil society.

“Of Youth and Age” (no. 42), which follows, shows the “compound employments” available in the new society. The young commonly will shine on the inventive side, the older as executives or managers. Bacon indicates that some young may be judicious before their time—his examples are generals and emperors—but he confines himself to supposing that “heat and vivacity in age is an excellent composition for business.” While both he and Machiavelli praise young over old, Bacon is more reserved. His society seems more of settled business than of daring military exploits. Accordingly, he favors the young not as combative but as inventive and open to “new projects” or “new things.” This

openness may show foolishness: “for the moral part” the young are superior, as are the older for “the politic.” His example: “your young shall see visions” rather than merely dream. Perhaps the new project of progress, as portrayed in the visionary half-light of *New Atlantis*, is designed especially for the adventurous young. The Europeans in the story left from the far edge of the known world and were prepared to sail, over uncharted seas, for a year.

V. STATES AND STATES OF LEARNING

As for the observation that Machiavel hath, that the jealousy of sects doth much extinguish the memory of things; traducing Gregory the Great that he did what in him lay to extinguish all heathen antiquities; I do not find that those zeals do any great effects, nor last long; as it appeared in the succession of Sabinian, who did revive the former antiquities. (“Of Vicissitude of Things.” no. 58)

The fourth and last reference to Machiavelli occurs in the final and culminating essay. This second criticism distances Bacon from Machiavelli’s impiety and name, while tacitly confirming his own more respectable name. There is less here than meets the eye, and yet it indicates a real difference.

Bacon appears in the lists of opinion as defender of Pope Gregory the Great against Machiavellian slanders. The defense barely exists when closely viewed, and is, in any event, misleading. He defends Christianity’s efficacy for empire, not its truth, and defends it as a sect, again tacitly denying its claim to be the one and catholic faith. He defends a pope (while not defending the ecclesiastical name), after having heretofore favored the Protestants. He fundamentally defends Christianity’s weakness in dealing with its predecessors, and by dignifying one Sabinian (also a pope whom Bacon deprives of the name) for saving things of a former sect. Actually, this pope seems best known for introducing the ringing of bells at canonical hours and for celebration of the eucharist; the Latin *Essays* indicates that his alleged “revival” of antiquities was but the creeping out of things forbidden. Like Machiavelli, Bacon is silent about the Renaissance popes’ patronage of Greek and Roman philosophy and art. In effect, Bacon adopts Machiavelli’s treatment of Christianity in *Discourses* II, 5, except for adding a fraudulent retraction that itself mirrors Machiavelli’s hints about the impotence of the unarmed conqueror. Besides, after a two-paragraph intermission, Bacon asserts what is close to the Machiavellian statement that he has just questioned:

The greatest vicissitude of things amongst men, is the vicissitude of sects and religions. For these orbs rule in men’s minds most.

The paragraphs between dubious correction and imitative paraphrase are Bacon’s serious correction of Machiavelli. As Machiavelli overestimated Christianity’s disposition to transform an old sect, he underestimated its capacity

to be transformed into a new sect. Bacon's correction is a new science able to find the causes in nature for effects useful to man. This invention can be presented as leading by regular progress to a new heaven on earth. Like Machiavelli's political science, however, Bacon's natural science is part of a sect to rule the world. The sequel reveals Bacon's fundamental science, which is the political science of causing "new sects."

The first of these intervening paragraphs is studded with "I's." It shows how to learn causes of useful effects, rather than alleged causes of eternal nature, such as Plato's supposition of natural cycles, or Aristotle's prime mover. Bacon shows himself observing useful causes and effects and then generalizing about them. In such generalizations will be found the true prime for man intimated in essay 15: he can move nature for his benefit. One can predict floods, for example, and control some of their effects. Thus the first advantage of Bacon's correction: it can influence natural vicissitudes that Machiavelli could not. But human sects, not natural disasters, are the decisive causes of oblivion. The art of prediction affords a tool for getting glory by manipulating hope, a tool that Machiavelli lacked. "Of Empire" (no. 19) had suggested that kings, however well established, seek "toys" to provide against an incessant fear that their fame will not endure. The illustrations were of arts or feats "of the hand." Essay 58 suggests a "toy" that is an art of the mind: the art of prediction and of invention. In another work, Bacon shows prominent persons relying on astronomy as "fortune-teller"; he discredits reliance on such "toys."¹⁴ His toy can master fortune, however, and can engage the patronage of both the prominent and the learned.

The two paragraphs are directed to those tempted by the old learning, as are the *Advancement of Learning*, the *New Organon*, and, in general, the project of an empire of the learned. As a nation-state advancing in wealth and power attracts the statesman, growth in powerful knowledge is to attract the curious and studious. Bacon provides a niche for those who would otherwise fall for the charms of philosophy. "The principle" appeared in "Of Empire": the mind of man "is more cheered and refreshed by profiting in small things, than by standing at a stay in great." Glory is the profit, however, not knowledge as such. Advancement of science brings advancement of the scientist. Bacon's description of the rules and rites of Solomon's House, the scientific establishment in Bensalem, begins with "two very long and fair galleries," one for the best inventions, the other for "statua's of all principal inventors." Every invention earns the inventor both a liberal and honorable monetary reward and a statue, which may be of a degree of richness ranging up to gold.¹⁵ By serving mankind the scientist can obtain affluence and the glory of leading mankind; the Fathers of Solomon's House are revered in Bensalem. The last of the rules and rites is the distribution of largess, especially useful knowledge. The leading scientists periodically bestow "natural divinations of diseases, plagues," and so

forth. It is the art of prediction that is the scientists' power, and by serving the scientists Bacon can lead them. Bacon took care to put his chief books in the language of the learned. Machiavelli did not, except for chapter titles. Machiavelli blamed change of language for oblivion of memories (*Discourses* II, 5). Essay 58 does not. Even the English version of the *Essays* is stuffed with Latin quotations, a bar to the unlearned but a charm to the learned. While Bacon helps Machiavelli contribute to the oblivion of the Greek language, he insinuates himself into the power of Latin as into the circles of the learned. In an ironic dedication, he assures the Duke of Buckingham that "the Latin volume" of the *Essays*, being in "the universal language," may last as long "as books last"—longer, presumably, than an English kingdom and its dukes.

It is difficult to compare essay 58 as a whole to the corresponding Machiavellian discussion in *Discourses*, II,5.¹⁶ Both are among their authors' most cryptic writings, probably because in both shocking statements cover more shocking intimations. The pioneering study of Bacon's mix of state and sect is by Howard White; he sets forth a Baconian "imperialism of the human mind" that wins by "subversion." White goes on to infer from Bensalem's hospitality, and the absence of political coercion, aggressive commerce, and imperialism, that Bacon's universal science calls for a "world community" or "world state."¹⁷ Yet White acknowledges that *New Atlantis* hints at a pervasive hidden state, at prominent merchants, at new and terrible weapons, and at industrial and scientific espionage to build up Bensalem at the expense of other countries. To supplement White's thesis, Richard Kennington has argued that an imperial state is needed to overcome the world of independent nation states; "world utopia is imposed by imperial power." Yet Bacon reduces humanitarianism to a policy for domination and empire in essay 13, and no one has shown a Baconian writing that prescribes or expects world government or world community. Essay 58, upon which White and Kennington do not comment, suggests what I believe to be Bacon's solution: various civil states, advancing and declining in turn, that separately harbor the progressive civilization devoted to useful science.

Amidst a rational explanation of sects or religions, that is, Machiavelli's discourse and Bacon's essay each invents a new sect or civilization to rule men's minds. Machiavelli is more nearly direct in title and text. The title: "That changes of sects and languages, together with the accident of floods and plagues, destroy the memories of things" (II, 5). At the start of his argument he confronts expressly "the philosophers'" contention as to the eternity of the world. Bacon allows this contention of Greek philosophy to appear only in quotations from Seneca, Plato, and, a nasty cut, an abstruse astrologer who reads rather like Aristotle. He finally confutes Plato, however, twice and expressly. Contrary to Plato, Bacon, like Machiavelli, maintains that immortality must be made or conquered. As to nature, "certain it is, that the matter is in a

perpetual flux, and never at a stay.” Bacon takes up change of sects, by which a man might make his name immortal, only after exploring the natural causes that Machiavelli puts second.

Like Machiavelli, Bacon touches preliminarily upon floods as the chief cause of oblivion, whose effect is to extinguish the memory of things. He omits from this biblically significant attribution a Machiavellian jibe that some survivor might conceal the past to get himself a reputation and name. More interesting, his account rebuts a myth from Plato’s *Timaeus* blaming the sun and an account from the Old Testament blaming fires. Instances of floods in the “West Indies” follow, in a way that alludes to the Americas (“their Andes”), asserts the inhabitants to be a “a newer or a younger people,” and alludes to the Atlantis Plato describes in the *Timaeus*. Elliptical indeed. What coherent message may be discerned?

Bacon seems to be rebutting old myths that have a supernatural tint, myths that his rivals for empire over the mind, Plato and the Bible, had set forth. He intimates a new myth that promotes belief in his new project. Specifically, he turns to observations, to what might be examined in a particular place and topography. But his purpose is to imagine what might newly be accomplished. Uncanny parallels with his imaginary *New Atlantis* occur. In Bensalem an official dealing with Christian Europeans tells a broadly similar tale of flood and surviving mountaineers, similar down to “West Indies,” equated with “America,” which is inhabited by a “young people.”¹⁸ He explicitly calls “poetical and fabulous” the divine or religious features of Plato’s Atlantis. The drama of the work rebuts the biblical drama: by Bacon’s art Christian Europeans convert to faith in a land of progress. The conversion is accomplished for most of the Europeans by a priest (by “vocation”) who looks after strangers (by “office”). The Europeans ask about the secrecy: how can the island know of “our state and business” but not be known by Europe? Despite the connotations of an unknown knower, the priest rejects any implications of “magicians” or “spirits of the air,” even “angelical” ones. He tells not of a divinely guided golden age but of an ancient time of great commercial and naval empires. As their norm, one may infer, Europeans should look to the power politics set forth in “Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates” (no. 29). Yet all these empires and all this navigation have disappeared, except Bensalem’s. Bacon can present himself as restoring the old ways. Peru attacked Greece and was never heard from again. Mexico attacked Bensalem but was captured by Altabin, ingeniously and without force, and then freed before succumbing to the flood. The rest of the tale concerns the research establishment at home and industrial and technological espionage abroad.

I shall venture some interpretation of the relevant parts. Bacon hints, I believe, at his strategy to spread his new ways to the new world. The land of the title, the new Atlantis vanquished by Bensalem’s new ways, is America. Bacon’s puzzling conflation of the empire of Atlantis-America with those of Mex-

ico and Peru itself intimates, perhaps, that a variety of states may nevertheless exist in the new world.

Unlike the old Greek political ways, Bacon's will be humane to conquered lands. Altabin's extraordinary mixture of ingenuity and humanity is not easy to interpret as a feat of real generalship. Might it symbolize Bacon's mode of conquering his practical-spiritual rival, Christian Spain? Like a "a wise man and a great warrior," he will handle the Spaniards, whose forces in Europe and America carry the spiritual empire, "so as to cut off their land-forces from their ships; and entoil both their navy and their camp with a greater power than theirs, both by sea and land." Could Bacon refer to British navies on the seas and expanding British plantations in the New World? Essay 29 urges a naval power; essay 33, industrious plantations. The Christian empire may eventually render itself "without striking stroke." Perhaps the appeals of progress will undermine the old spirituality within its Spanish homeland. In that case the father of enlightenment could content himself "only with their oath that they should no more bear arms against him," dismissing them all in safety. This strategy combines the new civil forces the *Essays* summon forth with the new humane vision *New Atlantis* propounds. Essay 58 soon intimates wars involving the Spaniards, but Bacon keeps this and many other tough secrets of state and life even farther from the visionary surface of *New Atlantis*.

A reader may be excused for wondering whether these scattered allusions to Atlantis amount to a Baconian plan for world empire. Yet similar allusions exist elsewhere, and they too are hard to explain otherwise. For example, the bizarre "Of Prophecies" (no. 35) contains the only other reference in the *Essays* to Atlantis or, rather, to Plato's "Atlantius." It intimates that a philosopher may act the poet ("Seneca the Tragedian") to provide "natural predictions" of disease and floods, the "divinations" for which human nature hungers. The phrase reminds of the scientists in Bacon's poetic Bensalem; during their circuits they bestow "natural divinations" of diseases, floods, etc. The end of the essay recurs to Seneca's alleged prophecy, in his *Medea*, of new worlds. Bacon expressly interprets it as a prophecy of the discovery of America. Bacon takes care to dwell on the rational causes of such a prophecy: the fact that land lay beyond the Atlantic might be demonstrated, and "the tradition in Plato's *Timaeus* and *Atlantius*" (Bacon misnames the *Critias*, perhaps to awaken us to distorting emphasis). These books encouraged Seneca to invent a "prediction." What Bacon makes Seneca appear to do for Plato, the poet and philosopher Bacon makes for himself. The *New Atlantis* predicts new worlds in America; its visionary poetic form helps make effectual the prediction.

While "Of Prophecies" discredits false prophecy of a traditional sort, it also shows how to master the art. It indicates that apprehension, the desire to know of dangers to come, is the cash value of natural divination. The essay ends by predicting political dangers. By the end of a catalogue of some fourteen foolishnesses, Bacon has discredited heathen oracles, divine prophecies ("in the

East,” of “Judea,” etc.), and ancient predictions, which in hands like Seneca’s are no better than prophecy. The account moves from prophecy in Greece and Rome to modern kings and empires. The Spanish Armada is the only subject of two prophecies, the last two. It was “the greatest in strength” of any fleet ever. Catholic Spain remains, the great empire and the great vehicle of Christ’s empire. Against these Bacon contrives a plot in which he can also embroil and form the British and perhaps the French kingdoms (which are threatened by Spain). Guiding the poetic geography of *New Atlantis*, as well as its poetic humanity, is policy.

An allusion of comparable obscurity occurs in the *History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh*. Bacon singles out as a “memorable accident” John Cabot’s discoveries in North America and praises the explorer for following other sailors, rather than prior “conjectures” such as “Seneca’s prophecies, or Plato’s antiquities” (*Works*, 11:293–94; 6:196–97). The likeness to “Of Prophecies” seems too close for coincidence. A bit of dark prose presents Cabot’s effort as inspired by Columbus’s, which is itself curiously reinterpreted. Columbus only rediscovered America; the original discovery had been related by a Spanish pilot who died in Columbus’s house. Columbus suppressed the account, wishing to “make his enterprise the child of his science and fortune.” Bacon praises Cabot’s enterprise and knowledge: he obtained his fleet by telling Henry of “an island endued with rich commodities.” There must be a reason for these elaborate oddities. Bacon elsewhere compared himself to Columbus, especially in being adept at inspiring those he hoped to attract to great projects (*New Organon* I 92, in *Works*, 8:129; 4:91). Is he showing followers how to woo kings? Or is he evoking his own promise of a future land of health, wealth, and peace? Or might he hint at a borrowing from Christ (the Spanish navigator), whose influence will die, nevertheless, in the secular land produced by Bacon’s science and fortune?

However one settles such obscurities, it is clear that the *History* encourages English kings to patronize “the discovery and investing of unknown lands,” particularly of North America. While Bacon praises Henry VII for “dexterity” in confronting immediate dangers, he tasks him for lacking “providence to prevent and remove [dangers] afar off” (*Works*, 11:364; 6:244). Bacon insinuates his own providence as tacit remedy for a defect explicitly noted but never explicitly remedied. The account of Cabot’s discoveries occurs expressly out of chronological order and as memorable. Bacon puts it immediately after the king’s defeat of Perkin Warbeck, the latest in a line of pretenders whom Bacon presents as magical or supernatural idols. The Baconian substitute turns affections away from supernatural remedies. It appears as instrument, not enemy, to the king’s unending desire for security of state.

The remainder of Essay 58 outlines Bacon’s greatest policy. Counsels civil and moral conclude with counsel as to the “causes of new sects.” Ostensibly concerned with the “stay” to such great “revolutions,” Bacon mainly gives for-

mulas for producing them. This Machiavellian science, of averting oblivion from the most powerful selves, is the greatest science. Bacon discusses in turn three conditions that are appropriate for the rise or founding of new sects, two necessary properties and then a third, and three manners of “plantations.”

The three properties of a successful sect are opposition to existing authority, provision of license to pleasure, and—if “speculative heresies”—the “help of civil occasions.” Bacon’s new sect, like Machiavelli’s, will oppose existing authority, although not as directly. Like Machiavelli, Bacon removes the traditional moral restraints or virtues, although for a liberty more moderated by business than *Mandragola* and *Clizia* portend. Like Machiavelli’s sect, Bacon’s is comprehensively planned and not merely anti-establishment and licentious. Indeed, Bacon’s is more attuned to speculation or learning, and yet such a sect can spread if linked with a civil movement. *Essays* and related works provide the civil supports.

For example, “Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates” (no. 29) suggests a growing naval empire and also lightly suggests expansion by “plantation of colonies.” “Of Plantations” (no. 33) suggests an economic sort of colony. Nobles can invest and patronize; plain people of skills and industry will populate new worlds. People as well as crops are thus “planted”; the population is the means for growth, wealth, and power, and colonies growing in wealth and numbers will expand to rival, and perhaps overwhelm, the missionary and gold-digging colonies of the other empire. Eventually “it is time to plant with women as well as men; that the plantation may spread into generations.” Bacon cares not at all about religious and marital regulations, except, as is also clear from *New Atlantis*, for the sake of population growth. “The sinfullest thing in the world” is to forsake, not God, but a plantation. He may be even more sly. Once he calls what has been planted a “country.” Does he anticipate the independence from the old world’s kings and nobles that such self-reliant new nations are likely to demand?

In essay 58, Bacon has a more comprehensive type of plantation in mind. Of the three methods of founding, he treats coolly “signs and miracles”; here as always he appears one of the “great atheists. . . ever handling holy things, but without feeling” (“Of Atheism,” no. 16). He treats almost invisibly the second means, “by the eloquence and wisdom of speech and persuasion.” Yet deep policy is in his brief counsel to stop new sects and schisms through reform, fostering agreement, and mildness, and “rather to take off the principal authors by winning and advancing them than to enrage them by violence and bitterness.” He would transform a struggle over creed into a plan of mutual tolerance with opportunity for rising. It is his general strategy for a civil society.

Behind the counsel of moderation, however, is a strategy of war. Virtually the whole remainder of the essay is about war. Bacon shows his followers the strategy by which a new civilization can conquer. A little sign: he substitutes the comprehensive term “war” for his first description of the third means, “the

sword.” This war is conducted in good part by “eloquence and wisdom in speech and persuasion,” the sort that later generations would call a war of ideas, ideology, or enlightenment.

Bacon expects to contrive with words a rise by the northern powers (perhaps including North America), a rise in wealth, numbers and power. Cold weather makes “the bodies hardest, and the courages warmest”; yet he notes the difference that “discipline” makes. Wars will follow the fall or rise of a great state and empire (Spain is his last example), and when a state grows to a great over-power, it is sure to overflow. The “ancient northern people” did. We recall that Bacon plans many ways to increase population, and not least by what he mentions here, growth in “means of life and sustentation.” Will modern northern peoples increase, forcing some to overflow into colonies abroad?

Abruptly, Bacon notes that rich states tend to become soft and vulnerable, whereupon he turns to the effect of weapons, of technology, upon military strength. Does he imply that a civilization devoted to increasing power can with new weapons overcome warlike barbarians? Perhaps. Yet here his argument grows more strange and abstract.

One wonders whether this discussion of artillery, like Machiavelli’s in *Discourses* II, 17, is actually about how to spike and redirect the canons and big guns of the church. The sequel intimates the use of a strategy of simulation and dissimulation. Warfare of old was waged more by peoples and now is more by “number rather competent than vast”; it relies on planning, cunning, and skill rather than force of numbers. Bacon’s next step somewhat confirms our suspicion that he is subtly intimating the warfare and followers his sect will have: he turns from the rise and fall of states to the rise and fall of learning. Even an enlightened political state will fall as well as rise, especially when “mechanical arts and merchandise” replace the arms of its youth, the learning of its middle age, and the union of the two. Striking. Does this mean that the economic cast of Baconian states, the prominence given to merchants, the soft affluence portrayed in Bensalem, are causes of downfall? Is Bacon’s compassionate and economic appeal, then, a consciously corrupting appeal? Or must we not remember the emphasis of essay 29 upon growth in power, a warlike population, and occasions for war? That is a tough element of Bacon’s civil teaching, a slight variation on Machiavellian toughness.

Nevertheless, Bacon suggests that modern economic states will inevitably decline and exhibits a further type of empire, of “learning.” One state of learning can exist in a variety of civil states. There are civil states and states of learning; in Bensalem, both the ordinary father, who is regulated by a governor, and the scientist-father, who keeps secrets from state institutions, appear beneath a “cloth of state” (*Works*, 5:587, 397; 3:148, 156). There can be a variety of enlightened and progressive nation-states, rising and then declining, while all embrace the science of progress.

Yet essay 58 indicates that even the sect of enlightenment may be finite.

Learning, too, has an infancy, a youth, a strength of years, an old age. Probably Bacon alludes to his own science established and progressing, to science developed and applied. Learning, too, may become “dry and exhaust.” Bacon had earlier intimated an uncertainty whether “the world should last.” He knows limits to progress, even his own progress in enduring. At this point, he counsels averting the eyes from such “turning wheels of vicissitude,” lest they make us “giddy.” Yet he eschews, he tells us, tales of cycles or other names. Bacon is steadfast in making his empire and himself endure, while knowing that he cannot do enough. If my argument has been accurate, Bacon’s steadfastness produced an effectual plan for our progress.

NOTES

1. Fink, *The Classical Republicans* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1962) pp. 10–21; Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); my discussion is drawn from pp. vii–x and 156–218. Consider the synthesizing efforts in a recent popular account, Sebastian de Grazia’s *Machiavelli in Hell* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). A “perfect republic” is the “point of it all,” according to de Grazia. That does not prevent him from holding Machiavelli at once “rather conventional” in his religious practice and faith, possessed of “fairly conventional, paganizing, Christian” ideas of human nature and the creation and fall, and an advocate of a “radically new political philosophy” with a “rhetoric of imposture” which “destabilizes the conventional morality” of kings.

2. *Advancement of Learning*, ed. William Aldis Wright (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), II xxi 9.

3. *The Prince*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 61.

4. “Bacon’s Humanitarian Revision of Machiavelli,” unpublished paper, 1983, p. 2.

5. Abbott, “The Latest Theory about Bacon,” *Contemporary Review*, 28(1876):141–68, and *Francis Bacon: An Account of His Life and Works* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1885), esp. pp. 457–60; Orsini, *Bacone e Machiavelli* (Genoa: E. degli Orfini, 1936), p. 9; Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli* (London and Toronto: Routledge & Kegan Paul, University of Toronto Press, 1964), pp. 73–76; White, *Peace Among the Willows* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968); Rossi, *Francis Bacon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Marwil, *The Trials of Counsel* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976); Quinton, *Francis Bacon* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980).

6. *Francis Bacon and His Times* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1878); cf. “The Latest Theory about Bacon,” *Contemporary Review*, 27 (1875–76):653–78, and Abbott’s reply, same title and journal, vol. 28, 141–68. Thomas Fowler’s reply to Abbott is more airy and contains nothing beyond Spedding’s, *Bacon’s Novum Organum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), pp. xiii–xviii.

7. I generally quote from *The Essays of Francis Bacon*, ed. Clark Sutherland Northup (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1936). The original spelling and orthography may be found in *The Essays or Counsellis, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

8. Alan Gilbert, ed. and trans., *Machiavelli, The Chief Works and Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1965), 3 vols., vol. 1. I tend to translate from *Il Principe e Discorsi*, ed. Sergio Bertelli (Milano: Feltrinelli Editore, 1960).

9. Howard B. White, *Peace Among the Willows*, pp. 17–39, 42, 197. See also Kennington, “Bacon’s Humanitarian Revision of Machiavelli,” pp. 7–12; J. Weinberger, *Science, Faith, and Politics: Francis Bacon and the Utopian Roots of the Modern Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 1985), pp. 17–39.

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10. "Machiavelli's UnChristian Charity," *American Political Science Review*, 72 (1978), 1217–28.

11. In a letter to the heir to the throne, 1623, reprinted in James Spedding, ed., *The Letters and The Life of Francis Bacon* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1874), 7:436–37. I owe the reference to Michael Kiernan's edition of *Essayes or Counsels*, p. 200.

12. Trans. Benjamin Farrington, in *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 104. Rossi, *Francis Bacon, From Magic to Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 88–97.

13. *Historiae Vitae et Mortis*, para. 90, in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Dennis Denon Heath (Boston: Brown and Taggard, 1861), 15 vols., 3:426; (London: Longman & Co., 1861), 14 vols., 2:172.

14. *History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh*, Works 11:319; 6:213–14.

15. *New Atlantis*, ed. Alfred B. Gough (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), pp. 46–47.

16. I have been helped here as elsewhere by Harvey Mansfield's *Machiavelli's New Modes and Orders* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1979).

17. *Peace Among the Willows*, pp. 230–39, 243–50. See also Kennington, "Bacon's Humanitarian Revision of Machiavelli," pp. 14–26, n. 40.

18. The quotations in this and the next paragraph occur in *New Atlantis*, ed. Gough, pp. 16–25.