Renaissance Transformations

The Making of English Writing (1500–1650)

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Chapter 5

The Making of Writing in Renaissance England: Re-thinking Authorship Through Collaboration

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Recent years have seen an outpouring of scholarship on collaborative authorship in English Renaissance literary studies.[1] Critics have focused on known collaborative teams such as Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, and have been increasingly willing to accept that even William Shakespeare may have been a 'co-author', writing several of his plays in tandem with other playwrights, including Fletcher (*The Two Noble Kinsmen*), George Wilkins (*Pericles*), and Thomas Middleton (*Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure*). It's now possible for Brian Vickers to state, without causing offence, that 'every major playwright in this period worked collaboratively at some point in his career'.[2] But whereas scholars such as Jeffrey Masten hoped that the collaborative play might move us beyond 'categories of singular authorship, intellectual property, and the individual that are central to later Anglo-American cultural, literary, and legal history',[3] in fact much of the recent work on collaboration has left intact the notion of the playwright as author. Most often, analysis of collaborative plays attempts to assign individual acts, scenes or speeches to individual authors. In Grace Ioppolo's reconstruction of collaborative play-writing, 'collaborators appear to have portioned off sections of the play by acts or scenes to complete alone and then found a way together or separately to join the scenes (with marginal additions of cue lines, for example) rather than sitting in the same room and composing the entire play together'.[4] So acceptance of the fact of collaborative writing has done little to change the model of the author, simply multiplying the *number* of authors.

This model has depended upon a very particular type of collaboration, what Philip McGuire has described as 'the collaborative compositional practices of professional dramatists writing together and concurrently (synchronously) for the commercial theater industry'.[5] And yet, as Ioppolo points out, these collaborations may not all have been a meeting of equals. She quotes the boast by Ben Jonson that he

had finished *Volpone* alone: "Tis knowne, fiue weekes fully penn'd it: / From his owne hand, without a *Co-adiutor*, / *Nouice*, *Iorney-man*, or *Tutor*.'[6] As Ioppolo notes, this

> suggests that at least one playwright, and perhaps his contractors, placed collaborators into hierarchical categories. For Jonson, the main author reigned above co-adjutors (helpers or assistant writers), novices (inexperienced or probationary writers) and journeymen (writers who were newly qualified, having finished their apprenticeships). The definitions of all three positions . . . imply that each served in subservient positions to more experienced masters, such as Jonson.[7]

In this chapter I want to follow through the implications of Ben Jonson's suggestive description of the dynamics of collaborative writing. Moving beyond the specific world of commercial drama, this chapter takes as its case study a prolific writer who was not – despite the rumours – a professional playwright: Francis Bacon. To all appearances, Bacon is the author *par excellence*: a writer who thinks of himself as an author, speaks of himself in terms of Demosthenes, Cicero and Ovid, executes the print publication of his books, and plans for their translation into Latin and European vernaculars. But while Bacon undoubtedly appropriates for himself what Michel Foucault would call the 'author-function',[8] the making of his writing is anything but a solitary exercise. In what follows, I suggest that an examination of collaborative writing forces us to re-think our notion of authorship: to accept that the author may not be the person who writes (either mentally composes or physically pens) a text.

From around 1588, Francis Bacon, then an up-and-coming Gray's Inn lawyer and junior parliamentarian, became associated with Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex. While his elder brother Anthony Bacon was clearly a follower of the earl, for some years living in Essex's own house, Francis Bacon was something between a client and a friend: the earl acted as a patron for Bacon, attempting to secure him the posts of Attorney General and Solicitor General, while Bacon undertook a variety of duties for the earl, most notably offering him counsel in the latter part of the 1590s through a series of widely circulated letters. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, Bacon's involvement in the earl's life came to be regarded as more thoroughgoing: two important editors of Bacon's work, Thomas Birch in the 1760s and James Spedding in the 1860s, identified various writings previously attributed to the Earl of Essex as being the work of Francis Bacon.[9] These included a device written for the 1595 Accession Day celebrations; and letters

of advice sent from Essex to Fulke Greville and to Roger Manners, the young Earl of Rutland. Since the 1860s, scholars have been generally happy to write about these works as Bacon's, identifying continuities in theme, content and style between these late Elizabethan writings and Bacon's later, more significant publications such as the *Advancement of Learning*, the *Essays* and the *New Atlantis*.

In a series of articles published from 1994, Paul Hammer, a leading expert on Essex, took issue with this attribution of authorship to Bacon.[10] Hammer showed that Essex was building a team of secretaries to compete with the secretariat of the father-and-son team of the Cecils in order to 'establish himself as the natural successor to Burghley as Elizabeth's leading councillor'. Unlike Burghley, however, Hammer argues, Essex 'had great faith in the practical value of *academic* learning', and his impressive secretarial pool included the scholars Thomas Smith, Edward Reynolds, Henry Wotton, Edward Jones and even the Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, Henry Cuffe, who was lured away from the university for a salary of twenty pounds per annum.[11] In addition to these paid secretaries, Essex had an array of scholarly friends on whom he called for some quasi-secretarial duties, including Anthony and Francis Bacon. Hammer writes of 'the product of a cooperative effort between Essex, his secretaries and, perhaps, Francis Bacon', with Essex at the helm: 'Essex himself *had a major part* in composing these productions but he also *used the assistance of* his secretariat and possibly also of Francis Bacon.' In Hammer's account, these men worked in a scholarly collaboration in which Essex remained the dominant factor. Although he allows that Bacon may have 'had a hand' in some of the works emanating from the Essex circle, to Hammer these works remain Essex's – commissioned by him, and bearing his name and his imprimatur.[12]

Hammer's assertions provoked a spirited response from Bacon specialist Brian Vickers, who argues that the various devices and letters of advice were 'interlinked in many ways, mirroring the development of Bacon's thought in the 1590s, and reflecting characteristic methods of composition'.[13] In Vickers's model, 'Essex seems to have called on his [Francis Bacon's] help when he needed some particularly delicate piece of writing, such as an eloquent or tactful composition involving the queen.' He points out that there is plenty of evidence that Bacon acted 'as go-between and ghost-writer for Essex',[14] citing Bacon's own words,[15] early drafts of letters that Bacon framd for my Lord Essex to the Queen',[16] and a letter 'Written by Mr. Bacon for my Lord of Essex', printed in an early collection by Bacon's chaplain and editor William Rawley.[17] Vickers retorts:

> Instead of Paul Hammer's image of Bacon as a subsidiary helper in Essex's campaign of reinstatement, grudgingly admitted to the same level as the men in Essex's employ, I should like to propose a different scenario: Bacon, already an experienced lawyer and politician, expending much energy between 1595 and 1600 as a private counselor.[18]

What is important to note here is that Hammer and Vickers share an understanding of a working relationship between Essex and Bacon whereby Bacon would draft written materials for Essex's use. The difference between them lies in attribution: the relative credit for authorship that each should receive. My contention in this chapter is that both Hammer and Vickers are right in their assertions: what we need to address is how they can both be right at the same time, and what this means for our understanding of authorship.

In order to answer this, I propose we have to reassemble the mechanics of what happened when Bacon 'wrote' a piece. Beyond the recent work on commercial play-writing, there is a distinct dearth of scholarship on the writing process in the early modern period. Thanks to the labours of Harold Love, Peter Beal and Henry Woudhuysen we know a good deal about scribal culture and scribal publication, but their interest is in the copying and dissemination of works that have already been composed, rather than composition *per se*.[19] Work on secretaries, men known to have written for their masters, has tended to focus on the notional relationship of secretary and master rather than to the detail of *how* the secretary worked with his master.[20] This lack of scholarship is quite understandable: there are precious few traces in the archive to suggest how even a figure as prominent as Essex might have worked with his team of secretaries. There are, however, a few.

I turn first to an undated letter (probably 1593) from Essex to Bacon, now at Lambeth Palace Library.[21] Essex explains that he is under pressure from the queen to produce, at short notice, 'a draft of an Instruction' on intelligence concerning Rheims and Rome, home to two English seminaries. Although the premise of this demand is that Elizabeth intends to send one of her Privy Council on a mission, Essex doubts this is the case: instead, the queen 'doth it rather to try my judgement in it'. In other words, the writing produced is a test of the capabilities of the earl. Faced with this challenge, however, Essex does not sit down and pen a tract himself. Instead, he seeks out the expertise of two men: Thomas Phelippes, a noted cryptographer who worked closely with the late secretary of state Francis Walsingham, and Francis Bacon:

> *Master* Phellipes hath known *Master* Secretary's courses in such matters; so as I may have counsel from you [Bacon] and precedents from him [Phelippes]. I pray you, as your leisure will serve, send me your conceipt as soon as you can; for I know not how soon I shall be called on. I will draw some notes of mine own which I will reform and enlarge by yours.

Phelippes will provide 'precedents'; Bacon will supply 'counsel' in the form of written 'notes'; Essex will then 'reform and enlarge' his own draft incorporating anything useful from Bacon's. The work will clearly stand as Essex's: the earl here commissions the piece, suggests the mechanism for its composition, perhaps – although this is not clear – polishes the final product himself, presents it to the queen himself, and takes credit for it. Here we see the kind of process that Hammer envisions, with Bacon providing only part of the process, and Essex in control. The collaborative process produces Essex as author, the hierarchy of master and scribal servants playing itself out. But there are other circumstances where the same collaborative process emphatically does *not* produce the same author.

Among Essex's sorry succession of military exploits of the 1590s, perhaps the most successful was his sacking of Cadiz in June 1596. Needing to publicise his success back in England, Essex despatched his secretary Henry Cuffe, armed with Essex-eulogising accounts of the victory, to oversee their publication in print.[22] Falling ill en route, Cuffe was obliged to send the materials on to another Essex secretary, Edward Reynolds, with a covering letter which provides a rare and detailed glimpse into the mechanics of manuscript production.[23] The letter's second half is familiar enough to readers of early modern printed books, with their conventional apologetics for reaching print. Cuffe asks Reynolds to replace his preface, if he considers it necessary, write a better one, and prefix it so that the tract would appear to be a letter sent from Cadiz to a 'gentleman in Court' back in England. The publication should then take place under someone's initials, with that person claiming that they had received the discourse from Cadiz from, say, D.T., but they don't know who D.T. is: Cuffe suggests that they use the initials of either Essex's friend at court Fulke Greville, or Privy Council clerk Robert Beale (with whom the Essex circle had quarrelled). These are all ploys familiar from print culture, but Cuffe's letter also tells us much of the often hidden processes by which a commissioned discourse, speech or letter came to be written. The discourse, he writes, was

> Penned very truly according to his L*ordshi*ps Large enstructions, by w*hi*ch besides my owne knowledge he enformed me of sundry p*ar*ticulers of moment in the processe therof. And after I had penned it as plainely as I might alteringe little or nothinge of his owne drawght, I caused his Lordship to p*e*ruse it on[c]e againe and to adde extremam manu*m*, w*hi*ch he hathe donne, as you may p*e*rceve by the enterlyneinge. his L*ordshi*p[es] purpose is that it should with the soonest be sett in print, both to stopp all vagrant

> Rumors, and to enforce those that are well affected of the truth of the whole, yet so that in any case nether his Lordships name nor myne nor any other my Lord be ether openly named used or soe insinuated that any slender guesse may be drawen who was the penneman / My opinion is that the best course is presently to cause a fair transcript to be made and so ether by Mr Temple or some other Lesse to be supported [suspected?] (in which point I knowe Sir Anthony Asheley will most willinging Lend you his helping hand) to cause it to be deliuered to some good printer in good Characters and with diligence to publish it.

The account was physically written ('penned') by Cuffe following general ('Large') instructions from Essex, also drawing on Cuffe's 'owne knowledge', while Essex added in 'sundry particulers of moment in the processe therof'. Cuffe continues: after he had penned with as little elaboration as possible of Essex's draft, he 'caus[es]' his master 'to peruse it once againe and to adde extremam manum', the finishing touch, visible in 'the enterlyneinge [interlining]'. Essex adds to Cuffe's writing, by interlining Cuffe's text, his own finishing touches, the final hand. The next part of this operation requires that these hands, so evident to Reynolds, be obscured, so that neither Essex, Cuffe nor any of the earl's followers is 'ether openly named used or soe insinuated' as 'the penneman'. Cuffe suggests that 'a fair transcript' should be made by someone unlikely to be suspected, proposing William Temple, another of Essex's secretariat, or Sir Anthony Ashley, a Privy Council clerk serving as secretary of war for the Cadiz mission, recently knighted by Essex and Lord Admiral Howard, who, Cuffe says, 'most willinging Lend you his helping hand' – literally. They should then 'cause it to be deliuered' to a printer. So who writes this letter? Is the letter Essex's, or Cuffe's, or Reynoldes's, or the man's who will provide the fair transcript, perhaps Temple or Ashley? Here we have five possible candidates, and none of them will have his *name* associated with the product – a further two possibilities, Fulke Greville and Robert Beale, are suggested for that honour. So in all we have seven men associated with this writing – a necessity, because the aim is to distract attention from the author, to produce an effect of anonymity.

Bacon knew this culture well. He is now believed to be the author of several anonymous or pseudonymous pieces that were published, either in manuscript or in print, in the 1590s. One of them is very similar to the Cadiz letter concocted by Essex and Cuffe: the 1598 *A Letter written out of England to an English Gentleman remaining at* Padua, *containing a true Report of a strange Conspiracie, contriued betweene* Edward Squire, *lately executed for the same treason as Actor, and* Richard Wallpoole *a* Iesuite, *as Deuiser and Suborner against the person of the Queenes Maiestie*, an account of the last of the alleged Catholic plots against Elizabeth (this one focused on a poisoned

pummel).[24] Its anonymity or pseudonymity did not stop people wondering who wrote it: the following year a Catholic pamphleteer attributed this 'smooth penned pamphlet' to 'M. *Smokey-swynes flesh*, at the instance of Sir R.C.'.[25] Once again, we have two names: Bacon as smooth penman, secretary of state Sir Robert Cecil as commissioner. Both names are needed to identify what we might call the authorship of the *Letter written out of England*.

The Cadiz letter and the *Letter written out of England* hint at something vital to our understanding of the politics of authorship in the 1590s. Essex, Cuffe, Bacon and Cecil do not want their involvement to be traced; while the trickeries of print paratext facilitate this for a reading public, Cuffe is equally concerned that the text going to press does not bear his or Essex's own handwriting. This is quite clearly because they recognise that handwriting has value as evidence: that one is held responsible for what one physically writes. This understanding underpins most of the criminal investigations of the 1590s. Documents in an identifiable hand are used to support arrests and arraignments; those being interrogated are required either to write confessions in their own hand or – in those cases when they are no longer able to write – to make an effort to sign the confession in their own hand, with witnesses observing the fact. Fully cognizant of these facts, conspirators would go out of their way *not* to pen letters or memoranda.

All of these manoeuvres come to a head in the final trial of the Earl of Essex, following his abortive uprising in February 1601. Although there is little debate about what happened during the uprising, and Essex never seeks to defend his actions, a surprising amount of court time is given over to establishing what was planned about taking the court. And it's not about whose idea this was, but quite literally, who held the pen. Prosecuting Essex in court was none other than Francis Bacon. Bacon was keen to establish that the conspirators were 'not met together by constellation', but purposely 'assembled upon summons and letters sent' – he wanted material, written evidence. Turning to Sir John Davis, he said: 'in this consultation . . . you were clerk of that council-table and wrote all'.[26] Sir John objected.

> If with good manners I might, I would long since have interrupted you, and saved you a great part of labour: for my intent is not to deny anything I have said or excuse that I have done, but to confess myself guilty of all, and submit myself wholly to the Queen's mercy. But in that you call me clerk of the council, let me tell you that Sir Charles Davers was writing, but his hand being bad, I was desired to take the pen and write. But by-and-by the Earl said he would speed it himself; therefore we being together so long and doing so little, the Earl went to his house and set down all with his own

> hand, which was formerly set forth, touching the taking and possessing of the Court.[27]

The pen should have been in Sir Charles Davers's hand, but since his hand was 'bad', it passes to Davies, but Davies writes too slowly and so Essex takes the pen and 'set[s] down all with his own hand'. So the culmination of this remarkable scribal incompetence is that the plan is penned by the earl himself, and what's more at his house, and by himself – this is a way of making the written evidentiary responsibility cohere with the actual responsibility. The only reason this debate takes place, of course, is that Essex took pains to burn the paperwork as soon as he realised that the uprising was doomed.

But perhaps the oddest moment in the trial is the showdown between Essex and his erstwhile client Francis Bacon. The earl suddenly interrupted Bacon, 'sayinge that the speache of *Master Bacon* gaue him occasion to plead himself against himself'. He recounted how

> *Master* Bacon beinge a dailye Courtier, and havinge Accesse to her Maiestie vndertooke to goe to the *Queene* in my behalfe, he drewe a Letter verie artificiallye, which was subscribed with my name: And another Letter was drawen to occasion the former, which other Letter should come from his Brother *Master* Anthonie Bacon, both which he shoulde haue showen vnto the Queene; Gosnold brought them both to me, and in my Letter he did plead for me as feelinglie, and pointed out my greevances as plainelie as was possible.

Far from being embarrassed by this revelation, Bacon claimed that 'he had spente more houres to make him [Essex] a meete servante to her Maiestie, then euer he deserued' and that 'as for any thinge contayned in those lettres, yt would not blushe in the Clearest light'.[28] These letters would make him appear a good friend to Essex, an interpretation he maintained in his 1604 *Apologie*.[29]

What should emerge from these incidents is an appreciation that our current notions of authorship are ill equipped to deal with the complexities of writing in the world occupied by Essex and Francis Bacon in the 1590s. This was, admittedly, a heightened political milieu in which it was not always advisable to be seen to be the penman of a particular letter or tract. The moments I've just discussed are all about wishing to avoid attribution, to evade responsibility, to escape blame. They testify to a sophisticated knowledge of the role of the writer, the penman, and how to manipulate documentary evidence. But beyond the more sensational cases I've been outlining, I want to suggest that these cases employ a mechanism of collaborative writing that in fact is common to a great many textual productions.

All of these situations rely on Essex having access to a team of advisers, writers and researchers. While we might expect senior politicians like Essex and Burghley to have their secretariats, it seems that even men without such status worked in a comparable manner. To give one example, probably in 1588, Essex wrote to his 'Cosin Foulke', the poet Fulke Greville, giving him advice on how to recruit men to write for him. This letter was identified as largely Bacon's by James Spedding; Paul Hammer has claimed that it is Essex's; and Brian Vickers has reclaimed it as Bacon's.[30] But interestingly, the letter provides an account of a model of collaboration that might resolve the gridlock they're stuck in. The letter opens: 'You tell me you are goinge to Cambridge, and that the endes of your goinge are to get a scholler to your likeinge, to liue with you, and some 2. or 3. others to remayne in the Vniuersitye, and gather for you; And you require my opinion what instruction you shall geve these gatherers.'[31] In 1589, Fulke Greville did indeed go to Cambridge and hired a scholar, John Coke, who became his secretary, and eventually his executor and editor, as well as having an elevated political career of his own.[32] It would seem that Essex used Bacon to draft this letter, which was then sent to his kinsman Greville, to tell him how to find his own 'Bacon' figure.

But this is not to suggest that the person in the supposedly 'subordinate' position did not have subordinates of his own. Bacon also had gatherers, both at the university and to live with him. In his 1608 notebook, the *Comentarius solutus*, Bacon not only lists figures he'd like to contact, men known to be practical experimenters, but also reminds himself to seek out 'young scholars in *the* Universities' and suggests 'Gyving pensions to 4 for search to compile the 2 Histories ut suprà [as outlined above]' [33] – the same notion on which he (as Essex) advised Greville. Even before he started his advancement to high office, Bacon clearly had a group of men writing for him. On 25 January 1595, he wrote from 'my lodge at Twickenham Park' to his brother Anthony in London, informing him,

> I have here an idle pen or two, specially one that was cozened, thinking to have gotten some money this term; I pray send me somewhat else for them to write out besides your Irish collection, which is almost done. There is a collection of Dr. James of foreign states, largeliest of Flanders, which, though it be no great matter, yet I would be glad to have it.[34]

Physician to Queen Elizabeth's household, Dr John James was equally known as an expert in governmental paperwork who since the late 1570s had been recovering government documents from private hands, and ordering them into a working record office. James was a client of Essex, and it is presumably through the Essex links that Bacon assumes

that his brother Anthony can obtain James's 'collection . . . of foreign states' for copying.[35] What is significant about this letter is that it reminds us that in 1595, Bacon was not only part of Essex's extended household, he also headed his own household. The work being done at Twickenham Park is for him: '*I* would be glad to have it.'

This kind of household academy was explored by Bacon imaginatively, and most famously, in *New Atlantis*, a text that he is thought to have written around 1623, after his fall from grace, and that was not published until 1627, the year after his death, when it was printed in a volume after his *Sylva sylvarum*.[36] *New Atlantis* describes a fictional land, Bensalem, on which a European ship is washed ashore. The narrator's description of this realm culminates in the institution known as Salomon's House, which was understood to forward Bacon's notion of a collaborative academic institution: his amanuensis and editor William Rawley wrote that Salomon's House should be seen as 'a Modell or *Description* of a *Colledge*, instituted for the *Interpreting* of *Nature*, and the *Producing* of Great and *Marueilous Works* for the *Benefit* of *Men*'.[37]

Salomon's House famously contains a division of intellectual labour. Twelve fellows known as the '*Merchants* of *Light*' 'Sayle into *Forraine Countries*' to bring back 'the *Bookes*, and *Abstracts*, and *Patternes* of *Experiments* of all other *Parts*' (f4^{r-v}). Three '*Mystery-Men*' '*Collect* the *Experiments* of all *Mechanicall Arts;* And also of *Liberall Sciences;* And also of *Practises* which are not *Brought into Arts*'. Three fellows called '*Pioners* or *Miners*' 'try *New Experiments,* such as themselues thinke good'. But there's also three *Depredatours* who '*Collect* the *Experiments* which are in all *Bookes*'. With these four groups doing the groundwork, three more fellows, known as '*Compilers*', '*Drawe* [their] *Experiments* . . . into *Titles*, and *Tables*, to giue the better light, for the drawing of *Obseruations* and *Axiomes* out of them'. There is a then a further set of three men, known as '*Dowry-men* or *Benefactours*', who look for practical applications for the experiments: they 'bend themselues, *Looking* into the *Experiments* of their *Fellowes,* and cast about how to draw out of them *Things* of *Vse*, and *Practise* for *Mans life*, and *Knowledge* as well for *Workes*, as for *Plaine Demonstration* of *Causes, Meanes* of *Naturall Diuinations*, and the easie and cleare *Discouery,* of the *Vertues* and *Parts* of *Bodies*' (f4^{v}). Following meetings of all the fellows, three, known as '*Lamps*', take responsibility 'to *Direct New Experiments*, of a Higher *Light*, more *Penetrating* into *Nature* then the *Former*' (f4^{v}–g1^{r}); three '*Inoculatours*' '*Execute* the *Experiments* so *Directed*, and *Report* them'; and three '*Interpreters of Nature*' 'raise the former *Discoueries* by *Experiments*, into *Greater Obseruations, Axiomes*, and *Aphorismes*' (g1^{r}). This is precisely the kind of research institution that could produce the collections of knowledge called for in Bacon's grand project, the *Instauratio magna*.

But where is the author in this institution? A 'Father' of the house enters in great opulence, but he is not identified as any of the thirty-three 'Merchants of Light', 'Depredatours', 'Mystery-Men', 'Pioners, or Miners', 'Compilers', 'Dowry-men or Benefactours', 'Lamps', 'Inoculators' and 'Interpreters of Nature'. In Bacon's fantasy academic world, all the work is delegated, *including* the writing.[38] And this should not be surprising. The world in which he moves is a culture in which leading politicians, courtiers and administrators routinely use a cadre of secretaries, clients, friends and scribes not simply to advise them on their writings, or research their writings, or copy out their writings, but also to draft their writings. This is a form of collaborative writing in which the head of the household takes responsibility, credit or blame for the work of his household – Bacon's *New Atlantis* image is of perfect control by the father, but in reality, subordinate household members might have a real involvement in moulding the writing of the father.

Finally, and leading on directly from this, I'd like to propose something that might be a little controversial. As I said at the outset, scholars are generally happy to recognise that Essex's writings in the 1590s owe a great deal to Francis Bacon. But what might it mean to apply our understanding of Bacon's methods of writing in the 1590s to a period later in his career, when he occupies the position Essex had occupied earlier? In the final decade of his life, Bacon authored the great natural philosophical works for which he's remembered, starting with 1620's *Novum Organum*, and continuing through the various parts of the unfinished *Instauratio magna*, the 1625 revision of the *Essayes*, and the posthumously published *New Atlantis*. At his height, Bacon's household numbered over one hundred male servants; among the men who worked with him in his latter years were the mineralogist Thomas Bushell, the chaplain William Rawley, the diplomat-to-be William Boswell, and a young Thomas Hobbes. John Aubrey wrote of Hobbes's working relationship with Bacon:

> The Lord Chancellour Bacon loved to converse with him. He assisted his lordship in translating severall of his *Essayes* into Latin, one, I well remember, is that *Of the Greatnes of Cities*: the rest I have forgott. His Lordship was a very Contemplative person, and was wont to contemplate in his delicious walks at Gorambery, and dictate to Mr. Thomas Bushell, or some other of his Gentlemen, that attended him with inke and paper ready to sett downe presently his Thoughts. His Lordship would often say that he better

> liked Mr Hobbes's taking his thoughts, then any of the other, because he understood what he wrote, which the others not understanding, my Lord would many times have a harde taske to make sense of what they writt.[39]

Aubrey's anecdotes, of course, are best taken with a ton of salt, but there may be something useful here: that Hobbes is the man best charged with 'taking his [Bacon's] thoughts' because 'he [Hobbes] understood what he [Hobbes] wrote', whereas Bacon would 'have a hard taske to make sense of what they [other scribes] writt'. None of the writing here is Bacon's. The surviving autograph drafts by Bacon – that is, tracts written in his own handwriting – are scant indeed, and most of them are notes, occurring in commonplace books and notebooks.[40] So his 1594 collection of proverbs, the *Promus*, also contains notes headed 'Semblances or popularities of good and evill, with their redargutions; for Deliberacions', which are a draft of the *Colours of Good and Evill* and notes on what becomes *De spe terrestri*.[41] The 1608 notebook *Comentarius solutus* (1608/9) contains a sketch, *Inquisitio legitima de motu*.[42] A legal commonplace book in Law French contains an unpublished piece *On the King's Prerogative*.[43] Otherwise, all we have is two fragments of rough drafts for *A Discourse touching Intelligence and the Safety of the Queen's Person*,[44] a single leaf containing drafts of parts 4 and 12 of 'Natura durabilis', part of the *Historia vitae et mortis*,[45] and a rough (and superseded) draft for a speech for the 1595 Accession Day device.[46] But these appear to be exceptions. The norm lies elsewhere: the norm is a draft in the hand of one of Bacon's secretaries or amanuenses, with Bacon's autograph comments, often quite extensive emendations. This is the case with a whole range of Bacon's tracts, both political and scientific: *A Brief Discourse touching the Happy Union of the Kingdom of England and Scotland* (1603); *A Preparation for the Union of Laws* (1603); *Certain Considerations touching the Better Pacification and Edification of the Church of England* (1603); *Valerius terminus* (1603–8); *Temporis partus masculus* (1608); *Cogitata et visa de interpretatione naturae* (1607); *Redargutio philosophiarum* (1608); *Of the True Greatness of the Kingdom of Britain* (1608); *Argument in the Case of the Post-Nati of Scotland* (1608); *Certain Considerations touching the Plantation in Ireland* (1608/9); *In felicem memoriam Elizabethae, Anglicae Reginae* (1608/9); *Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral* (1607–12); *De vijs mortis*; *Aphorismi de dissolutione rerum*; *Filum labyrinthi, sive formula inquisitionis*; and *The History of the Reign of King Henry VII* (1621).[47] That these writings range in date from 1603 to 1621 suggests that Bacon's preferred form of writing may always have been collaborative, along the lines I've suggested above.

The process of their composition prompts a further question. If we are happy to see the Baconian elements of works attributed to Essex in the 1590s, should we also be looking for, say, the Hobbesian elements of Bacon's Latin *Essays*? To what extent did men like Hobbes or Rawley or Bushell attempt to impose or import their own views, obsessions or vocabulary? This is especially the case with William Rawley, who edited many of Bacon's works posthumously – and was quite content to introduce minor changes into every other line of Bacon's texts. So if Bacon wrote Essex, who wrote Bacon?

My question here deliberately plays devil's advocate. As I stressed above, there is no doubt that Bacon had the *extremam manum* on these texts, and that we should see them as produced under his authorship. But similarly, we should see Essex's 1590s texts as produced under *his* authorship, while admitting that Bacon uses his position vis-à-vis Essex to promulgate his own, characteristically Baconian ideas. The Hammer–Vickers debate is a symptom of the circumstances under which Essex's and Bacon's writings were produced – a thoroughly collaborative process in which piecemeal divisions of labour were impossible, and in which the author might well not be the man who writes the text.

Notes

1. See, for example, Jeffrey Masten, *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Heather Hirschfeld, 'Early modern collaboration and theories of authorship', *PMLA*, 116 (2001), pp. 609–22; Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Hirschfeld, *Joint Enterprises: Collaborative Drama and the Institutionalization of the English Renaissance Theater* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004); Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author: a Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
2. Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author*, p. 25.
3. Jeffrey Masten, 'Playwrighting: Authorship and collaboration', in John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (eds), *A New History of Early English Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 357–82, pp. 361–2.
4. Grace Ioppolo, *Dramatists and their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and Heywood: Authorship, Authority and the Playhouse* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 32.
5. Philip McGuire, 'Collaboration', in Arthur Kinney (ed.), *A Companion to Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 540–52, p. 550 n. 1.
6. *Ben Ionson his Volpone or The foxe* ([London]: [by George Eld] for Thomas Thorpe, 1607), sig. A4v.
7. Ioppolo, *Dramatists and their Manuscripts*, p. 33.

8. Michel Foucault, 'What is an author?', in Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (eds), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 124–7.
9. Thomas Birch (ed.), *Letters, speeches, charges, advices, &c. of Francis Bacon* (London: Andrew Millar, 1763); James Spedding (ed.), *The Letters and Life of Francis Bacon* (London, 1861–74), I and II.
10. Paul E. J. Hammer, 'The uses of scholarship: The secretariat of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, c.1585–1601', *English Historical Review*, 104 (1994), pp. 26–51;Hammer, 'The Earl of Essex, Fulke Greville and the employment of scholars', *Studies in Philology*, 91 (1994), pp. 167–80.
11. Hammer, 'Essex, Fulke Greville', p. 175 n.40.
12. Hammer, 'Essex, Fulke Greville', p. 172.
13. Brian Vickers, 'The authenticity of Bacon's earliest writings', *Studies in Philology*, 94 (1997), pp. 248–96.
14. Vickers, 'Authenticity', pp. 257–8.
15. In *Sir Francis Bacon, his Apologie, in certaine imputations concerning the late Earle of Essex, etc.* (London: Felix Norton, 1604): 'And I drew for him by his appointment some letters to her Maiestie' (D3v).
16. 'The Substance of a Letter I now wish your Lordship should write to her Majesty'. Lambeth Palace Library [hereafter LPL] MS 941 art. 139.
17. *Resuscitatio*, ed. William Rawley (London: Sarah Griffin for William Lee, 1657), 3Nlv–3N2r.
18. Vickers, 'Authenticity', p. 263.
19. Harold Love, *Scribal Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Peter Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
20. Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Richard Rambuss, *Spenser's Secret Career* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Alan Stewart, *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), ch. 5.
21. Essex to Francis Bacon, [after 25 February 1593]. LPL MS 653 art. 2, holograph. Modernised transcription by Spedding, *Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*, I, p. 251.
22. See Hammer, 'Myth-making: Politics, propaganda and the capture of Cadiz in 1596', *Historical Journal*, 40 (1997), pp. 621–42.
23. Henry Cuffe to Edward Reynoldes, [1] July 1596. LPL MS 658, fo. 88 (art. 61). I am grateful to Andrew Gordon for this transcription.
24. Anon., *A Letter written out of England* (London: deputies of C. Barber, 1599).
25. Anon, 'An Addition to the Reader', appendix to M[artin] A[day], *The Discoverie and Confvtation of a Tragical Fiction, devysed and played by Edward Squyer* (1599).
26. William Cobbett and T. B. Howell (eds), *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials . . .* (London: T. C. Hansard, 1809–1823), I, col. 1438.
27. Cobbett and Howell, *State Trials*, I, col. 1438.
28. British Library, London [hereafter BL] Harley MS 4289, fo. 28v.

29. 'I did draw with my Lords priuitie, and by his appointment, two letters, the one written as from my brother, the other as an answer returned from my Lord, both to be by me in secret maner shewed to the Queene, which it pleased my Lord very strangely to mention at the barre.' Bacon, *Apologie*, D5v–D6v.
30. See the discussion in Alan Stewart (ed.), *Oxford Francis Bacon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming), I.
31. Essex to Greville, n.d. The National Archives, Kew [TNA], State Papers [SP] 14/59, art. 4, fos. 4r–5v
32. Hammer, 'Essex, Fulke Greville', pp. 175, 176–80. On Coke see Michael B. Young, *Servility and Service: The Life and Work of Sir John Coke* (Woodbridge: Boydell for the Royal Historical Society, 1986). See also Hammer, 'Uses of scholarship', pp. 47–8.
33. BL Additional MS 27278, fo 16r.
34. Francis Bacon to Anthony Bacon, 25 January 1595, Twickenham Park. LPL MS 650 art. 28, holograph. Modernised transcription by Spedding, *Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*, I, pp. 347–9, p. 349.
35. On James, see R. Julian Roberts, 'James, Thomas (1572/3–1629)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14619, accessed 26 December 2008.
36. In seeing *New Atlantis* as an imaginative engagement with his real household, I follow John Guillory's recent work: see 'The bachelor state: Philosophy and sovereignty in Bacon's *New Atlantis*', in Victoria Kahn, Neil Saccamano and Daniela Coli (eds), *Politics and the Passions, 1500–1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 49–74.
37. William Rawley, 'To the Reader', in Francis Bacon, *Sylua Syluarum: or A Naturall Historie In Ten Centuries*, ed. William Rawley (London: William Lee, 1626 [i.e. 1627]), a2r.
38. For a possible model of Salomon's House, with the same set-up, see Anthony Grafton's discussion of Matthias Flacius Illyricus, who created a large-scale Institum Historicum in Magdeburg to prepare materials for a new history of the church. What is significantly missing from Flacius' model is any specified place for Flacius himself. One might assume that he sees himself as one of the 'five governors and inspectors' but he doesn't make this explicit: instead, all the components of work on the project – research, the compiling of notes, copying and drafting – appear to be delegated. Grafton, 'Where was Salomon's House? Ecclesiastical history and the intellectual origins of Bacon's *New Atlantis*', in Herbert Jaumann (ed.), *Die europäische Gelehrtenrepublik im Zeitalter des Konfessionalismus/The European Republic of Letters in the Age of Confessionalism* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), pp. 21–38.
39. John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (1949; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), pp. 149–50.
40. I draw on Peter Beal's pioneering work, cataloguing extant manuscripts of Bacon's work in *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. I: *1450–1625* (London, Mansell, 1980), pp. 17–52. Each witness is designated by a 'BcF' code.
41. BL Harley MS 7017, fos. 83r–129v (BcF 269); ibid., fos. 128r–129v (BcF230); ibid., fo. 118 (BcF305).

42. BL Additional MS 27278, fos. 17v–22v (BcF303).
43. BL Harley MS 7017 fos. 179r–206v.
44. LPL MS 936 arts. 1 and 2 (BcF 199).
45. BL Additional MS 38693, fo. 49.
46. LPL MS 936 art. 274 (BcF309).
47. BL Harley MS 532, fos. 61r–4v (BcF 107); BL Harley MS 6797, fos. 20r–46v (BcF 261); TNA SP 14/5, no. 51 (BcF121); BL Harley MS 6463, pp. 1–70 (Bc 285); BL Harley MS 6463, pp. 70–3 (BcF307); Queen's College, Oxford, MS 280, fos. 205r–33r (BcF 289); BL Harley 6855, vol. 1, fos. 4r–31v (BcF 306); BL Harley MS 7021, fos. 25r–42v (BcF232); BL Royal MS 17 A. LVI, fos. 1r–16v (BcF 99); BL Harley MS 6797, fos. 122r–127v (BcF 132); BL Harley MS 6797, fos. 79r–83v (BcF 298); BL Harley 5106 (BcF203); BL Harley 6797 fos. 139r–46v (BcF 214); BL Additional MS 7084 (BcF 215); Chatsworth House, Hardwick MS 72A, fos. 1v–8r, 8v–30v (BcF 294 and 287).