

Francis Bacon, Shakespeare, and Tortured Secrets: Violence, Violins, and—One Day—Vindication?

by Christina G. Waldman

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In his writings, Francis Bacon carefully guarded certain secrets. For one thing, he was mindful of the likelihood that his innovative ideas for changing the world would be misunderstood before they had had a chance to be tried. He thought if people had to dig beneath the surface to understand the concepts he was presenting, they would value them more, and perhaps enjoy the treasure hunt of learning. He was a poet, as have been some of his most ardent admirers. Sometimes “reading between the lines”; i.e., interpretation, as if one were trying to understand while translating a foreign language is required, particularly when trying to discern the meaning of poets skilled in the use of double entendre (double meaning). The too-literal (*ad verbum*, or “to the word”) translation may even “do violence” to the author’s intended meaning.

Ironically, the interpretations given to the words of two of Bacon’s ardent admirers have paved the way for great harm to be done to his reputation. In his 1732 poem, the *Essay on Man*, British poet Alexander Pope (1688–1744) enigmatically, called Bacon the “wisest, brightest, and meanest of mankind.” Bacon’s detractors have interpreted “meanest” to mean “most base or low”; but is that what Pope meant? Then there was the German mathematician, philosopher, and jurist Wilhelm Gottfried Leibniz who took liberties with Bacon’s language when he wrote in 1696 that Bacon advocated the torture or racking of nature to extract her secrets. It appears that Bacon did not say these literal words,¹ although one might not know that from the literature. Over the last forty years, Carolyn Merchant and other feminist ecologists have stretched the limits of any

¹ Peter Pesic, “Francis Bacon, Violence, and the Motion of Liberty: The Aristotelian Background,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75, no. 1 (January 2014), 69–90, 70 n 3, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43289651>; Peter Pesic, “Proteus Unbound: Francis Bacon’s Successors and the Defense of Experiment,” *Studies in Philology* 98 (2001), 428–456, 429–430, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4174712>; Peter Pesic, “Wrestling with Proteus: Francis Bacon and the ‘Torture’ of Nature,” *Isis* 90, no. 1 (March 1999), 81–94, 82, nn 2, 5, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/237475>; conceded, Carolyn Merchant, “The Scientific Revolution and The Death of Nature,” special focus section, *Isis* 97, no. 3 (September 2006), 513–533, 518; Peter Pesic, “Proteus Rebound: Reconsidering the Torture of Nature,” *Isis* 99, no. 2 (June 2008), 304–317, 306, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/588627>; Peter Pesic, “Nature on the Rack: Leibniz’s Attitude towards Judicial Torture and the ‘Torture’ of Nature,” *1 Studia Leibnitiana*, Bd. 29, H.2 (1997), 189–197, 195, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40694324>.

connection between such torture metaphors and Bacon's writing, attempting to blame what she calls "Baconian hubris" for a downfall of mankind that began with man's loss of a connection with nature that she posits began in the early modern period, leading to the world's current ecological mess.² If there ever was a contradiction in terms, though, it is "Baconian hubris," for the humanitarian genius humbly sought only to serve God and his fellow Earth-dwellers with his vision and plan for a renewal of learning he called the "Great Instauration."³

Merchant is, to say the least, *not* an admirer of Bacon. If I understand her correctly, she means by "Baconian hubris" not a hubris personal to Bacon, but one with which she would like to brand him. I believe she was speaking in broad terms of a modern attitude towards nature she considers hubristic, for which she holds Bacon responsible because he was the originator/early developer of inductive and experimental methods which enhanced practical knowledge, resulting in the scientific industrial revolution, with all its positive and negative consequences.

Is that all? Yes, it was four hundred years ago, and such an attenuated theory of causation would be laughed out of court today. One wonders why Merchant felt it was important to make Bacon the scapegoat for the problems that have resulted from humanity's abuse of scientific knowledge in its relationship with nature (Actually, the word "science" in Bacon's time itself *meant* knowledge, for the discipline of science did not yet exist). It is as if Merchant were trying to rewrite the Garden of Eden story,

² Carolyn Merchant, *Science and Nature: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 268. See also 24 (conceding, "Obviously, Bacon cannot be held individually responsible") and 41 ("Bacon alone cannot be held responsible"; however, those statements stand in stark contrast to the overall Bacon-blaming thrust of her message.

³ Regarding hubris, Bacon's 19th century biographer and editor, James Spedding, wrote of him: "Our estimate of ourselves rests always upon internal evidence. The man with ten talents thinks much or little of himself, the man with one talent thinks little or much, not according to the number of the talents, but according to his nature. Bacon had by nature a large faculty of hope: but it was hope from things that lay out of and beyond himself—from ideas, from principles, from "the fortunes of the human race," from God—meaning by God the divine purposes as he inferred them from his theory of the divine character and government. But *he attached little importance to himself, except as an instrument for their accomplishment.* And this absence of self-importance was in one respect—to the world, if not to himself—a disadvantage. It made him content to occupy a position in the State which was not only beneath his reasonable pretensions but without the authority requisite for carrying his principles into action" *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath (London: Longmans, 1857–1874), 14 vols (hereafter cited as "Spedding") 14:568 ("The Letters and the Life" 7) (italics added), HathiTrust, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006685889>. See, generally, Nieves Matthews, *Francis Bacon: The History of a Character Assassination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

making Bacon, instead of Eve, responsible for what Merchant seems to see as a “second Fall” of man⁴ by encouraging man (Adam) to eat of the fruits of eating of the tree of knowledge (of good and evil). Eve, misled by the serpent, disobeyed God who had ordered them not to eat of that tree, or they would die. Note, though, that the ultimate culprit was the lying serpent who told Eve, “You shall not surely die.” For Bacon, truth and the search for truth were paramount.⁵

Merchant blamed Bacon for the modern destruction of nature in her 1980 book, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper Collins, 1980; second printing, 1990; third printing, 2020). It is difficult to understand how she could come to such a conclusion from an objective study of Bacon’s writings. In *Science and Nature*, she reprints two of her previous articles: “The Scientific Revolution and The Death of Nature” as chapter one: “The Death of Nature”; and “Secrets of Nature: The Bacon Debates Revisited”⁶ as chapter 2, “Francis Bacon.” Both articles/chapters focus negative criticism on Bacon. While minimally acknowledging some, but not all, of the strong negative responses to her treatment of Bacon by scholars, including Peter Pesic, Alan Soble, and Brian Vickers,⁷ she continues, by reprinting those chapters, to attempt to associate Bacon with the inflammatory metaphors of the “rape” and “torture” of nature (personified), the torture of witches during the Inquisition, animal experimentation, and the male domination of (female) Nature.⁸ Does the evidence support her views, though? The story of the Garden of Eden shows how people will prefer an appealing lie to the truth.

One initial inquiry might be to discover whether Carolyn Merchant and Bacon define nature in the same way. In *Science and Nature*, Merchant wrote: “In *The Death of Nature*, I focused on nature symbolized as female, but I did not believe that nature itself was a

⁴ See, e.g., Merchant, “The Violence of Impediments,” 734, 751.

⁵ See, e.g., Spedding 3:85.

⁶ Carolyn Merchant, “Secrets of Nature: The Bacon Debates Revisited”⁶ *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, no 1 (January 2008), 147–162.

⁷ Merchant, *Science of Nature: response to criticisms*: ch 1, “The Death of Nature” (shortened reprint of “The Scientific Revolution,” September 2006), 12–29, 24 n 1 (list of reviews 1980–1998), 26 nn 13, 16, 18, 21; 317 (Pesic); 27 nn 29, 28 n 32; 319 (Soble); ch 2, “Francis Bacon” (reprint of “Secrets of Nature,” January 2008), 42 n 1 (Vickers, “Francis Bacon, Feminist Historiography, and the Dominion of Nature,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, no 1 (January 2008), 117–141, 123, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30139670>; 320.

⁸ Merchant, ch 1, *Science of Nature*, 12–29, 16–21, 23, 24, 26 n 14, 27 n 30 (meaning of “vex”); ch 2, ‘Francis Bacon’ (reprint of “Secrets of Nature”), 30–45 in pt. 1, “The Scientific Revolution,” *Science and Nature*, 9–46.

universal force. Rather nature is characterized by ecological laws and processes described by the laws of thermodynamics and by energy exchanges among biotic and abiotic components of an ecosystem.”⁹ While the study of how Bacon used the term “nature” could be lengthy, it seems fair to say he did, in contrast to Merchant, consider nature to be a universal force, in some contexts. He used the term in a variety of ways including: human nature, his personal nature, the laws of nature (and/or natural law), and to describe the origin and composition of the world and universe similar to the way the ancient Roman poet/natural philosopher Lucretius used it in his poem, *De Rerum Natura*. For example, Bacon wrote, “...Pythagoras asserted that the *nature* of things consisted in numbers.”¹⁰ Of human nature, he wrote: “The human understanding is of its own *nature* prone to suppose the existence of more order and regularity in the world than it finds. And though there be many things in nature that are singular and unmatched, yet it devises for them parallels and conjugates and relatives which do not exist....”¹¹ (*italics added*).

⁹ Merchant, *Science and Nature*, 15.

¹⁰ *De Augmentis*, bk 3, Spedding 5:422, “Sir Francis Bacon’s Quotes on Nature,” Today in Science History, https://todayinsci.com/B/Bacon_Francis/BaconFrancis-Nature-Quotations.htm.

¹¹ Francis Bacon, bk 1, Aphorism 45, *Novum Organum*, Spedding 4:55. Of interest may be Patrick Mayer, retired University of Illinois philosophy professor, Lecture 20, “Bacon on Interpretation of Nature and Idols,” <http://patrick.maher1.net/317/lectures/bacon1.pdf>.

Brian Vickers,¹² Peter Pesic,¹³ Alan Soble,¹⁴ Alan Sokal,¹⁵ and Noretta Koertge¹⁶ have strongly criticized Merchant and other eco-feminists¹⁷ for attempting to link Bacon with metaphors regarding the torture and “rape,” of nature and the Inquisitional torture of witches.¹⁸ For example, Koertge wrote, **“Other critiques, such as the allegations by Harding, Merchant, and Keller that Bacon’s experimental method was inspired by rape metaphors and that science became more sexist when the mechanical philosophy displaced the alchemical world view, are more radical and have been vehemently repudiated”** (bold added). One would not have surmised this, however, from *Science and Nature*.

¹² Brian Vickers, “Francis Bacon, Feminist Historiography,” 117–141 (see 118 n 4 for summary of literature), JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30139670>.

¹³ Pesic, “Wrestling with Proteus” (see 82 nn 2–5 for summary of literature); Pesic, “Proteus Rebound,” 304–317, 305 nn 2–4 (see 306 n 5 for summary of literature); see also Peter Pesic, [“Turning the Tables on Bacon: Computer-Assisted Baconian Philology,”](https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/journal/index.php/emls/article/view/34) *Early Modern Literary Studies* 17, no. 1 (2014), <https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/journal/index.php/emls/article/view/34>; and Pesic, [“Francis Bacon, Violence, and the Motion of Liberty,”](https://www.jstor.org/stable/30139670) *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75, no 1 (January 2014) (see 70 n 3 for summary of literature).

¹⁴ Alan Soble, ch 12, “In Defense of Bacon” (January 1, 1995), in Noretta Koertge, ed., *A House Built on Sand: Exposing Postmodernist Myths about Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 195–215, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 25, no 2 (1995): 192–215, <https://doi.org/10.1177/004839319502500203>, available at SSRN, 1–22, 10, 11, 19, 22. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2324626>.

¹⁵ See Alan Sokal, “Science Studies: Less Than Meets the Eye,” *Behind the Hoax: Science, Philosophy, and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), reviewed by Allan Franklin (Springer, online June 3, 2011), https://physics.nyu.edu/sokal/franklin_review_BtH.pdf.

¹⁶ Noretta Koertge, “‘New Age’ Philosophies of Science: Constructivism, Feminism, and Post-Modernism,” *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 51 (2000), 667–683, 675; JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3541612>; Noretta Koertge, “Methodology, Ideology, and Feminist Critiques of Science,” *PSA* (1980), 2:346–359, 353–356, 353 (Koertge: “In the passages cited above [from the *New Organon*], I think Bacon speaks of nature with a good deal of humility and respect.”), JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/192598>.

¹⁷ For other feminist authors who follow Merchant in “making a feminist case against Bacon,” see Vickers, “Francis Bacon, Feminist Historiography,” 117 n 1, 118 n 6; Peter Pesic, “Proteus Unbound: Francis Bacon’s Successors and the Defense of Experiment,” *Studies in Philology* 98 (2001), 428–456, 429 n 4.

¹⁸ Vickers, “Francis Bacon, Feminist Historiography,” 126–131; Pesic, “Proteus Rebound,” 309–313 (witchcraft); Soble, “In Defense of Bacon” (SSRN), 10, 11, 19, 22, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2324626>.

By not fully documenting, in *Science and Nature*, critical attacks on scholarly grounds of her treatment of Bacon and her responses to them, Merchant fails to apprise readers of their existence and thus, it would seem, fails to fulfill her ethical obligation of objectivity.¹⁹ Particularly of concern are her attempts to link Bacon's metaphors with the torture of witches.²⁰ While, in *Science and Nature* she informs readers that she omitted two paragraphs "on Vickers" from the first two pages of her reprinted article, "Secrets of Nature," she does not tell writers that these were the paragraphs in which she responded to one (albeit only one) of Vickers' points: that hers and other eco-feminists' work suffered from the victim-mentality of *ressentiment*. She characterizes his January 2008 article as a critique, in part, of her 2006 article, "The Scientific Revolution."²¹ While she includes this article in *Science and Nature's* bibliography (as well as Soble's "In Defense of Bacon" (1995), Pesic's "Nature on the Rack" (1997), and Pesic's "Wrestling with Proteus" (1999)),²² she altogether excludes from mention Pesic's June 2008 article, "Proteus Rebound" (which specifically criticized *The Death of Nature* 1990 edition and Merchant's 2006 article, "The Scientific Revolution"), and her response to it (in "The Violence of Impediments," December 2008). Nor does she list Vickers (January 2008), Soble (1995), and Pesic (June 2008) in a list of reviews which is accessed via a link to her website.²³

Merchant disagreed with Soble, insisting that Bacon's use of the term "vexations" in the phrase "the vexations of art" was stronger than "pester" or "hound" and implied mechanical means of torture such as the rack in interrogation,²⁴ associating Bacon with "legitimizing the treating of nature in ethically questionable ways" such as animal and

¹⁹ See, e.g., Merchant, "The Scientific Revolution," 513–533; Carolyn Merchant, "The Violence of Impediments: Francis Bacon and the Origins of Experimentation," *Isis* 99, no. 4 (December 2008), 731–760, responding to Pesic, 732–735, 740–741, 745–746, 748–751, 754–755, 758, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/597767>; Carolyn Merchant, "Secrets of Nature: The Bacon Debates Revisited," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, no. 1 (January 2008), 147–162, response to Vickers on page 147, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30139672>; Carolyn Merchant, "Francis Bacon and The Vexations of Art: Experimentation as Intervention," *British Journal for the History of Science*, vol 46, no 4 (December 2013), 551–599, 552, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43820431>.

²⁰ See Carolyn Merchant, *Science and Nature*, 16–21, 26 n 13, 33, 35–37, 41, 42 n 1, 43.

²¹ Merchant, *Science of Nature*, 42 n 1, 320 (biblio.); Vickers, "Francis Bacon, Feminist Historiography."

²² Merchant, *Science of Nature*, 16, 18, 26 n 13, 16, 18, 21, 27 n 27, 28, 317 (biblio), 330 (index).

²³ "Reviews of Books Written by Carolyn Merchant," <https://nature.berkeley.edu/departments/espm/env-hist/reviews.html>, accessed May 18, 2021 from <https://ourenvironment.berkeley.edu/people/carolyn-merchant>.

²⁴ Merchant, *Science of Nature*, 20, 26 n 13, 27 n 29, 28 n 32, 319 (biblio.), 331 (index).

human experimentation and the torment to the fox in the fox hunt.²⁵ She called Pesic's warning (that young girls might shy away from a science that was said to have derived from the torture of witches) "demeaning to the intelligence of young women."²⁶ In one footnote, she summarized her response to Pesic's arguments as a "difference of interpretation."²⁷ She provided a misquotation of Bacon by historian Thomas Kuhn which attributed to Bacon the phrase "twisting the lion's tail," but the clarification (in response to Pesic) in her "The Violence of Impediments," is not referenced in the 2017 *Science and Nature*.²⁸

In his 2008 article, Vickers stated: "In the 1980's three feminists (Sandra Harding, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Carolyn Merchant) *set out to discredit* Bacon, and the Scientific Revolution to which he contributed, by alleging that he had advocated "the rape and torture of nature"²⁹ (italics added). As mentioned, Vickers suggested that Merchant's historical writing suffered from *ressentiment*, a term for how a self-image of victimhood may distort a person's view of the world.³⁰ In "Secrets of Nature" (which became chapter 2 of *Science and Nature*), Merchant had responded that Vickers' charge of *ressentiment* was "debasement" and "demeaning." However, she omitted the paragraphs containing her response to Vickers in the reprint the article for *Science and Nature*. She tells us she omitted the paragraphs; she does not tell us they contained a response to negative criticism of her treatment of Bacon. In Bacon's method, one collects data and then draws conclusions from the data, rather than setting out to prove a particular theory with the associated risk of confirmation bias.

Vickers had also criticized Merchant's misunderstanding of metaphor (124–128), particularly her claim that Bacon's metaphors for extracting truth from nature pertained to the torture of witches (129–131), her failure to credit the Bible as authority for man's dominion over nature (136–141), and her misunderstanding of Bacon's use of the Proteus myth (132–136). He stated, "Merchant's whole case [for associating Bacon's metaphors with the torture of witches] rests on her sexual interpretation of Bacon's metaphor praising the King's courage in investigating the supernatural arts, despite the

²⁵ Merchant, ch 1, *Science and Nature*, 21; see also 17.

²⁶ Merchant, "Secrets of Nature," 747 (of Vickers); Merchant, "Violence of Impediments," 740 (of Pesic).

²⁷ Merchant, ch 1, 'The Death of Nature,' reprinting Merchant, "The Scientific Revolution" (2006), in Part 1, "The Scientific Revolution," *Science of Nature*, 26, n 16 (referring to note 13.1 which I could not locate).

²⁸ Merchant, ch 1, *Science and Nature*, 23; Merchant, "The Violence of Impediments," 732 fn 3.

²⁹ Vickers, "Francis Bacon, Historiography," 117, citing Paolo Rossi in n 1.

³⁰ Vickers, "Francis Bacon, Historiography," 119–122.

risks involved: “Neither ought a man to make scruple of entering and penetrating into these holes and corners [“nooks and crannies”], when the inquisition of truth is his sole object.... The whole of Merchant’s association of Bacon with witch trials collapses once we realize that it derives from her interpreting this [harmless] metaphor.” (130–131).

It appears that *ressentiment* was the only criticism of Vickers to which Merchant made a response, accusing him of attempting to “sweep Bacon’s critics from history.”³¹ She asserted that a “**deep divide existed between Bacon’s supporters and detractors**” such that one’s interpretation of the scientific revolution, “progress and hope” vs “decline and despair” ... “is a marker of how one might assess Bacon’s contributions.”³² This, however, sounds like a tacit acceptance and acknowledgement of the existence of subjective bias on the part of Merchant and perhaps other feminists. Feminist Katherine Parks labelled Bacon’s defenders “Friends of Bacon” and even “FOBs.” Vickers suggested the appropriate response might be, “*amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*”³³ (“a friend to Plato, but more, a friend to truth”). Ironically, objectivity is at the heart of Bacon’s teaching. How do we know when a statement is true? How do we prevent those “four idols” from blurring our perception and distorting our judgment of facts? In a later article not referenced in *Science and Nature*, Merchant suggests a “middle ground” may exist “when larger political and social issues underlying ... [Bacon’s] concept of power are taken into consideration,” but does not spell out what that middle ground might look like.³⁴

In his June 2008 article, “Proteus Rebound,” Pesic concluded, “Merchant ... does not seem aware of substantial evidence that does not support her claim that, for those who followed Bacon, “the very essence of the experimental method arose out of techniques of human torture transferred onto nature.”³⁵ He also wrote, “Under such searching interrogation, Merchant’s contention that ‘the very essence of experimental method arose out of human torture transferred onto nature’ is not sustained.”³⁶ Like Vickers, Pesic was strongly critical of her attempts to associate Bacon’s use of myth and metaphor with the torture of (female, though not all were female) witches.³⁷

³¹ Merchant, “Secrets of Nature,” 147.

³² Merchant, “Secrets of Nature,” 148.

³³ Vickers, “Francis Bacon, Feminist Historiography,” 123.

³⁴ Merchant, “The Violence of Impediments,” 734.

³⁵ Pesic, “Proteus Rebound,” 315 n 44.

³⁶ Pesic, “Proteus Rebound,” 317.

³⁷ Pesic, “Proteus Rebound,” 309–313.

Bacon is not here to defend himself. In his own lifetime, even his enemy Lord Coke stated that the slander of a dead man was “a living fault.”³⁸ While the defamation of a dead person is not a “tort” (civil wrong) in most jurisdictions (except, perhaps, in Rhode Island), it is *unethical* to deliberately present a man’s life and work inaccurately (the term is “false light”). One might think generous restraint and humility would be the rule when discussing the complicated thought of a literary and philosophical genius who lived four hundred years ago, whose defense depends on the sense of justice of others. Leibniz said, “We do well to think highly of Verulam, for his hard sayings have a deep meaning in them.”³⁹

Part of the challenge in writing about Bacon lies in the fact that he was a man of secrets. If he was the man in charge of the Shakespeare literary project, as many, including myself, believe the evidence suggests, he has hidden it well. Would the feminists revise their opinion of him, if the “consensus” of academic scholars suddenly held that Bacon was Shakespeare? Think of the strong women he depicted in his plays. On the other hand, perhaps that would just give the feminists more ammunition. Merchant wrote, “Bacon’s narrative reverses the tragedy of the Fall to a comedy of recovery.”⁴⁰ Bacon’s “narrative,” though, was not a comedy, but a blueprint of hope for a better life for humankind.

My background is in law. I became interested in the Bacon-Shakespeare question when I was in college in the late seventies, as I discuss in my 2018 book.⁴¹ An interest in Shakespeare authorship was my “way in” to learning more about Francis Bacon. He is a person well worth knowing, one for whom truth was of paramount importance. He sought to revolutionize learning, believing humanity could, by properly focusing its labors, increase practical knowledge and thus better its “estate.”⁴² We are indebted to

³⁸ Don Herzog, *Defaming the Dead* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 111–113, 112, citing Lord Coke on defamation: “I will not admit a dead man; for tho’ spoken of him, it is a living fault” from *A Vindication of the Lord Chancellor Bacon, from the Aspersion of Injustice, Cast Upon Him by Mr. Wraynham* (London, 1725), 33, https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/118195/herzog_defaming%20the%20dead.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y.

³⁹ Robert Leslie Ellis, ed., preface to *De Principiis atque Originibus*, *Philosophical Works*, Spedding 3:71. Influenced by Bacon, Leibniz wrote a fragmentary tract, “Gulielmii Pacidii Plus Ultra,” under the pseudonym “Guglielmus Pacidius” (Spedding 3:72).

⁴⁰ Merchant, “Secrets of Nature,” 150.

⁴¹ Christina G Waldman, *Francis Bacon’s Hidden Hand in Shakespeare’s ‘The Merchant of Venice’: A Study of Law, Rhetoric, and Authorship* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2018).

⁴² “To write at leisure what is to be read at leisure does not interest me. My concern is with life and human affairs and all their troubles and difficulties. It is these I wish to improve by true

him for so much we take for granted—so many of the words we use, the computers we compose upon, and how we define a fact objectively.

Another challenge in writing about Bacon is the complexity of his thought. Many people seem to prefer simple explanations to digging in the “mine of truth,” to use Bacon’s own expression.⁴³ The temptation to find whatever one is looking for in Bacon, to see the “Bacon” one wants to see, must be avoided, as Daniel R. Coquillette warned in his 1992 book, *Francis Bacon*.

Scholars seeking to project a unified and compelling picture of Bacon’s thought have, for centuries, picked about his voluminous writings until they have found what they want. By weaving together threads of Bacon’s thought from different chronological periods and from different professional contexts, writers can, and have, created highly subjective pictures that say more about their own minds than Bacon’s.⁴⁴

While one does expect a historian to use words literally to express truth, one does not have the same expectation of a poet. We give poets freedom with words, “poetic license.” Yet, historians have read poet Alexander Pope’s couplet about Bacon as if he meant it literally. Let us explore this further.

Pope’s hint

In his poem, *Essay on Man*, Pope wrote,

“If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,
The wisest, brightest, *meanest* of mankind.”⁴⁵

and wholesome thoughts.” Title page, Benjamin Farrington, *Francis Bacon: Philosopher of Industrial Science* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1949). In Bacon’s beautiful letter to Father Redemptus Barazano, June, 1622, he closed: “Love me as you have begun, but love Truth most.” Spedding 14:377–378. See also Spedding 3:85. HathiTrust, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006685889>.

⁴³ Frontispiece quotation, *Baconiana* 16, third series, 1921 (August 1919, March 1920, March 1921) <http://sirbacon.org/archives/baconiana/1919-1921%20Baconiana%20No%2061-63.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Daniel R. Coquillette, intro., *Francis Bacon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 2.

⁴⁵ (Italics added). Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man: Moral Essays and Satires*, ed. Henry Morley, epistle 4 (London: Cassell, 1891; first pub., in parts, London, 1732-1738), transcr. Les Bowler, e-book #2428, Gutenberg.org, 2007 (search “meanest”), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2428/2428-h/2428-h.htm>.

These lines present a paradox, for how could Bacon have been, at the same time, both the wisest and brightest, and yet the lowest of men? Might not these lines put us on notice to make further inquiry?

One explanation is that Pope meant Bacon was “humble.”⁴⁶ However, there may be another interpretation. Perhaps, Pope was intentionally creating a puzzling conundrum, to challenge readers to take a second look at his *meaning*, following the example, perhaps, of Ben Jonson in his cryptic dedication to the First Folio and (probable) inscription on the Stratford Shakespeare Monument.⁴⁷

In analyzing a text by Bacon or Shakespeare, at least, consider whether a word that does not seem to “fit,” that therefore stands out, might hint or signal that further inquiry should be made into its meaning. In lawyer’s terminology, it might “put one on notice” that due diligence was required. What did Pope mean by “parts”? Might it suggest the parts actors play in the theatre? Did Bacon “play a part” by writing under the pseudonym of Shakespeare? “Think how Bacon shined” suggests a play on words with “Bacon” and “beacon.” Looking at how Pope used *mean* in another work might “shed some light.” Bacon himself said the “mean and small things” were sometimes more instructive than others.⁴⁸

For example, in Pope’s preface to his 1725 edition of Shakespeare’s plays, he wrote,

<https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/gutbook/lookup?num=2428>. For examples of use of the word “mean” by both Bacon and “Shakespeare,” see *The Oxford Universal Dictionary on Historical Principles*, ed. William Little, rev. and ed. with addenda, C. T. Onions, 3d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955; first pub. 1933) (hereafter, “OUD”), s.v. “mean.”

⁴⁶ See, e.g., Nieves Matthews, ch 27, “The Meanest of Mankind,” *The History of a Character Assassination*, 323–336, 332–336, 332, 336; H. Kendra Baker, “Pope and Bacon,” *Baconiana: The Journal of the Francis Bacon Society*, 47, no. 164 (October, 1964), 24–50, SirBacon.org, http://sirbacon.org/archives/baconiana/1964_Baconiana_No.164.pdf; editorial, *Baconiana* 70, no. 187 (December 1987), 2, 25–26, 28, 70, SirBacon.org, http://sirbacon.org/archives/baconiana/1987_Baconiana_No.187.pdf.

⁴⁷ Amanda Mabillard, “Preface to the First Folio, 1623,” Shakespeare Online.com, 2/27/2021, <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/biography/firstfolio.html>; Peter Dawkins, “Shakespeare,” Francis Bacon Research Trust, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/shakespeare/>.

⁴⁸ Vickers, “Francis Bacon, Feminist Historiography,” 132; Spedding 3:332.

The Audience was generally composed of the *meaner* sort of people His Genius in those *low* parts is like some Prince of a Romance in the *disguise* of a Shepherd or Peasant⁴⁹ (Italics added).

Here is the entire preface, retaining Pope's spelling and italics (my bold):

It must be allowed that Stage-Poetry of all other is more particularly levell'd to please the *Populace*, and its success more immediately depending upon the *Common Suffrage*. One cannot therefore wonder, if *Shakespear*, having at his first appearance no other aim in his writings than to procure a subsistence, directed his endeavours solely to hit the taste and humour that then prevailed. The Audience was generally composed of the **meaner** sort of people; and therefore the Images of Life were to be drawn from those of their own rank: accordingly we find that not our Author's only but almost all the old Comedies have their Scene among *Tradesmen* and *Mechanicks*: And even their Historical Plays strictly follow the common *Old Stories* or *Vulgar Traditions* of that kind of people. In Tragedy, nothing was so sure to *Surprize* and cause *Admiration*, as the most strange, unexpected, and consequently most unnatural, Events and Incidents; the most exaggerated Thoughts; the most verbose and bombast Expression; the most pompous Rhymes, and thundering Versification. In Comedy, nothing was so sure to *please*, as mean buffoonry, vile ribaldry, and unmannerly jests of fools and clowns. Yet even in these our Author's Wit buoys up, and is born above his subject: his Genius in those **low parts** is like some **Prince** of a Romance in the **disguise** of a Shepherd or Peasant; a **certain Greatness and Spirit now and then break out, which manifest his higher extraction and qualities**.⁵⁰

A plausible interpretation is that Pope understood that "Shakespeare" — that is, the true poet and playwright of the works we know as "Shakespeare" — was writing plays the

⁴⁹ "Preface to Shakespeare, 1725, Alexander Pope," Shakespeare Brasileiro, 2020, in *The Works of Shakespeare*, vol (part) 1, ed. Alexander Pope (London, 1725. Parts 2–6 after 1725, but with 1723 date), <https://shakespearebrasileiro.org/en/preface-to-shakespeare-1725-alexander-pope/>.

⁵⁰ "Preface to Shakespeare," par. 9.

common people would understand and enjoy, but that would also uplift and teach them, thus enlarging their capacities for understanding.⁵¹

It is interesting that Bacon, like Shakespeare, appreciated the educational potential of drama and the theatre. Would it be so far-fetched to suppose that he wished to employ drama in his master plan for the “advancement of learning” and betterment of mankind? This would have to be a secret, for if people thought learning was being foisted on them as something “good for them,” that would detract from their pleasure in watching the plays.⁵²

Something else to consider is whether “parts” in Pope also hints that the “wanting” (missing) parts of Bacon’s *Great Instauration* may be found, in part, in the Shakespeare plays?⁵³

These plausible potential meanings of Pope’s lines would be missed forever if people no longer feel free to question the assumption of the “consensus of scholars” that Bacon was not Shakespeare which is, arguably, contrary to the evidence.⁵⁴ The late Bacon

⁵¹ For Bacon’s use of the word *capacity*, see *De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum (De Augmentis)*, bk 9, Spedding 5:114; Aphorism 68, ‘Example of a Treatise on Universal Justice’ (transl.); *De Augmentis*, bk 8, Spedding 5:88–110, 102–103. Also, in *The Lion and the Throne* (New York: Little, Brown, 1957), Catherine Drinker Bowen wrote that a young Gray’s Inn barrister (Henry Gosnell) reported, in a letter to Anthony Bacon after Bacon’s second court case in which he argued opposite Lord Coke, that Bacon had “spangled his speech” and “presumed somewhat on the judge’s capacities” with his unusual words (p. 79).

⁵² Edwin Reed, ch. 4, “The Place of the Shakespeare Dramas in Bacon’s System of Philosophy,” *Francis Bacon: Our Shake-Speare* (Cambridge: University Press, 1902), 120–143, http://sirbacon.org/archives/Francis_Bacon_Our_Shake_speare.pdf. Spedding 4:316, 496.

⁵³ As to part 1, see Spedding 3, following p. 33); as to parts 4, 5, and 6, see W. F. C. Wigston, “Pan, Dionysius or Bacchus, and Perseus (Bacon’s Three fables Illustrating Parabolical Poesy and Stage Plays in the *De Augmentis*),” *The Columbus of Literature, or, Bacon’s New World of Sciences* (Chicago, 1892), 82–107, 95, 49, 145, 158–160, SirBacon.org, <http://sirbacon.org/archives/columbusoflitera00wigsuoft.pdf>; Reed, ch 4, 132–143.

⁵⁴ See sources old and new collected at Francis Bacon’s New Advancement of Learning, SirBacon.org, including the Bibliographies, <http://www.sirbacon.org/>; Peter Dawkins, Francis Bacon Research Trust, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/>, and the Francis Bacon Society website and journal, *Baconiana*, <https://francisbaconsociety.co.uk/>. More recent books include N. B. Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question: The Baconian Theory Made Sane* (Guildford, printed for the author, 1998); Barry R. Clarke, *Francis Bacon’s Contribution to Shakespeare: A New Attribution Method* (New York: Routledge, 2019); Peter Dawkins, *Second-Seeing Shakespeare* (e-book, Kindle, 2020); Peter Dawkins, *The Shakespeare Enigma* (London; Polair Publishing, 2004); Brian McClinton, *The Shakespeare Conspiracies: Untangling a 400-Year Web of Myth and Deceit* (Belfast:

scholar Benjamin Farrington wrote that Maynard Mack, in taking the “pejorative meaning of ‘of the meanest’ for granted” had done Pope an “unforgiveable injury,” for Pope was known to indulge in “... paradoxes, and was quite capable of inconsistency.”⁵⁵ Elsewhere, Farrington wrote, “I concern myself with Bacon’s reputation as a poet, not in order to involve myself in the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy, but in order to protest against the systemic depreciation of the poetical side of Bacon’s genius now current.”⁵⁶

As Sophie Weeks, one of the editors of the Oxford Francis Bacon Project, has observed, Bacon’s own way of working was to scatter or “deliberately disperse” his thoughts “within and across his works.” It then fell to the reader to “reassemble the scattered fragments into a coherent whole. Consequently,” she continued, “reading Bacon is rather like doing an enormous jigsaw puzzle. However, not only do readers have to impose order on a chaos of fragments, but they must also supply essential connections.”⁵⁷ It is interesting to compare Weeks’ description with Elizabeth Gallup’s description of her own method of following a Bacon cipher throughout various works, some by Bacon, some by Shakespeare, and some by other writers, in transcribing *The Play of Anne Boleyn*.⁵⁸

Just as nature is full of secrets, so Bacon, who worked in intelligence for the Crown with his brother Anthony for years, appreciated the value of a secret. In fact, he invented the bi-literal cipher which led to the development of computers. His meanings are not

Shanway Press, 2008; first published Aubane, IRE: Aubane Historical Society, 2007), and Waldman, *Francis Bacon’s Hidden Hand*, E. M. Dutton, *Homeless Shakespeare*, e-book, https://archive.org/details/HomelessShakespeareHisFabricatedLifeFromCradleToGrave_991.

⁵⁵ Matthews, *The History of a Character Assassination*, 336, fn 77, 529, citing “Benjamin Farrington, unpublished notes for a volume to be entitled ‘Bacon, Personality, and Performance,’ on the influence of Bacon over Herbert, Pope, Milton, Coleridge and other poets, which he did not live to finish.”

⁵⁶ Benjamin Farrington, “Francis Bacon After His Fall,” reprinted from *Studies in Literary Imagination. The Legacy of Francis Bacon* 1 (April 1971), SirBacon.org, <http://www.sirbacon.org/farringtonb.htm>. See also Reed, ch 7, “Bacon’s Poetic Gifts,” *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare*, 217–225.

⁵⁷ S. V. Weeks, “Francis Bacon’s Doctrine of Idols: A Diagnosis of ‘Universal Madness,’” *British Journal of Historical Science* 52, no. 1 (March 2019; Epub. January 30, 2019), 1–39, National Library of Medicine, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30696499/>.

⁵⁸ *The Tragedy of Anne Boleyn, a Drama in Cipher Found in the Works of Sir Francis Bacon, from original editions in the British Museum 1579 to 1590, as Deciphered by Elizabeth Wells Gallup from the Novum Organum of Sir Francis Bacon by means of the Biliteral Cipher, described in his ‘Advancement of Learning’* (Geneva, IL: Riverside Laboratories, 1916), 148–150 and appendix), discussed in Waldman, app. 2, “The Tragedy of Anne Boleyn,” *Francis Bacon’s Hidden Hand*, 227–232.

always apparent on the surface. He quoted from the Bible: "The glory of God is to conceal a thing, but the honour of kings is to search out a matter."⁵⁹ He sometimes hinted at, or alluded to, things he felt it was better or safer not to say outright. However, were all those "secrets" meant to be hidden *forever*? Others may disagree, but I would say no. A fair reading of his works suggests he intended readers to hunt for his meanings, although he realized not all of them would. Let us continue to explore Pope's interpretation of "mean":

A *mean* can also refer to the quantity in the middle, an intermediate entity. Francis Bacon used it to refer to the middle term in a syllogism. Also, he took his father Nicholas Bacon's motto as his own: "The middle way is best," adopted from Erasmus. Pope wrote:

"Papist or Protestant or both between,
Like good Erasmus in a modest *mean*,
In moderation placing all my glory."⁶⁰

In the *Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare uses the word *mean* several times, in relation to Nature and art:

Yet Nature is made better by no mean
But Nature makes the Meane: so, over that art
Which you say adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry
A gentler scion to the wildest stock
And make conceive a bark of baser kind
By bud of nobler race: this is an art
Which does mend nature, change it rather, but
The art itself is nature.
(*Winter's Tale* 4.1964.72⁶¹).

⁵⁹ Proverbs 25:2 (KJV); Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), Spedding 3:[220, 299](#); Joseph Deavey, ed., *The Advancement of Learning, by Lord Bacon* (New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1901), Online Library of Liberty, 6–16, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1433>.

⁶⁰ Alexander Pope, "'Satire One: To Mr. Fortescue,' The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace, Satires and Epistles of Horace Imitated," in *An Essay on Man. Moral Essays and Satires*, ed. Henry Morley (London: Cassell, 1891; first pub. London, 1732-1738), transcr. Les Bowler, e-book #2428, Gutenberg.org, 2007 (search "Erasmus"), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2428/2428-h/2428-h.htm>.

⁶¹ The 1864 Globe edition will be used, OpenSourceShakespeare, George Mason University, www.opensourceshakespeare.org.

There is certainly much to ponder in these lines, more than this brief paper will have time to adequately address. How can art *be* nature? Perhaps this paradox, too, calls for further exploration. Here, Shakespeare seems to be using art to mean “artifice,” something artificial done to change nature; here, the grafting of “a gentle scion to the wildest stock” to produce “a bark of baser kind by bud of nobler race.” It seems he could be describing the author’s intent in writing the Shakespeare plays themselves.

Perhaps, art is to nature as knowledge is to power. In the second part of the *New Organon* (the first part being “wanting ...”), Bacon wrote:

Human knowledge and human power meet in one; for where the cause is not known the effect cannot be produced. Nature to be commanded must be obeyed; and that which in contemplation is as the cause is in operation as the rule.⁶²

This passage provides a parallel to the Shakespeare passage cited just above:

It is the fashion to talk as if art were something different from nature or a sort of addition to nature, with power to finish what nature has begun, or correct her when going aside ... In truth man has no power over nature except that of motion—the power, I say, of putting natural bodies together or separating them—the rest is done by nature within.” (*Descriptio Globi Intellectualis* (ca. 1612).⁶³

He further wrote, “Nothing really exists in nature besides individual bodies, carrying out pure, individual acts, according to law.”⁶⁴ Here he would seem to be referring to natural law, the law of nature, a topic too vast to be covered here.⁶⁵

It is interesting, as Richard Sergeantson, one of the directors of the *Oxford Francis Bacon* project, found, that Bacon borrowed his term “interpretation of nature,” from civilian jurists who “interpreted” (explained, expounded upon) the law, passed down to them

⁶² Francis Bacon, bk 1, Aphorism 3, “The Second Part of the Instauration which is called the *New Organum*, ‘Aphorisms Concerning the Interpretation of Nature and the Kingdom of Man,’ Spedding 4:47.

⁶³ Reed, *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare*, 30.

⁶⁴ Book 2, Aphorism 2, *The Oxford Francis Bacon 11: The Instauration magna*, pt. 2: *Novum organum*, ed. Graham Rees with Maria Wakely (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 202, as cited in S. V. Weeks, “Francis Bacon’s Doctrine of Idols,” 23, 68 fn 122.

⁶⁵ See, e.g., Paul H. Kocher, “Francis Bacon and the Science of Jurisprudence,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 18, no. 1 (January 1957), 3–26, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2707577>.

from the Code of Justinian in the sixth century. These jurists often took it upon themselves to try to explicate concepts of “higher law.” As professor of canon law Andrea Padovani wrote, “Whereas the Roman jurists of Antiquity, in line with the pragmatism of their law, were not inclined to address complex questions of natural philosophy, the glossators and commentators of late medieval jurisprudence displayed a radically different attitude. In doing so, they implemented a change of greatest importance in the history of juridical thought.”⁶⁶ Bacon would have felt very much at home in their company, for his thought crossed disciplines (theology, philosophy, law, science, poetry ...). As he had written to Lord Burghley in a 1592 letter, he had taken all knowledge to be his province.

To return to Leibniz ...

To expand on the discussion above, Pope was not the only Bacon admirer whose unfortunate choice of phrase has harmed Bacon’s reputation. In 1696, the German mathematician, lawyer, and philosopher Wilhelm Gotfried Leibniz (1646–1716) wrote, in a private letter, “Here belongs also the art of inquiry into nature itself and of putting it on the rack ... the art of experiment which Lord Bacon began so ably.” This image suggests the abuse of heretics who were tortured by the Inquisition to extract confessions. Peter Pesic explains that Leibniz was a jurist who abhorred torture—which was, in fact, in the process of being abolished and not practiced under the Elector.⁶⁷ Moreover, Pesic continued, when Bacon used the word “torture,” he used it in a legal sense; whereas, when Bacon used the word “vexation,” from the Latin *vexatio*, he used it to convey the “inward torment of the soul,” as Shakespeare also had done.⁶⁸

Carolyn Merchant, however, seemed determined to insist that, when Bacon wrote “vexations of art,” he was speaking of torture. In *Science and Nature*, Merchant wrote: “We have an increasing ability to destroy nature as we know it through mechanistic

⁶⁶ Andrea Padovani, foreword, ch. 2, “The Metaphysical Thought of Late Medieval Jurisprudence,” in Michael Lobban, *The Jurists’ Philosophy of Law from Rome to the Seventeenth Century*, vol 7, ed. Andrea Padovani and Peter G. Stein, *Treatise Of Legal Philosophy And General Jurisprudence* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2007), 2.1, 31. For an engaging collection of the biographies of these jurists, see Orazio Condorelli and Raphael Domingo, eds., *Law and the Christian Tradition in Italy: The Legacy of the Great Jurists* (London: Routledge, 2020).

⁶⁷ Peter Pesic, “Nature on the Rack,” 190, 195–196.

⁶⁸ Pesic, “Wrestling with Proteus,” 82 n 3; 88 n 16, 89 n 16; *King Lear* 5.3.314–317, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* 1.1.22, 4.1.74; 90–93; on Leibniz, see also Pesic, “Proteus Rebound,” 314–315.

science, technology, capitalism, and the *Baconian hubris* that the human race should have dominion over the entire universe”⁶⁹ (italics added).

As stated above, if ever there was a person devoid of hubris, it was Francis Bacon! Despite ill health for most of his life, he devoted himself to his grand plan, the “Great Instauration,” the betterment of man’s estate, seeking to alleviate human suffering through learning the secrets of nature and, thus, increasing useful knowledge. If he had a major hand in the authorship of the works of Shakespeare, as many, including myself, believe, he did not put his name on them. Instead, in his Will, he entrusted his good name to future generations. Surely that is the opposite of hubris! Was his trust in us misplaced?

In a beautiful passage, Bacon wrote:

Being at some pause, looking back into that I have passed through, this writing seemeth to me, ‘*si nunquam fallit imago*,’ [if the image never deceives] as far as a man can judge of his own work, not much better than the noise or sound which musicians make while they are tuning their instruments, which is nothing pleasant to hear, but yet is a cause why the music is sweeter afterwards; so I have been content to tune the instruments of the muses, that they may play that hath better hands.⁷⁰

This man they would slander?

Shakespeare aside for the moment, it is illogical and unfair to hold Bacon responsible for modern man’s bad stewardship of nature.⁷¹ His plan involved restoring man’s mastery over nature. Pursuant to the Creation story in Genesis, God instructed Adam to “husband” nature when he placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15, KJV). One does not “husband” an asset by destroying it, but by nurturing it. Bacon’s

⁶⁹ Carolyn Merchant, *The Science of Nature*, 268. Spedding 3:472 (“all things are vanity and vexation of spirit”).

⁷⁰ *Advancement of Learning*, bk 2, Spedding 3:476. Quoted in Basil Montagu, preface, *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England, a new edition, with a life of the author*, vol 1 (of 3) (Philadelphia: A Hart, late Carey & Hart, 1852): viii.

⁷¹ Paul Krause, “Conservatism and the Ecological Crisis.” [VoegelinView](https://voegelinview.com/conservatism-and-the-ecological-crisis/), March 22, 2021 (first published, *Front Porch Republic*, April 15, 2019), <https://voegelinview.com/conservatism-and-the-ecological-crisis/>; Merchant, “The Violence of Impediments, 736.

preface to his [The Advancement of Learning](#) explains his prayerful intent.⁷² He himself was a gardener. He nurtured the beauty of nature when he designed the lovely gardens at [Gray's Inn](#) which people today still enjoy,⁷³ as Vickers observes, adding that Bacon did not originate the idea that man should have dominion over nature; it was God's command to Adam in Genesis, and elsewhere, in the Bible.⁷⁴

With regard to Bacon's making an analogy between the laws of nature and the Roman civil law, it is interesting that he also used the term "Inquisitor" to refer to two persons to whom he sent copies of his work "for scrutiny and criticism," Tobie Matthews and Bishop Launcelot Andrews.⁷⁵ In 1609, Andrews wrote, for King James, *Tortura torti*, a refutation to Cardinal Robert Bellarmine's attack on the English Oath of Allegiance, in which stricter penal laws for English Catholics were "at stake" after the Gunpowder Plot. The title punned on Bellarmine's pseudonym, Mattheo Torti, in a prior tract.⁷⁶

In an essay at SirBacon.org, Nieves Matthews, following Pesic, asserted that Leibniz "failed to distinguish, as Bacon emphatically did, between the concept of racking, or torture – terms which Bacon invariably connected with a brutal abuse – and that of 'the trials and vexation of art', indicating the agitation or provocation of nature in the course of an experiment aimed at verifying the evidence of the senses."⁷⁷ One might also consider, when interpreting Bacon's use of the term "art" or "invention" in a given passage, whether he was using those terms broadly or narrowly, and thus, whether his meaning could, in some instances, be taken to refer to the invention of creative art such as poesy; for Bacon was an "artist," a poet.

Bacon's "Violence of Impediments"

⁷² Joseph Devey, ed., *The Advancement of Learning, by Lord Bacon* (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1901), Online Library of Liberty, 6 – 16, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1433>. See also Pesic, "Wrestling with Proteus, 93, n 33.

⁷³ "The Walks," Gray's Inn, <https://www.graysinn.org.uk/history/the-walks>; Vickers, "Francis Bacon, Feminist Historiography," 139.

⁷⁴ Vickers, "Francis Bacon, Feminist Historiography," 136–139.

⁷⁵ N. B. Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 274, n. 2; Spedding 10:256; 11:144.

⁷⁶ "Andrews, Lancelot," Sokol Books, accessed May 21, 2021, <https://sokol.co.uk/stock/andrewes-lancelot/>.

⁷⁷ Nieves Matthews, "[Francis Bacon: Slave-Driver or Servant of Nature?](http://www.sirbacon.org/mathewsessay.htm)" <http://www.sirbacon.org/mathewsessay.htm>; <http://www.cristinacampo.it/public/nieves%20hayat%20de%20madariaga%20matthews.pdf>.

I strongly disagree with Merchant's assertions, in her earlier writings reprinted in her 2017 book, *The Science of Nature*,⁷⁸ and in her article, "The Violence of Impediments,"⁷⁹ that Bacon's writings on the need for experiments to test and try scientific theories condemn the experimental method by closely linking it, metaphorically, with the torture and racking of nature which is female, and, by extension, with the extraction of secrets unwillingly from women's bodies and the torture of women during Inquisitional witchcraft trials.

What would likely have hit much closer to home for Bacon was the violence he saw being done to his fellow scientists which hindered their progress, such as the eight-year imprisonment and trial of fellow philosopher-poet Giordano Bruno (who had lived and lectured in England from 1583–1585), resulting in his being burned at the stake for teaching and writing about Copernicanism and other "heresies." Galileo's sentencing to house arrest in 1633, after imprisonment and trial, with the prohibition of teaching or writing about the Copernican theory or other "unproven" theories, would come just seven years after Bacon's death in 1626. Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland (1564–1632)⁸⁰, spent sixteen years in the Tower, on charges relating to the Gunpowder Plot; however, Hilary Gatti suspects his involvement in heretical science was the real cause for his imprisonment. Walter Warner and Thomas Harriot⁸¹ also operated within this

⁷⁸ Merchant, *Science and Nature*: ch 1, "The Death of Nature," 9–30, 16, 17, 21, 26; ch 2, "Francis Bacon," 31–47, 34–37, 41, 43; 62, 213; Merchant, "The Scientific Revolution." 518–526. See bk 2, *Advancement of Learning*, Spedding 3:294 ("... violence of impediments; as in the case of monsters"), 490 (witchcraft). Cp: John Knox, "If any man be afraid to violate the oth [sic] of obedience, which they have made to such monstres." OUD, s.v. "violate."

⁷⁹ Merchant, "The Violence of Impediments," 739, 749, 751–757, 759

⁸⁰ "The Northumberland Manuscript," a folder which had once contained Shakespeare plays and which connected the names of Bacon and Shakespeare was found at [Northumberland House](#) in 1867. See "The Northumberland Manuscript," SirBacon.org, <http://www.sirbacon.org/links/northumberland.html>.

⁸¹ For a Harriot connection with Shakespeare, see Beatrice Montedoro, "Earliest known manuscript extracts from *Henry IV, Part 1*," Shakespeare Documented, last updated January 25, 2020, <https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resource/document/earliest-known-manuscript-extracts-henry-iv-part-1>.

scientific circle.⁸² Gatti writes that Bruno was valued by these scientists as a *scientist*, not as a magi, mystic, or Hermeticist, as Francis Yates had described him.⁸³

Two other natural philosophers whose work Bacon knew were Bernardino Telesio, whose books, including a multi-volume *De Rerum Natura* (first two volumes, 1565) were banned after his death,⁸⁴ and his student Tommaso Campanella, who was imprisoned for twenty-seven years, tortured, and only escaped burning by feigning insanity.⁸⁵ Such risks were certainly “impediments” to the progress of science,” although this is not Bacon’s perhaps more usual sense of talking about impediments of the mind.⁸⁶ Hilary Gatti observed, “ ... it is certain that already in Elizabeth’s reign ... [Harriot and Warner] were being attacked for unorthodox views on the creation of the world and the nature of the soul which clearly suggest an early influence of Bruno.”⁸⁷ What could be said outright, and what meanings had to be couched in veiled language?

Bacon kept close to the literal Latin meanings of words derived from Latin. *Cassell’s Latin Dictionary* gives “vehement, violent, furious, impetuous” for “*violens*.” “Furious” might have suggested Bruno’s *De gl’ heroici furori* to fellow scientists who knew and

⁸² Hilary Gatti, chs 4 and 5 on “The Northumberland Circle,” *The Renaissance Drama of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1989), 35, 53 (mentioning Bacon), 35–48 (39–48, *Heroici furori*), 49–73, see esp. 71–73, 72, Harriot on Bruno’s daring concepts which “had destroyed a world picture, brought down a centuries-old cosmos”: “Minimum” next to “that will kill men by percing and running through” and below it “Maximum—that which will press men to death.”

⁸³ Gatti, *The Renaissance Drama of Knowledge*, 49–50.

⁸⁴ “Bernardino Telesio,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, first pub. August 30, 2004, subst. rev. Nov. 18, 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/telesio/>. See Pesic, “Wrestling with Proteus,” 90 n 20. Bacon’s editor, Robert Leslie Ellis, discusses Telesio and Campanella’s influence on Bacon in his preface to *De Principiis et Originibus*,” *Philosophical Works*, Spedding 3:74–77. See also index, 5:654–655 (“Telesius”). Bruno’s influence on Bacon remains to be thoroughly explored. Gatti has studied Bruno in connection to *Hamlet* and Marlowe’s *Faust*. Gatti, *The Renaissance Drama of Knowledge*, 74–113, 114–162.

⁸⁵ “Tommaso Campanella,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, August 5, 2005, subst. rev. April 6, 2021, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/campanella/>. “Scientist of the Day — Tommaso Campanella,” Linda Hall Library (Kansas City, MO), September 5, 2018; Jeff Matthews, “Tommaso Campanella,” Naples: Life, Death, Miracles, May, 2012, <http://www.naplesldm.com/Campanella.php>. See Pesic, “Francis Bacon, Violence, and the Motion of Liberty,” 74–75 (“contemporary reception of violent motion” in physics).

⁸⁶ See *Of the Interpretation of Nature*, *Philosophical Works*, Spedding 3: 224–231; bk 2, *Advancement of Learning*, 3:468. Bacon may have considered Lord Coke an “impediment” when he wrote to King James (February 10, 1619), regarding the examination of Peacock: “Sir Edward Coke is now *on foot*” (italics added). *Lit. & Prof. Works*, Spedding 7:77.

⁸⁷ Gatti, *The Renaissance Drama of Knowledge*, 77–78.

studied Bruno's writings but kept any reference to him quiet. This included Bacon who, though many do not know it, was a satirist. When he wrote about fire being used to experiment on human bodies,⁸⁸ it seems to me that he might have been making a veiled reference to Bruno that his fellow scientists would have understood, for Bruno was not mentioned in writing by his English contemporary scientists.⁸⁹

Especially under the authoritarian King James (r. 1603–1625), the Protestants were no more tolerant of the Copernican or other "heresies" than the Catholics. In England, Marlowe, Raleigh, and those in the Earl of Northumberland's circle such as Thomas Harriot, Walter Warner, Nicholas Hill, Robert Hues would have felt the danger of repression.⁹⁰ In his preface to the *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon cautioned his readers who were making new scientific explorations to be wary. The following passage, concerning restraints on the experimentation of animals, could be interpreted as making a veiled reference to Walter Raleigh's "School of Night" group of writers, thinkers, and scientists and, perhaps, to Giordano Bruno's drama, *Il Candelaio*:

For to prosecute such inquiries concerning perfect animals by cutting out the foetus from the womb would be too inhuman, except when opportunities are afforded by abortions, the chase, and the like. There should therefore be set a sort of night watch over nature, as showing herself better by night than by day. For these may be regarded as night studies by reason of the smallness of our candle and its continual burning.⁹¹

"Shakespeare" may have been making a similar veiled reference to *Il Candelaio* in *The Merchant of Venice* which was written 1596–97, at about the time that Bruno's books began to be censored by the Roman Inquisition,⁹² when Portia says,

⁸⁸ Merchant, "The Violence of Impediments," 757.

⁸⁹ Gatti, *The Renaissance Drama of Knowledge*, 77.

⁹⁰ Gatti, ch 4, "Bruno and Marlowe: *Dr. Faustus*," *The Renaissance Drama of Knowledge*, 74–113, 77–81. For Bruno's transformation of the eagle who relentlessly tormented Prometheus into the positive figure of Icarus, "ready to risk failure and death for a glimpse of new and higher truths than man has so far attained," see Gatti, 81–89, 86. For similar language in Bacon, see the *De Augmentis*, Spedding 6:336 (at the beginning of iii), quoted in Waldman, *Francis Bacon's Hidden Hand*, 36. The eagle also figures in Biblical imagery; see Isaiah 40:31.

⁹¹ Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, in Spedding 4:202; 1:316.

⁹² Douglas O. Linder, "The Life and Trial of Giordano Bruno: A Chronology," University of Missouri–Kansas City School of Law, accessed May 5, 2021, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/bruno/brunochronology.html>.

That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
(*The Merchant of Venice*, V.1.2546–2548).

It was just five years after Bruno's death, in 1605, that Bacon published his *Advancement of Learning*. It would be published again in 1640 as part of an educational reform effort in England.⁹³

Interrelated poesy, philosophy, and law

Lucretius—whom Bacon translated and quoted⁹⁴ and, I think, sought to emulate—wrote *vexamen mundi*, a “shaking, upheaval of the world.”⁹⁵ Lucretius was an ancient Roman poet, the author of the *De rerum natura*, a poem important to the rebirth of learning and the arts when it was rediscovered early in the Renaissance. In that poem, Lucretius, preserving the philosophy of Epicurus, tried to include all the known knowledge of the world. In those days, as in Shakespeare's time, the divisions between the various disciplines, such as poetry and the philosophies of law or science (then called “natural philosophy”) were not the separate disciplines they are today.⁹⁶ For example, although Jacqueline L. Cowan disavows espousing any theory that Bacon authored Shakespeare, crediting instead a “common cultural climate,” she shows how Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*, and Bacon's natural philosophy closely complement one another.⁹⁷ Barry R. Clarke is among those who *have* linked Bacon to authorship of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.⁹⁸

⁹³ [William Eamon](#), *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 325.

⁹⁴ Spedding 4:114, discussed in Waldman, *Francis Bacon's Hidden Hand*, 40.

⁹⁵ *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (New York: Wiley, 1968), s.v. “*vexamen*.”

⁹⁶ Hilary Gatti, preface, *The Renaissance Drama of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1989), xiii.

⁹⁷ Jacqueline L. Cowan, “The Imagination's Arts: Poetry and Natural Philosophy in Bacon and Shakespeare,” *Studies in Philology* 133, no. 1 (Winter 2016), 132–162.

⁹⁸ Clarke, ch 11, “The Tempest,” *Francis Bacon's Contribution to Shakespeare*, 169–191; see also, e.g., Reed, *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare*, 51–61; “The Tempest and the ‘History of the Winds,’” from Edwin Bormann, *The Shakespeare Secret*, transl. from German, Harry Brett (London, 1895), 16–22, SirBacon.org, <http://www.sirbacon.org/btempesthistorywinds.htm>; W. F. C. Wigston, *The Columbus of Literature*, 33–48, SirBacon.org, <http://sirbacon.org/archives/columbusoflitera00wigsuoft.pdf>.

For Bacon, there was a correlation between philosophical and legal truths.⁹⁹ For example, [Daniel R. Coquillette](#), in discussing *Bowle's Case* in his book on Bacon's jurisprudence, *Francis Bacon* (Stanford, 1992), observes that Bacon's eloquent legal argument is "right out of the *Cogitata et Visa*" [for] "The 'wisdom of the law' is found by 'imitation of the course of nature.'" ¹⁰⁰ Bacon advocated for a middle way in both law and philosophy. Thus, Bacon wrote that he was: "... propounding a character of Justice, in a middle term, between the speculative and reverend discourses of philosophers, and the writings of lawyers which are tied and obnoxious to their particular laws."¹⁰¹ Bacon also wrote, in his legal treatise in the *De Augmentis*, "... it is unseemly for judicial proceedings to borrow anything from the stage."¹⁰² The courtroom was a forum for finding the true facts, not for feigning and fictions. And yet, Bacon valued fiction, in its place, for he also wrote, "... a truer picture of human life may be found in a satire than in some histories of this kind."¹⁰³ Kenneth Hovey describes how Bacon was a master at religious satire, a fact which sometimes escapes notice.¹⁰⁴

Bacon, Shakespeare, and Torture

How did Shakespeare depict torture? One revealing passage occurs in *King Lear* when "Servant 1" is speaking to "Lord Cornwall" as he is about to pluck out the Duke of Gloucester's eyes. This act which occurred during interrogation was, as James Simpson points out, a form of torture,¹⁰⁵ although the word *torture* does not appear in the play.

Here are the lines of Servant 1:

"I have serve'd you ever since I was a child,

⁹⁹ For a summary of scholarship on the relationship between Bacon's law and philosophy, see Peter Grajzl and Peter Murrell, app. A, "Toward understanding 17th century English culture: A structural topic model of Francis Bacon's ideas," *Journal of Comparative Economics* 47, no. 1 (March 2019), 111-135,

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0147596718304426?via%3Dihub>.

¹⁰⁰ Coquillette, *Francis Bacon*, 146–149, 146 (Spedding 7:529); *Cogitata et Visa de Interpretatione Naturae, sive de Scientia Operativa* (Spedding 3:591).

¹⁰¹ Coquillette, *Francis Bacon*, p. 256, citing Spedding 7:14).

¹⁰² Francis Bacon, Aphorism 91, *De Augmentis*, bk 8, *Example of a Treatise on Universal Justice or the Fountains of Equity, by Aphorisms*, discussed in Coquillette, *Francis Bacon*, 254 (Spedding 5:107).

¹⁰³ Francis Bacon, *De Augmentis*, Spedding 4:304-305.

¹⁰⁴ Kenneth Alan Hovey, "Bacon's 'Serious Satire' of the Church and the 'Golden Mediocrity' of Induction," *Seventeenth Century News* 61, nos. 1 and 2 (2003), Texas A & M University, OAKTRUST, 1–12, <https://hdl.handle.net/1969.1/95572>.

¹⁰⁵ James Simpson, "No Brainer: The Early Modern Tragedy of Torture," *Religion and Literature* 43 (2011), 1–23, 23.

But better service have I never done you;
Than now to bid you hold."
(*King Lear*, III, 7, 2202–2205).

One could imagine Bacon saying these words to Queen Elizabeth, in private, as her legal counsellor. After all, he was barely more than a child — just fifteen if born in 1561 — when she sent him to France with Sir Amias Paulet, England's ambassador (1576–79). Later, Bacon served as her first "Counsel Extraordinary," a post she created for him. Yes, while fulfilling official duties, he signed orders authorizing the torture of prisoners for the extraction confessions. Bacon was conducting investigations at the Tower for the Queen (1596–97)¹⁰⁶ during the same time frame in which Shakespeare is thought to have been writing *The Merchant of Venice*.

At times, lawyers and others serving the state in official roles, have been constrained by orders to commit acts they found personally distasteful, even abhorrent. Sometimes, as in the case of Sir Thomas More or modern authoritarian governments, the choice is life or death. Sophocles dramatized the problem of following what one knows to be right, even when the law says it is wrong, in his drama, *Antigone*. Perhaps Bacon, under the pseudonym of Shakespeare, was expressing his true, but otherwise-censored, feelings about the unjust treatment of heretics (for Jews were heretics) in *The Merchant of Venice*. Perhaps he hoped that Portia's and Shylock's arguments would resonate with future generations which might make more enlightened choices.

"So may the outward shows be least themselves:
The world is still deceived with ornament."
(*The Merchant of Venice* III.2.1440–1441).

In *The Merchant of Venice*, the name, "Bassiano" suggests, *inter alia*, *basanos*, the Latin word for the touchstone which was part of the interrogation by torture of ancient Roman slaves.¹⁰⁷ In 1837, David Jardine concluded, after investigation, that Bacon's actual involvement with the state's torture agenda was far less than had been assumed.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Coquillette, *Francis Bacon*, app. 2, "Chronology," p. 325; see also Waldman, *Francis Bacon's Hidden Hand*, 81, 136–137.

¹⁰⁷ Pesic, "Nature on the Rack," 190. For further suggestions regarding the name "Bassiano," see Waldman, *Francis Bacon's Hidden Hand*, 159–162.

¹⁰⁸ David Jardine, *A Reading on the Use of Torture in the Criminal Law of England* (London, 1837), 42, 50–52, 66, 99, 100. See also Clifford Hall, "Bacon and the Legality of Torture," *Baconiana* 71, no. 188 (December 1989), 24–47; specifically on Bacon, 29, 33–35,

In interpreting Bacon's meanings, it is important to realize that he was fluent in Latin. He coined new words for the English language from Latin, at the same time in which "Shakespeare" was coining new words. Moreover, when Bacon used words derived from Latin, he tended to keep close to their original Latin meanings.¹⁰⁹ In Latin, *extorquere* meant "to twist out, wrest away, wrench out, dislocate."¹¹⁰

Shakespeare coined the word "tortive" from *torquere*: "Tortive and errant is his course of growth" (*Troilus and Cressida* I.3.459).¹¹¹ The Latin *torquere* from which the word "torture" derived has to do with twisting. It is quite different in meaning from *vexatio* from which our word "vexation" derives. Perhaps significantly, the first meaning of *natura* is "birth, origin" followed by "nature, natural qualities."¹¹² As Spedding and others have observed, Bacon sometimes wrote in Latin to conceal his meanings, and he used Latin derivatives in meanings close to the original Latin.¹¹³ Bacon was witty; he punned and played with language. There was one "secret of nature," a secret pertaining to his birth, about which he would not have been free to speak openly.¹¹⁴

http://sirbacon.org/archives/baconiana/1989_Baconiana_No.188.pdf. For additional references, see Pesic, "Wrestling with Proteus," 91, nn 25, 27, 28; 92 n 28.

¹⁰⁹ Reed, pt. 1, "The Latin Language" in ch 5, "The Classical Element in the Plays," *Francis Bacon: Our Shake-speare*, 144–168.

¹¹⁰ D. P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (NY: Wiley, 1968), p. 236. Also, Bacon would have known the legal word *tort*, meaning a civil wrong ("twisted or crooked"), as opposed to a crime.

¹¹¹ Reed, *Francis Bacon: Our Shake-speare*, 167.

¹¹² *Cassell's Latin Dictionary*, 1968, s.v. "*extorquere*" and "*natura*." For Bacon's usage derived from *torquere*, see Pesic, "Wrestling with Proteus," 90. See entry, "1569," "Chronology Related to Francis Bacon's Life," prepared by Alfred Dodd and Doris Davis, accessed May 2, 2021, <http://www.sirbacon.org/links/chronos.html>. Giordano Bruno named a pedantic character "**Torquato**" in his fourth dialogue in the *Cena delle Ceneri* (*The Ash Wednesday Supper*) (London, 1584) which he wrote after his harsh reception to his Oxford lectures—in which he satirized the Aristotelianism of the Oxford dons. Hilary Gatti, *The Renaissance Drama of Knowledge*, (London: Routledge, 1989), 99, 101–102.

¹¹³ Spedding 11:278, cited in Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 74; see also Edwin Reed, *Coincidences: Bacon and Shakespeare* (Boston: Coburn Publishing and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1906), 70–71,

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Coincidences_Bacon_and_Shakespeare/Tjkub5_gEL4C?q=&gbpv=1#f=false (see <http://www.sirbacon.org/biblio.html>).

¹¹⁴ See, e.g., Peter Dawkins, "Royal Birth," Francis Bacon Research Trust,

<https://www.fbrt.org.uk/bacon/royal-birth/>. Also, search "royal birth" at SirBacon.org.

Violins and musical metaphors

In Bacon's discussion of how sound is produced in his *Sylva sylvarum* (published posthumously in 1626, then 1627¹¹⁵), he wrote, "**The bow tortureth the string** continually, and thereby keeps it in a state of continual trepidation."¹¹⁶ Bacon is speaking about **vibration** which is **one of the meanings of the word "shake"**¹¹⁷ (as in the pseudonym **Shakespeare?**). Also, the word "**vexation**," in: "The secrets of nature reveal themselves more readily under the vexations of art than when they go their own way,¹¹⁸" derives from the Latin roots *vexatio* and *vexamen*, the main meanings of which include: "**a shaking**"¹¹⁹ (Bold added).

In "The Violence of Impediments¹²⁰: Francis Bacon and the Origins of Experimentation," Merchant wrote: "The new technologies, he [Bacon] wrote elsewhere, "do not like the

¹¹⁵ "Collection Highlight: Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum* ...", University of Rochester, <https://rbscp.lib.rochester.edu/3613>. See also Basil Montagu, ed., "Editor's preface, *Sylva Sylvarum, or, a Natural History, in Ten Centuries*, Lord Bacon's Works," *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England, vol 2* (of 3) (Philadelphia: M. Murphy, 1876), iii–viii, <http://www.sirbacon.org/sylvasylvarumpreface.htm>; Dana Jalobeanu, "Francis Bacon: *Sylva Sylvarum, or a natural history in ten centuries*," April 27, 2012, <http://blogs.ub-filosofie.ro/pce/?p=131>; "Translation Project I: Francis Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum*," From natural history to science (website), accessed April 27, 2021, http://blogs.ub-filosofie.ro/pce/?page_id=1034; James Gray, "Sylva Sylvarum, Francis Bacon," accessed April 27, 2021, JamesGray2 (bookseller's website), <https://jamesgray2.me/2013/05/13/sylva-sylvarum-francis-bacon/>; Doina-Cristina Rusu, "From Natural History to Natural Magic: Francis Bacon's *Sylva sylvarum*," (dissertation, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, December 16, 2013), Academia.edu, https://www.academia.edu/5957904/From_Natural_History_to_Natural_Magic_Francis_Bacon_s_Sylva_sylvarum.

¹¹⁶ Spedding 2:398; see also OUD, s.v. "torture," (first used as a noun, 1540; first used as a verb, 1588; "to put to the torture," 1593); see also Pesic, "Wrestling with Proteus, 90 fn 23.

¹¹⁷ OUD, s.v. "shake."

¹¹⁸ Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* (1620), bk 1, Aphorism 98, Spedding 4:98.

¹¹⁹ *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (1968), s.v. *vexamen* ("a shaking, upheaval: *mundi* [the world], *Lucr.*"), *vexatio* ("a shaking, jolting, shock; transf., ill-treatment: *sociorum*, *Cic.*; *Liv.*").

¹²⁰ Francis Bacon, *De Augmentis*, bk 2, ch 2, Spedding 4:294 ("violence of impediments, as in the case of monsters," in discussing how nature is in one of three states: free, in error, or in bondage, analogized to the mythological characters, Pan, Proteus (Neptune's seal-herder), and Prometheus). For a discussion of Pan, Prospero, and how *The Tempest* demonstrates Bacon's natural philosophy, see Edwin Bormann, "The Tempest," *The Shakespeare Secret*, trans. (from German) Harry Brett (London, 1895), 8, 9–22, SirBacon.org,

old, merely exert a gentle guidance over nature's course, they have the power to conquer and subdue her, to **shake her to her foundations**"¹²¹ (bold added). Perhaps he felt that something akin to a metaphysical "earth-quake" would be required to bring his plan for the "Great Instauration" to fruition. To Merchant, such language encouraged a subjugation of female "nature." However, as others also have pointed out, the word *natura* is of the feminine gender in Latin. It has to do with origin and birth; and, in nature, it is the females who give birth (a notable exception being, of course, seahorses).

Interestingly, the **first recorded use of the word *torture* as a verb was by Shakespeare**, in *2 Henry VI* and, perhaps earlier, in *Love's Labour's Lost*.¹²² The entity known as Shakespeare used the word *torture* forty-five times in all, in nineteen plays and three poems, in either its legal or metaphorical sense. In addition, he used *torment* forty-nine times, *wring* twenty-four times, *wrung* six, a form of *wrest* thirty-seven, a form of *wrench* ten, and *wrack* seven (*Rack* often occurs as part of another word).¹²³ Readers might wish to explore these uses further at www.opensourceShakespeare.org.

In *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare*, Reed points out that, in the 1594, 1600, and 1619 published quartos of the *Second Part of King Henry VI*, Gloucester admits that he "tortur'd above the rate of [or, contrary to] common law." In the 1623 folio, the words "above the rate of common law" were changed to "above the felon, or what trespass

<http://sirbacon.org/archives/Bormanns-Edwin-The-ShakespeareSecret-0b.pdf>. Classical allusions would escape religious censorship were others might be suspect.

¹²¹ Merchant, "The Violence of Impediments," 749, using Benjamin Farrington's translation of the *Cogitata et Visa* (ca. 1607), Benjamin Farrington, *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon: An Essay on its Development from 1603 to 1609 with New Translations of Fundamental Texts* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1964), 93.

¹²² Jeffrey McQuain and Stanley Malless, *Coined by Shakespeare: Words & Meanings First Penned by the Bard* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam Webster, 1998), p. 222; for more examples, see Reed, *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare*, 144-168; Waldman, *Francis Bacon's Hidden Hand*, 81-82.

¹²³ *All's Well That Ends Well*: II.1.633, 781; IV.3.2209; *Antony and Cleopatra*: III.13.2433; IV.14.3034; *Cymbeline*: IV.4.2899; V.5.3527, 3540, 3541, 3624; *2 Henry IV*, II.4.1418; *1 Henry VI*: V.4.2729; *2 Henry VI*: III.1.1402, 1412, 1664; III.2.1938, 2097; III.3.2125; *3 Henry VI*: II.6.1325; *King John*: IV.1.1612; IV.3.2167; *Love's Labour's Lost*: V.2.1942; *Macbeth*: III.2.1193; *Merchant of Venice*: III.1.1348, 1352; III.2.1402; *Merry Wives of Windsor*: III.2.1348; *Much Ado About Nothing*: IV.1.1835; *Othello*: V.2.3740; *Rape of Lucrece*, 1339; *Richard II*: III. 2.1608; *Richard III*: IV.4.2903; *Romeo and Juliet*: I.1.106; III.2.1766; III.3.1889, 1900; *Sonnet 28*, 384; *Sonnet 133*, 1852; *Twelfth Night*: V.1.2418; *Winters Tale*: II.3.1147; III.2.1412; IV.4.2747, 1864 Globe Edition, www.opensourceshakespeare.org.

else” (III.1.1413). Reed tied this change to Bacon’s real-life experiences as Attorney General for King James to which he may not have wished to draw attention.¹²⁴

In 1619, in the matter of Peacock, Spedding wrote, “It is to be regretted that we do not know more about this case of Peacock; for Bacon appears in it, far more distinctly than in the case of Peacham, as sanctioning the use of torture under certain conditions for judicial purposes; and it would have been instructive to know what the conditions were” (14:78–80). Bacon was then Chancellor. In his February 10, 1619 letter to King James, he makes it clear that he considers the King’s honor and safety to be at stake in the Peacock matter.¹²⁵ As Pesic relates, in Bacon’s essay “On Judicature,” Bacon wrote, “Judges must beware of hard constructions and strained inferences; for there is no worse torture than the torture of the laws” (Spedding 6:507). Bacon also wrote, “In highest cases of treason, torture is used for discovery, and not for evidence (Spedding 10:114). It should be kept in mind that modern rules of evidence did not yet exist in the courtrooms of Bacon’s time. He worked to bring about law reform.¹²⁶ Coquillette gives him credit for the instigation of modern scientific judicial rule-making.¹²⁷

Torture was “illegal” in England, though it still occurred. It had been illegal since the Magna Carta in 1215. That same year, the Lateran Council abolished trial by ordeal, although torture was still being used on the Continent to elicit confessions of guilt. Duress, however, such as pressing a person under heavy weights, was apparently still allowed in England until 1772—not to elicit confessions, but as a form of punishment.¹²⁸ “Hanging, drawing, and quartering” would have been forbidden under the Eighth

¹²⁴ Reed, *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare*, 35–36.

¹²⁵ Bacon to King James, February 10, 1619, beginning “Sir Edward Coke is now on foot, and according to your command, signified by Mr. Secretary Calvert, we proceed in Peacock’s examinations” Spedding 14:77 (internally, vol 7 of “The Letters and the Life”); on torture, see also Spedding’s commentary, 78–80 and editor’s preface to Bacon’s “Arguments on the Jurisdiction of the Council of the Marches,” 7:570 n 3. A forthcoming volume 7 of the *Oxford Francis Bacon*, containing Bacon’s legal and political writings, will be edited by [Chris R. Kyle](#). See “Planned Volumes,” *Oxford Francis Bacon*, British Society for the Humanities and Social Sciences, <http://www.oxfordfrancisbacon.com/planned-volumes/ofb-vii-political-and-legal-writings/>.

¹²⁶ Waldman, *Francis Bacon’s Hidden Hand*, 47–49.

¹²⁷ Daniel R. Coquillette, “Past the Pillars of Hercules: Francis Bacon and the Science of Rule-Making,” *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* 46, no. 2 (2013), 549–592, 552, 567–568; see also Pesic, “Wrestling with Proteus,” 92 n 29.

¹²⁸ J. H. Baker, ch. 29, “Pleas of the Crown: Criminal Procedure,” *An Introduction to English Legal History* (London: Butterworth’s, 2002), 508–509.

Amendment to the United States Constitution (1791) as “cruel and unusual punishment.”¹²⁹

There is an anecdote, well-known in certain circles, which Bacon related in his *Apology Concerning Essex*, regarding his response to Queen Elizabeth when she threatened to rack John Hayward whose name was on the title page of the play, *Raigne of Henrie IV*:

“.... And another time, when the Queen would not be persuaded that it was his writing whose name was to it, but that it had some more mischievous author, and said with great indignation that she would have him racked to produce his author, I replied, “Nay, Madam, he is a doctor, never rack his person, but rack his stile”¹³⁰

Bacon used the “**bow to the fiddle**” metaphor again in the 1263 *De Augmentis*. Joseph Devey translates:

Dramatic poetry which has the theatre for its world, would be of excellent use if it were sound, for the discipline and corruption of the theatre is of very great consequence, And the corruptions of this kind are numerous in our times, but the regulation quite neglected. The action of the theatre, though modern states esteem it but ludicrous, unless it be satirical and biting, was carefully watched by the ancients, that it might improve mankind in virtue; and indeed, many wise men and great philosophers have thought it to the mind **as the bow to the fiddle**: and certain it is, **though a great secret in nature**, that the minds of men in company are more open to affections and impressions than when alone¹³¹ [bold-face added].

Here is how Spedding translated the passage:

¹²⁹ “Cruel and Unusual Punishments,” U. S. Constitution Annotated, Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution-conan/amendment-8/cruel-and-unusual-punishments>.

¹³⁰ Bacon’s “Apology Concerning Essex” (Spedding 10:139–162, Paul Dupuy, hiwaay.net, <http://home.hiwaay.net/~paul/bacon/misc/apology.html>), discussed in H. S., “Hayward’s King Henry IV,” *Baconiana* 4, third series, no. 13 (Jan. 1906), 5-14, http://sirbacon.org/archives/baconiana/1906_%20Baconiana_No%2013.pdf.

¹³¹ Francis Bacon, *De Augmentis*, bk 2, ch 13, pt. 1, “Science,” in *The Advancement of Learning*, by Lord Bacon, ed. Joseph Devey, 56; cp. *Advancement of Learning*, Spedding 3:343, n. 1, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.31175005968832>. See also Pesic, “Violence, and the Motion of Liberty,” 90.

Dramatic Poesy, which has the theatre for its world, would be of excellent use if well directed. For the stage is capable of no small influence both of discipline and of corruption. Now of corruptions in this kind we have enough; but the discipline has in our times been plainly neglected. And though in modern states **play-acting** is esteemed but as a toy, except when it is too satirical and biting; yet among the ancients it was used as a means of educating men's minds to virtue. Nay, it has been regarded by learned men and great philosophers as a **kind of musician's bow by which men's minds may be played upon**. And certainly it is most true, and one of the great **secrets of nature**, that the minds of men are more open to impressions and affections when many are gathered together than when they are alone.¹³²

Brian McClinton in his book, *The Shakespeare Conspiracies* observes: "This notion that drama provides insights into human nature from which we can learn virtue is precisely echoed by Hamlet in his advice to the players, in Act 3, Scene 2: "The purpose of playing, whose end both at the first and now, was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."¹³³

A word search in Shakespeare reveals the use of "elbow," "bowsprit," "bowels," "rainbows," "bows" in warfare, and "bowing" the head or to royalty in (www.opensourceshakespeare.org); however, it seems he only used "bow" once in connection to music: "bowed her hand to teach her fingering ... as on a pillory, looking through the lute, call me rascal fiddler and twangling Jack." (*Taming of the Shrew* II.1.993, 999, 1000). "A. Phoenix" presents evidence demonstrating the connections between the *Taming of the Shrew* and Francis Bacon's life story.¹³⁴ In *The Tempest*, the first word, called out, is "Boatswain," pronounced "bo-sun"¹³⁵ (as in "bovine").

¹³² *De Augmentis*, bk 2, ch 13, Spedding 4:316, HathiTrust, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044014199384>.

¹³³ McClinton, ch 7, "A Dream of Learning," *The Shakespeare Conspiracies*, 161–176, 165.

¹³⁴ A. Phoenix, "An Unrecognized Francis Bacon Manuscript Written in the Hand of the Bacon Family Scribe, Petruccio Ubaldini, The Model for Petruccio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, whose Father in the Play is Antonio, and Where Two of his Household Servants are Named Nicholas and Nathaniel, the Christian Names of Anthony, Nicholas, and Nathaniel Bacon," SirBacon.org, March 22, 2021, <http://www.sirbacon.org/CAMBRIDGE%20MANUSCRIPT.pdf>.

¹³⁵ *The Tempest*, I.1.2, 3, 15, 18 41; II.2.1135; V.1.2129, 2276; see also *Pericles* IV.1.1618.

Notably, there is an ancient Roman etymological connection between the words *violence* and *violin*, through the root *vitula* which meant a calf or heifer. *Vitulina* was the word for “veal,” a calf, taken from its mother at an early age and associated with religious sacrifice in ancient times. In his article on this topic, Robert Jesselson suggests the young calf or heifer may have provided gut-strings for musical instruments. Taking a different etymological path, *vitula* evolved into *fidicula*, a “small lute or other mechanism used to torture slaves,” from which the English word “fiddle” evolved.

That is how the English language came to have two words for the same instrument, *fiddle* and *violin*. In Old French, *vitula* became *vielle* (similar to “veal”), leading to the medieval word *vyell*. Who, in Shakespeare’s England, would have likely known that the small lute was used in Roman times in this way, much like the way Shakespeare employed it in *Taming of the Shrew* (II, 1, 1003), other than a serious student of antiquity – which Bacon, incidentally, was!¹³⁶

The Latin verb *vitulare* also meant “to sing or rejoice.” It was related to [Victoria](#),¹³⁷ the name of the “Roman goddess of exhaltation or victory”¹³⁸ (Latin *vinco*, v.: to win, as in Julius Caesar’s “*Veni, vidi, vici.*”). In Greek mythology, she was “Nike,” the “winged Victory” who carried a lyre.¹³⁹ Victoria was considered an “attribute” or manifestation of the Roman goddess Minerva (Pallas Athena in Greek), goddess of wisdom and the

¹³⁶ See Anna-Maria Hartmann, “The Strange Antiquity of Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis*,” *Renaissance Studies* 29, no. 3 (June 2015; online, April 22, 2015), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/rest.12084>, 375–393. For Shakespeare’s knowledge of antiquity, see, e.g., Reed, ch 5, “The Classical Element in the Plays,” *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare*, 144–214, 147, 149, 150, 152, 156; *Wisdom of the Ancients*, 207–212.

¹³⁷ For an image of the Roman goddess Victoria, see “Statuette of Flying Victory, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/152710>.

¹³⁸ Robert Jesselson, “The Etymology of the Words ‘Violin’ and ‘Violincello’: Implications on Literature in the Early History of the Cello,” copyright 1995 by Internet Cello Society, reprinted with permission of [StringsMagazine.com](http://www.stringsmagazine.com), accessed April 26, 2021, <http://www.cello.org/newsletter/articles/celloetymology.htm>; C.A.W., “Remarks, Biblical and Classical,” *The Classical Journal* 28, no. 55 (September and December 1823), 73–79, 77.

¹³⁹ For images of Nike with her lyre, see Aaron J. Atsma, “Nike,” *Theoi.com*, <https://www.theoi.com/Daimon/Nike.html>.

arts.¹⁴⁰ As a pseudonym, the name “Shakespeare” would suggest a connection with Minerva who sprang from the head of Zeus, spear-in-hand.”¹⁴¹

Also, in flowers, *viola* is the name of the family of violets and pansies — also called “posies” — which derives from *pensees*, a French word (from Greek, then Latin) meaning “thought — which is related to the words *poesy* and *poetry*.¹⁴² Most violets are purple; purple is the color of bruises and is also associated with royalty. The wild violet (“dog’s violet”) is *viola canina sylvestris*. *Sylvestris* “sounds like” *silver*; *silva* is “forest” in Latin (sometimes *saltus*), with *silvestris* meaning wooded *Cassell’s Latin Dictionary* (Wiley, 1968). There are eighteen mentions of *violet* in Shakespeare (Sonnet 12, line 157; Sonnet 99, line 1373; *Venus and Adonis*, lines 145, 958, and eleven Shakespeare plays, as found at www.opensourceshakespeare.org).

Altogether, Shakespeare used the word “fiddle” seven times. Of special note, in *Troilus and Cressida*, Thersites says, “... unless the fiddler Apollo get his *sinews* to make *catlings* on (III.3.2184).¹⁴³ The word *catlings*, musical instrument strings made out of cat-gut, shows up just once more in Shakespeare, in *Romeo and Juliet* when Peter says: “Then music with her *silver sound* — why ‘silver sound.’ Why ‘music with her silver sound’? What say you, Simon *Catling*?” (IV.5.2788) (italics added).

Reed, in *Francis Bacon: Our Shake-speare*, discusses the fact that Shakespeare makes a connection between money and an ox, just as the ancient Greek dramatist Aeschylus had done. “Aeschylus uses the word “ox” as Shake-speare does the word “silver,” as synonymous with money, to denote obligation. The first form of money was cattle, in consequence of which coins came to be stamped in after times with the figure of an ox.” In *Timon of Athens*, we find “He ne’er drinks/But Timon’s silver treads upon his lip.” (III.2.1087). Reed explains, “Shake-speare’s use of the verb tread shows that he also had this circumstance in mind, while his weakening of the metaphor by substituting “silver”

¹⁴⁰ James Grout, “Altar of Victory,” SPQR, *Encyclopedia Romana*, Penelope (University of Chicago), last updated February 24, 2021, https://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/greece/paganism/victoria.html.

¹⁴¹ Peter Dawkins, “Image of Pallas Athena, the Spear-Shaker, Guardian of the Mysteries,” Francis Bacon Research Trust, 1999, SirBacon.org, <http://www.sirbacon.org/sagessemysterie.htm>.

¹⁴² In Shakespeare, *posy* was the word for the motto inscribed inside the ring Portia gave to Bassiano in *The Merchant of Venice* (V.1.2613; V.1.2616). See also *Hamlet* III.2.2042 (*posy* of a ring); IV.5.3054 (“There’s pansies, that’s for thoughts.”). www.opensourceshakespeare.org.

¹⁴³ Bacon uses the word *sinew* in his legal treatise by aphorisms: “... And for all these objects laws are the sinews and instruments” (Francis Bacon, aphorism 5, *Example of a Treatise on Universal Justice, De Augmentis*, discussed in Coquillette, *Francis Bacon*, 244 (Spedding 5:89)).

for “ox” would seem to imply a knowledge that Aeschylus had already pre-appropriated it.”¹⁴⁴

In 1988, a short play fragment, an “analog” related to the Gadshill robbery scene from *The First Part of Henry IV* was found in binder’s waste, in use as end leaves in a 1586 copy of Homer’s *Odyssey* (Geneva). In a 1992 report, forensic handwriting analyst Maureen Ward-Gandy determined it to be “highly likely” that the fragment was written in Francis Bacon’s handwriting.¹⁴⁵ This play fragment consists of fifty-seven lines. Arthur Freeman, a bookseller who examined the fragment, deciphered, in “four short lines of notes, partly torn away in a minute script at the top left-hand corner of the recto, written vertically and apparently under the beginning of the dramatic text ..., with some difficulty and doubt,” these words: “... or fiddle/fiddle E [or “&”?]/Italian Catlins/mysteria verbi ad popul[um?].”¹⁴⁶

And One Day—Vindication?

At the time of this writing, the Folger Lost Plays Database website does not mention Ms. Ward-Gandy’s 1992 report, although it was well-publicized at the time.¹⁴⁷ I emailed Prof. McInnis, one of the individuals responsible for maintaining the database, on May 5, 2020 and September 20, 2020 to let him know of the inclusion of the complete report in my book, *Francis Bacon’s Hidden Hand*. To date, I have not received a response from him. Perhaps he did not receive my emails. It appears the Folger Library still maintains a position that William Shaxpere of Stratford wrote the works of Shakespeare which

¹⁴⁴ Reed, *Francis Bacon: Our Shake-speare*, 168–169.

¹⁴⁵ Waldman, app. 4, “Handwriting on the Wall,” *Francis Bacon’s Hidden Hand*, 237–241, 247–274, 269; blog, Christina G. Waldman, “Shakespeare Play Fragment Found—Said to be in Francis Bacon’s Handwriting,” last revised September 25, 2020, <https://christinagwaldman.com/2020/05/14/fragment-of-i-henry-iv-found-in-binders-waste/>.

¹⁴⁶ Arthur Freeman, “The Tapster Manuscript: An Analogue of Shakespeare’s *Henry the Fourth Part One*, *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700*, vol 6, ed. Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths (1997), 93–105, 100.

¹⁴⁷ “Play of Thieves and a Gullible Tapster,” Lost Plays Database, Folger.edu, <https://lostplays.folger.edu/Play of Thieves and a Gullible Tapster>; “Shakespeare, Henry IV: Part 1,” The Schoyen Collection, accessed May 3, 2021, <https://www.schoyencollection.com/literature-collection/modern-literature-collection/shakespeare-henry-fourth-4-ms-1627>.

would seem to exclude Bacon from consideration,¹⁴⁸ although one might hope things are changing. A Folger website now states, “We don’t know what Shakespeare’s handwriting looks like.”¹⁴⁹ Speakers in several Folger podcasts have acknowledged collaboration among playwrights on the Shakespeare works,¹⁵⁰

However, Francis Bacon’s name still seems to be excluded from mention in this regard. During Neva Grant’s podcast interview with Emma Smith, author of *The Making of Shakespeare’s First Folio*,¹⁵¹ Smith was discussing the contemporary interest in ciphers in the Shakespeare plays when Henry and Emily Folger were collecting First Folios. Grant asked Smith for her “sense of it.” Smith asked for clarification as to whether Grant was asking for her opinion on whether Francis Bacon wrote the works of Shakespeare. Grant responded “no, no, your sense of ...,” redirecting the question.¹⁵² What harm could there have been in letting listeners hear Smith’s answer to that question?

The [Oxford Francis Bacon Project](#), formerly directed by [Graham Rees](#),¹⁵³ then Brian Vickers¹⁵⁴, and now by [Richard Sergeantson](#) and [Alan Stewart](#), is in the process of publishing all the known works of Francis Bacon in a new sixteen-volume edition. One hopes that the evidence of Bacon’s contribution to the authorship of Shakespeare will be

¹⁴⁸ “Shakespeare’s Life,” Folger.edu, accessed April 25, 2021, <https://www.folger.edu/shakespeares-life>.

¹⁴⁹ Paul Werstine and Folger Shakespeare Library Staff, “Shakespeare’s Handwriting: Hand D in the Booke of Sir Thomas More,” last updated July 13, 2020, <https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resource/document/shakespeares-handwriting-hand-d-booke-sir-thomas-more>.

¹⁵⁰ David McInnis, “Shakespeare and Lost Plays,” Shakespeare Unlimited: Episode 164, March 21, 2021, Folger.edu, <https://www.folger.edu/shakespeare-unlimited/lost-plays-mcinnis>; Emma Smith, interview by Neva Grant, “This Precious Book, Creating Shakespeare’s First Folio,” *Shakespeare Unlimited Podcast*, episode 47, Folger Shakespeare Library, <https://www.folger.edu/shakespeare-unlimited/creating-first-folio>.

¹⁵¹ Emma Smith, *The Making of Shakespeare’s First Folio* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016, distributed for the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford), <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/M/bo22278281.html>.

¹⁵² Emma Smith, interview by Neva Grant, episode 47.

¹⁵³ In Memoriam, “Professor Graham Rees OBE (1944–2009); at QM 1998–2009,” School of English and Drama, Queen Mary University of London (with list of publications), <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/sed/english/research/culture/memoriam/reesg/>.

¹⁵⁴ “Professor Sir Brian Vickers,” School of Advanced Study, University of London, <https://research.sas.ac.uk/search/fellow/162/professor-sir-brian-vickers/>; see also <https://brianvickers.uk/>.

fairly and adequately addressed; at minimum, treated as worthy of investigation. Surely the matter deserves more attention than a one-minute podcast.¹⁵⁵

Regrettably, the editors of the *New Oxford Shakespeare: Authorship Companion*,¹⁵⁶ [Gary Taylor and Gabriel Egan](#), have, it would seem, not provided the results of any serious investigation they have made into the question of Bacon's authorship of Shakespeare, although they acknowledge collaboration among playwrights—just not Bacon. As an authorship theory, collaboration has been around for a long time, at least among “non-Stratfordians.” In her 1857 book, Delia Bacon may have been the first to suggest that Bacon headed a group of writers who wrote the Shakespeare plays.¹⁵⁷ Peter Dawkins explained long ago that Bacon ran a “scrivenery” of “good pens” whom he employed in the writing of the Shakespeare works.¹⁵⁸ In his 2019 book, Barry R. Clarke provides new evidence in support of both Bacon and collaboration.¹⁵⁹

In conclusion

*How haps it governor, yesterday my Lady Princess,
and today but my Lady Elizabeth?*

¹⁵⁵ “Is it plausible that Sir Francis Bacon wrote the work attributed to Shakespeare?” Sir Francis Bacon and Shakespeare Authorship with Alan Stewart, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/podcasts/60-minutes-shakespeare/sir-francis-bacon-and-shakespeares-authorship/>.

¹⁵⁶ Gary Taylor and Gabriel Egan, eds., *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Authorship Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), <https://www.oxfordscholarlyeditions.com/nos/view/10.1093/actrade/9780199591169.001.0001/actrade-9780199591169?product=nos>.

¹⁵⁷ Delia Bacon, *The Philosophy of the Shakespeare Plays Unfolded* (London, 1857), Another early proponent of Bacon-Shakespeare authorship was William Henry Smith, *Was Lord Bacon the Author of Shakespeare's Plays? A Letter to Lord Ellesmere*, (London, 1856) and *Bacon and Shakespeare: An Enquiry Touching Players, Playhouses, and Play-writers in the Days of Elizabeth* (London, 1857).

¹⁵⁸ Peter Dawkins, Founder-Principal, Francis Bacon Research Trust, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/>.

¹⁵⁹ Barry R. Clarke, *Francis Bacon's Contribution to Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 2019); see also: (1) “Book Review, ‘Barry R. Clarke, *Francis Bacon's Contribution to Shakespeare: A New Attribution Method*,’ ” by MacDonald P. Jackson, *Style* 53, no. 3 (2019), 364–70, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/743795>; and (2) Barry R. Clarke, “Response to Book Review, ‘Barry R. Clarke. *Francis Bacon's Contribution to Shakespeare: A New Attribution Method*,’ by MacDonald P. Jackson, *Style* 53, no. 3 (2019), 364–70,” *Style* 54, no. 3 (2020): 365-369, muse.jhu.edu/article/771234, reprinted in Barry R. Clarke, pt. 6 of 8, “Response to a review,” *Baconiana* 1 (new online series), no. 8 (September, 2020), <https://francisbaconsociety.co.uk/the-society/baconiana/baconiana-vol1-no8/#anchor-six>.

So a young Elizabeth Tudor asked, upon her sister Mary's ascension to the English throne.¹⁶⁰ And so might we ask:

How haps it ...

... that one of the greatest literary geniuses the world has ever known is categorically excluded from consideration for Shakespeare authorship, while authors of lesser ability are readily ushered into the Canon as collaborators? ... that the totality of evidence—the broad hints made by Bacon himself¹⁶¹ and others during his lifetime¹⁶² and after,¹⁶³ including the thirty-two elegies by his Oxford and Cambridge colleagues praising him as a poet (despite the fact that his known output as a poet under his own name was

¹⁶⁰ Historical Manuscripts Commission, Rutland, cited in Elizabeth Jenkins, *Elizabeth the Great* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1959; first published 1958), p. 14.

¹⁶¹ E.g., for acrostics, see William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies Writ in the Margents of Books* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925); Bacon to Sir John Davies postscript: "be good to concealed poets," discussed in Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 14–16, Spedding 10:65 n 1; Edwin Reed, ch 5, "Coincidences," *Bacon vs Shakespeare: Brief for Plaintiff*, 7th ed., rev. and enlarged (Boston, 1897; first pub. Chicago, 1891), 296 pp, 222 ("Write I still all one, ever the same, And keep invention in a noted weed/That ever word doth almost tell my name, Showing their birth and whence they did proceed?" —Sonnet 76), SirBacon.org, <http://www.sirbacon.org/reedchapter5.htm>; "'The Bacon Nonsense,' positive review of Edwin Reed, *Bacon vs Shakespeare*" (Boston, 189-? Reprinted from the *Birmingham* (Eng.) *Daily Gazette*), HathiTrust, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044022413546>; but see W. J. Rolfe, negative review of previous edition of Reed, *Bacon vs Shakespeare: "In the Tribunal of Literary Criticism, Bacon vs Shakespeare, Part II, A Brief for the Defendant,"* *The Arena* 7, pt. 1 (1892), 279–289, 285; see also 173–184), Google Books, https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Arena/GLuR3Eufzf4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Bacon+have+almost+said+my+name&pg=PA285&printsec=frontcover.

¹⁶² See, e.g., Walter Begley, preface, *The Exit of Shaxpere*, vol 2 of *Bacon's Nova Resuscitatio: or, The Unveiling of his Concealed Works and Travels* (3 vols) (London: Gay & Bird, 1905), 3; 22–39, 67–177, SirBacon.org, <http://sirbacon.org/archives/baconsnovresusci02begley%20VOL2t.pdf>; Basil Brown [pseud.], "Supposed caricature of the Droeshout portrait of Shakespeare ..." (printed for private circulation), illustrated, HathiTrust, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001018476>.

¹⁶³ See Edwin Durning-Lawrence's discussion of a "rare and curious" 1645 pamphlet, "The Great Assises holden in Parnassus by Apollo and his Assessours," with Francis Bacon as "Lord Verulan [sic] Chancellor of Parnassus," in Edwin Durning-Lawrence, "Bacon and the English Language," *Baconiana* 35, no 138 (1951), 22–24, 24, SirBacon.org, http://sirbacon.org/archives/baconiana/1951_Baconiana_No%20138.pdf.

slim,¹⁶⁴ the *Promus*¹⁶⁵; the “Northumberland Manuscript”¹⁶⁶; the aforementioned “Tapster Manuscript” — and all the other good, scholarly evidence that has been accumulating over the past four centuries in support of Bacon’s authorship of Shakespeare — has not been enough to put scholars “on notice,” **at very least**, that there is a **case that requires deeper investigation**¹⁶⁷ and that Bacon’s involvement is not — as Gary Taylor told a reporter in 2016 — “**just a wonderful story**”¹⁶⁸?

In Bacon’s world, a world in which so many secrets had to be kept, it would be hubris to think we could ever know exactly what men meant when they wrote in veiled language. However, the spirit of open inquiry in which there are no corners too dark to poke into — and that is not a sexual metaphor — does seem to be worth striving for, if we wish to find truth. American Supreme Court Justice Learned Hand famously said, “The spirit of liberty is that which is not too sure it is right.”¹⁶⁹ Erich Fromm reminds us that

¹⁶⁴ “*Manes Verulamiani* (Shades of Verulam), 32 Elegies written on the Death of Francis Bacon by his Colleagues of Cambridge and Oxford. 1626. Published in Latin by Bacon’s Chaplain William Rawley. 1626. Transcribed into English verse 1927 by Willard Parker ...” repr. *American Baconiana* 5 (November 1927), SirBacon.org, <http://sirbacon.org/Parker/ManesVerulamiani.html>. First published as *Memoriae Honoratissimi Honori Francisci, Baronis de Verulamio, Vice-Comitis Sancti Albani Sacrum* (London, 1626). See Peter Dawkins, “Tributes to Sir Francis Bacon,” Francis Bacon Research Trust, [https://www.fbrt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Tributes to Sir Francis Bacon.pdf](https://www.fbrt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Tributes%20to%20Sir%20Francis%20Bacon.pdf).

¹⁶⁵ For Mrs. Henry Pott, *Bacon’s Promus: Illustrated by Passages from Shakespeare* (Bacon’s private literary common-place book), see SirBacon.org, <http://www.sirbacon.org/links/notebook.html>; Theobald, *Shakespeare Studies in Baconian Light*, 199–222; Edwin Reed, ch 3, *Bacon vs. Shakespeare*, SirBacon.org, <http://www.sirbacon.org/reedchapter3.htm>.

¹⁶⁶ *Northumberland Manuscripts, Collotype Facsimile and Typed Transcript of an Elizabethan Manuscript Preserved at Alnwick Castle, Northumberland*, made by Frank J. Burgoyne (London: Longmans, 1904), SirBacon.org, <http://sirbacon.org/ResearchMaterial/nm-contents.htm>; discussed at Howard Bridgewater, Barrister-at-Law, *Evidence Connecting Sir Francis Bacon with Shakespeare* (London, The Bacon Society, n.d.), SirBacon.org, <http://sirbacon.org/ResearchMaterial/evidence.htm>.

¹⁶⁷ See Robert M. Theobald, *Shakespeare Studies in Baconian Light*, 8–9, SirBacon.org, <http://www.sirbacon.org/downloads/shakespearestudi00theo.pdf>.

¹⁶⁸ Danica Kirka, “Oxford says Shakespeare will share credit for Henry VI,” AP [The Associated Press], October 24, 2016, <https://apnews.com/article/9f361922133840029f03be40e4a60645>. See Begley, ch 1, “The Inability to Say Bacon,” *Bacon’s Nova Resuscitatio*, vol 2, 8–22.

¹⁶⁹ Judge Learned Hand, “The Spirit of Liberty Speech,” <http://www.learnedhand.org/?p=4>.

objectivity requires humility.¹⁷⁰ The wise and hopeful¹⁷¹ voice of Bacon encourages us, through time, to “Make the time to come the disciple of the time past and not the servant.”¹⁷² May we heed that voice.

Appendix: Edwin Reed’s translation of a portion of Bacon’s *Cogitata et Visa* (ca. 1607)

Many may not realize that, in *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare* which Cambridge University published in 1902, Boston lawyer Edwin Reed, author of several books on the Bacon-Shakespeare authorship question,¹⁷³ provided “for the first time” an English translation of a portion of Bacon’s *Cogitata et Visa*. This was one of the manuscripts which Bacon’s executor William Boswell had committed to the care of his learned friend, Isaac Gruter, in the Netherlands, for publication. Gruter included it in *Francisci Baconi Scripta in Naturali et Universali Philosophia* (Amsterdam: Ludovico Elsvir, 1653¹⁷⁴).

However, the first printed version of the *Cogitata et Visa* (*Francisci Baconi De Verulamio, Cogitata et Visa de Interpretatione Naturae, sive de Inventione Rerum et Operum*) was missing several passages that another manuscript, the manuscript from the library of Queens College, Oxford, with corrections in Bacon’s own hand, included. Conversely, the Queens College manuscript was missing a leaf which Gruter’s manuscript contained. Between the two manuscripts, Spedding was able to furnish a complete text of the

¹⁷⁰ “The faculty to think objectively is reason; the emotional attitude behind reason is that of humility ... love being dependent on the relative absence of narcissism, it requires the development of humility, objectivity and reason ... humility and objectivity are indivisible, just as love is.” Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 101.

¹⁷¹ See Robert M. Theobald, ch 7, “Bacon’s Philosophy of Hope,” *Shakespeare Studies in Baconian Light* (San Francisco, John Howell, n.d., first pub. London: S. Low, Marson, 1901), 95–108, SirBacon.org, <http://www.sirbacon.org/downloads/shakespearestudi00theo.pdf>.

¹⁷² Loren Eiseley, “Francis Bacon as Educator,” *Science* 133, no 3460 (April 21, 1961), 1197–1201, 1197, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1707244>.

¹⁷³ Reed also wrote: *Brief for Plaintiff: Bacon vs. Shakespeare*, 5th ed., rev. and enlarged (New York: privately printed, 1892); *Bacon and Shakespeare Parallelisms* (Boston, 1892); *Coincidences: Bacon and Shakespeare* (Boston: Coburn Publishing, 1906); *Noteworthy Opinions, Pro and Con: Bacon vs. Shakespeare* (Boston: Coburn Publishing, 1905).

¹⁷⁴ *Francisci Baconi Scripta in Naturali et Universali Philosophia*, ed. Isaac Gruter (Amsterdam: Ludovico Elsvir, 1653), Internet Archive, https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_tCowjNAYxIYC; Richard Sergeantson, ch. 1, “The Division of a Paper Kingdom: The Tragic Afterlives of Francis Bacon’s Manuscripts,” in *Archival Afterlives: Life, Death, and Knowledge-Making in Early Modern British Scientific and Medical Archives*, ed. Vera Keller et al (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 29–71, 36–42.

Cogitata et Visa. He, however, left the manuscript in Latin, having observed that the main substance of the *Cogitata et Visa* was contained in Bacon's 1620 *Novum Organum*.¹⁷⁵

Reed believed Gruter was trying to keep a secret of Bacon's by purposefully excluding the missing paragraphs from print¹⁷⁶ (In my opinion, Spedding, too, may have tried to keep certain secrets of Bacon's by making some materials a little harder to find). In support of his theory, Reed points to Gruter's frontispiece illustration for the *De Augmentis* (Leyden, 1645). In it, Bacon appears to be holding onto the goatskin, a symbol of Greek tragedy, of (and thus, holding back), a female who is climbing, Reed suggests, towards the Temple of Fame.¹⁷⁷ Reed also uses this illustration for the frontispiece of *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare*.

According to the *Oxford Francis Bacon* website, the *Cogitata et Visa* is scheduled to be included in volume 5: "*Early Philosophical Writings to 1611*." The editors are Rhodri Lewis, Sophie Weeks, and Daniel Andersson. The other translation of the *Cogitata et Visa* of which I am aware is Benjamin Farrington's.¹⁷⁸ **The portion which Reed translated in *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare* corresponds to Farrington's section 19, "Scope of the work; proposed tables of data."**¹⁷⁹ For the interested reader, I have typed in Reed's translation of this material from *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare* (120–143, 127–129; discussed 130–143). The material in italics (129) is the material which was excluded from Gruter's edition. The Latin is provided by Reed in appendices (230–233). Here it is, verbatim:

(p. 127) He [Bacon] thought, also, that what he has in hand is not more theory, but a practical undertaking. It lays the foundations, not of any sect or dogma, but of a great and far-reaching benefit (p. 128) to mankind. Therefore, attention must be given, not only to the perfection of the matter, but also (and this is of equal importance) to the communication of it to others. But he has observed that men minister to their love of fame and pomp sometimes by publishing and sometimes by concealing the knowledge of things which they think they have acquired, particularly those who offer unsound doctrines,

¹⁷⁵ Ed. preface to the *Cogitata et Visa*, Spedding 3:589–590; 591–620, 591; see also 619 fn 5, 620 fn 3.

¹⁷⁶ Reed, ch 4, "The Place of the Shake-Speare Dramas in Bacon's System of Philosophy," 120–143, 120, 122–124, 126–143, *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare*.

¹⁷⁷ Reed, *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare*, 142–143.

¹⁷⁸ Benjamin Farrington, *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*, discussed in S. V. Weeks, "Francis Bacon's Doctrine of Idols," 7, 44, 52.

¹⁷⁹ Farrington, *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*, 101–102.

which they do in a scanty light, that they may more easily satisfy their vanity. He thought, however, that while his subject is one that ought not to be tainted with personal ambition or desire of glory, still (unless he were a mere tyro, not knowing the ways of the world and without foresight) he must remember that inveterate errors, like the ravings of lunatics, are overcome by ingenuity and tact, but aggravated by violence and opposition. We must therefore use prudence, and humor people (as far as we can with simplicity and candor), in order that contradictions may be extinguished before they become inflamed. To this end he is preparing a work on Nature and on the Interpretation of Nature, to abolish errors with the least asperity, and to affect the minds of men without disturbing them. And this he can do the more easily because he will not offer himself as a leader, but will so spread abroad the light of nature that no leader will be needed. But, as time meanwhile glides away, and he has been engaged, in civil affairs more than he wished, it seemed to be a long work, — especially considering the uncertainty of life and his own impatient desire to make something secure. Therefore, it has appeared to him that a simpler method might be adopted, which, though not set forth to the multitude, might yet prevent so important a matter from being prematurely lost. So he thought best, after long considering the subject and weighing it carefully, first of all to prepare *Tabulae Inveniendi*, or regular forms of inquiry; in other words, a mass of particular matters arranged for the understanding, and to serve, as it were, for an example and almost visible representation of the matter. For nothing else can be devised that would place in a clearer light what is true and what is false, or show more plainly that what is presented is more than words, and must be avoided by any one who either has no confidence in his own scheme or may wish to have his scheme taken for more than it is worth.

(p. 129) *“But when these Tabulae Inveniendi have been put forth and seen, he does not doubt that the more timid wits will shrink almost in despair from imitating them with similar productions with other materials or on other subjects; and they will take so much delight in the specimen given that they will miss the precepts in it. Still, many persons will be led to inquire into the real meaning and highest use of these writings, and to find the key to their interpretation, and thus more ardently desire, in some degree at least, to acquire the new aspect of nature which such a key will reveal. But he intends, yielding neither to his own personal aspirations nor to the wishes of others,*

but keeping steadily in view the success of his undertaking, having shared these writings with some, to withhold the rest until the treatise intended for the people shall be published.

“Nevertheless, he anticipates that some persons of higher and more exalted genius, taking a hint from what they observe, will without more aid apprehend and master the others of themselves. For he is almost of the opinion (as someone has said) that this will be enough for the wise, while more will not be enough for the dull. *He will therefore intermit no part of his undertaking.* At the same time he saw that, *so far as these writings are concerned,* to begin his teaching directly with them would be too abrupt. Something suitable ought to be said by way of preface, and this in the foregoing he thinks he has now done.

“Besides, he does not wish to conceal this or to impose any rigid forms of inquiry upon men (after the manner now in vogue in the arts); but he is assured that, when these productions have all been tested after long use and (as he thinks) with some judgment, this form of investigation, thus proved and exhibited by him, will be found the truest and most useful. Still, he would not hinder those who have more leisure than he has or who are free, from the special difficulties which always beset the pioneer or who are of a more powerful and sublime genius from improving on it; for he finds in his own experiences that the art of inventing grows by invention itself.

“Finally, it has seemed to him that, if any good be found in what has been or shall be set forth, it should be dedicated as the **fat of the sacrifice to God**, and to men in God’s likeness who procure the welfare of mankind by benevolence and true affection [bold added].”