Citation:
Lawson, A (2021) Improving the Self : Francis Bacon's Essays and the Cultural Logic of Agrarian Capitalism. College Literature, 48 (1). pp. 112-142. ISSN 0093-3139 DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/lit.2021.0004

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:
https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/6446/

Document Version:
Article (Accepted Version)

Copyright John Hopkins University Press and West Chester University 2021

The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please contact us and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Each thesis in the repository has been cleared where necessary by the author for third party copyright. If you would like a thesis to be removed from the repository or believe there is an issue with copyright, please contact us on openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Improving the Self: Francis Bacon's *Essays* and the Cultural Logic of Agrarian Capitalism

Abstract

This article argues that Bacon's *Essays* follow the evolving logic of agrarian capitalism by positing in each individual a stock of capacities that can be induced to expand. The article shows how the successive editions of the book make an initial investment in moral maxims and aphorisms which are then subjected to a process of incremental development and growth. Economic and ethical discourses of improvement function in Bacon's work as overlapping and mutually reinforcing practices, laying the foundations for the "active human subject" of neoliberalism.

Key words: Francis Bacon, improvement, fortune, virtue, cultivation, growth, wealth.

Francis Bacon was completing his education at Gray's Inn and looking forward to life as a leisured gentleman when, on February 20, 1579, his father died. Descended from "a long line of grasping East Anglian sheep farmers," Sir Nicholas Bacon had gone to Cambridge on a Bible scholarship and afterwards pursued a successful career as a court official (Collinson 1980, 261). As Solicitor of the Court of Augmentations responsible for the disposal of former monastic lands, Sir Nicholas snapped up estates for himself at knock-down prices, including the Suffolk manor of Redgrave where he built his first country residence (Jardine and Stewart 1998, 29-31). As Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, Bacon's father turned the fees, stipends, levies, retainers, and bribes that accompanied the position into yet more land, establishing his oldest son, Nicholas, at Redgrave in Suffolk and purchasing a manor for his second son, Nathaniel, at the village of Stiffkey on the north Norfolk coast (Simpson 1961, 36-90; Smith 2002). After his sudden death, the sum Sir Nicholas had allocated for Bacon went instead towards paying off his debts and meeting the expenses for his lavish funeral (Jardine and Stewart 1998, 67-69). Robbed of a viable patrimony, Bacon found himself obliged to earn a living.

In order to impress the Queen, Sir Nicholas had spent the enormous sum of £1,800 on the construction of a country house at Gorhambury in Hertfordshire and another £600 on an extension with a pillared gallery. Written in gold lettering on dark wood panels behind the

pillars were sixty Latin sententia, the majority of them drawn from Seneca's *Letters to Lucilius*. One of them read *Faber quisque suae fortunae* ("every man is the maker of his own fortune") (Goy-Blanquet 2010, 217). Bacon recorded the aphorism in a notebook begun on December 5, 1594 and pondered. At some time between 1596 and 1604 he told Henry Savile, Warden of Merton College, Oxford and Provost of Eton College, that if the proposition were changed to *Faber quisque ingenii sui* ("each the maker of his own character"), it would be "somewhat more true and much more profitable," because "it would teach men to bend themselves to reform those imperfections in themselves, which now they seek but to cover; and to attain those virtues and good parts, which they now seek but to have only in shew and demonstration" (2008, 115). In 1605, Bacon devoted a section of *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) to the theme of how men "raise and make their fortune," citing Plautus's comedy *Trinummus* as his source (1996- 4:164). The idea that men's fortunes are self-made receives its final articulation in the 1625 essay "Of Fortune:"

> It cannot be denied, but Outward Accidents, conduce much to *Fortune*: Favour, Opportunity, Death of Others, Occasion fitting Virtue. But chiefly, the Mould of a Mans *Fortune*, is in his own hands (1871, 375).

Recent scholarship on the humanist commonplace book has made Bacon's notetaking readily comprehensible as a readerly practice that involves the "harvesting" of texts as the prelude to the moment of textual production, each absorbed quotation acting as the "germ" from which new writing is generated (Moss 1991, 514).[1] The commonplace book organized a reader's gathered material under a series of headings, creating what Rodolphus Agricola referred to as "a certain copia and storehouse" to be kept in a constant state of in readiness (qtd. in Crane 1993, 22). As well as referring to abundance and variety, "copia" had specific connotations with material wealth, an economic register that is especially pronounced in Erasmus's influential treatise *De copia* (1534). Erasmus stipulates that a speaker must learn the art of "compressing the subject," then "enriching," "expanding," and "amplifying" it, avoiding at all cost a "thin and poverty-stricken" style and instead revelling in "verbal luxuriance" (1974- 24:298, 301). In order to develop the capacity to turn one idea into manifold shapes and forms an orator must accumulate a "vast supply" or "wealth" of words and figures of speech from "all sides out of good authors" (301). This generative principle is central to the successive editions of Erasmus's *Adages*, an expanding inventory of quotations and commentary based on a principle of open-ended transformation and growth.[2]

What interests me here is the way in which a textual fragment is appropriated, hoarded, and expanded on by Bacon in a process that mimics the economic practices his father consecrated in the pillared gallery. Mary Thomas Crane has argued that, in a period of “precipitous mobility,” gathering quotations constituted cultural capital, a “uniquely nonthreatening form of primitive accumulation” which allowed humanist scholars to locate themselves in a secure social space between “the landed nobility and the deterritorialized merchant class” (Crane 1993, 94, 100, 15). Embodying a set of middle-class virtues based on “wisdom” rather than “birth or wealth,” humanism functions for Crane as an “intellectual counterpart, or replacement for, contemporary economic processes” (Crane 1993, 97, 16).[3] I want to argue instead that these forms of textual and economic appropriation work as overlapping and mutually reinforcing practices. I show how Bacon’s *Essays* develop a homology between the rhetorical practice of building a stock of useful knowledge from commonplaces and an economic model of investment or improvement in which his own family was deeply involved. I conclude by suggesting that Bacon’s self-improvement strategies lay the early modern foundations for the ideological formation of ‘neoliberalism,’ with its requirement that the individual should be an “active human subject” who sees his or her income as a return on an investment in their own “human capital” (Foucault 2008, 223). The historical significance of the *Essays* is that, in them, human development is closely tied to the process of economic growth.

Manuring one’s own mind

As John Pitcher notes, there was an “urgency” to the display of sententia at Gorhambury, “even a nervousness, grabbing at understanding” (Pitcher 1985, 29). There is more nervous grabbing in a letter from Sir Nicholas to Nathaniel Bacon written on November 22, 1572. Concerned that his tenants were paying an “over easy” rent, Sir Nicholas told Nathaniel that it was “necessary to understand how many acres every man holdeth, and how many of those acres every man soweth and with what grain” (Nathaniel Bacon 1979-2010, 1:45, 46). It was established practice for a manorial lord to familiarize himself with agricultural practices and techniques, and to undertake a survey of his lands and tenements.[4] Sir Nicholas sent Nathaniel a “field book,” instructing him to check the information it contained “by treading over of the field” and specifying the more particular information he required:

> [F]or the better understanding what the profit of 600 sheep which I have going upon in Styfkey be yearly worth, I would have you enquire & certify of some men of understanding how many lambs 600 ewes one year with another is like to bring forth to live. And how many fleeces of ewes will make a stone of wool (1:45, 46).

While Sir Nicholas sought to "improve" his land in the older, legal sense of enhancing its rental value both father and son understood that the key to increasing the profitability of their land was "improvement" in the newer and more general sense, meaning "anything from expanded use of manure to large-scale commercial development" (McRae 1996, 173-174). In response to steadily rising demand for wool and grain Nathaniel Bacon set about raising the productivity of sheep-corn husbandry on his estate.

Sheep farming in Norfolk was monopolized by manorial lords. The animals were fed by day in "foldcourses" on hill pastures and heaths and moved at night to arable fields where their dung fertilized the light, sandy soil and prepared it for the sowing of crops. The lord had an exclusive right to maintain a foldcourse and his flocks were allowed to range freely over his tenants' grounds.[5] With the help of his father, Nathaniel consolidated his estate in the parish of Stiffkey through the purchase of contiguous manors, so that he was running 2,000 sheep in three foldcourses across 600 acres of pasture and arable land (Smith 1989, 12). He employed a permanent staff of wage labourers to tend these flocks while day-labourers undertook the more seasonal work of hedging, ditching, thrashing, weeding, making hay, and harvesting (Smith 1989, 14-30). As well as farming wool, barley, and wheat, he cultivated high-value, labour-intensive crops like saffron and hops (Smith 1989, 13). He built a water mill on the Stiffkey river and constructed a storehouse and haven from which boats could sail to distant markets in Rotterdam, Flushing and Antwerp with his grain and wool.[6] In 1593-1594, once he had finished building Stiffkey Hall, Nathaniel embarked on a programme of drainage and enclosure, laying hedges and cutting new watercourses (Smith 1989, 21). By the early 1590s Nathaniel Bacon's income had doubled to £1200 per annum; the knighthood conferred on him by James I at his coronation suggests that by 1603 his rent roll alone was worth at least £2,000 (Smith 2002, 183; Simpson 1961, 97). By continually re-investing their surpluses improving landlords like Nathaniel Bacon became "agrarian capitalists" committed to a long-term accumulation of wealth.[7]

Bacon responded to the discourse of improvement in his role as an advisor to the Crown. Increasing the value of marginal land was a particular concern of the Tudor state in

its project to aid the colonization of Ireland by establishing private plantations.[8] In *Certain Considerations touching the Plantation in Ireland* (1609), Bacon outlined a major project of improvements in Ulster, including bridges, roads, and fortifications, arguing that investors in the project should be committed to long-term involvement rather speculative gains. The more their profit depended on "the annual and springing commodity," the more "sweetness" they would find in the "manurance and husbanding of the grounds" (1825-36, 5:184). In 1618, Bacon offered James I a chorographic vision of Britain as an island kingdom bounded by "sea-walls" but world-encompassing in its trade, its "fields growing every day by the improvement and recovery of grounds, from the desert to the garden" (1837-38, 2:109-10).[9] But my focus here is on the ways in which improvement figures in Bacon's writings as a metaphor for self-cultivation and as part of a wider economic discourse of wealth generation and material increase. Both of these objectives required gathering linguistic resources and expanding on them.

A gentleman scholar seeking employment at court lived on his ability to salt his speech with an apt commonplace, to make his prose glitter with sententia.[10] Bacon stored his material in the 1594 notebook, "A late promus of formularies and elegancies." The title alludes to a tag from Ausonius that Bacon found in his copy of the *Adages*: "Promus magis qu*a*m Condus" ("More butler than steward") (1996- 1:557). Erasmus explains that the terms refer to the steward or "store-keeper" of a large household who has two separate roles: dispensing, or "bringing things out of store for the use of the household," and storing up, or "putting other things on one side" (1974- 33:228).[11] Bacon chose to preserve an odd jumble of phrases -- Latin tags, proverbial sayings, epistolary valedictions, and bits of colloquial speech:

> Suauissima vita in dies meliorem fierj. . . .
>
> His lips hang in his light . . . .
>
> wishing you all & c. and my self occasion to do you service . . . .
>
> How do you? They have a better question in cheap side what like (1996- 1:536).

Bacon was fond of apothegms – witty remarks or "*pointed speeches*" like the quip about the London district of Cheapside – because they were adaptable to different contexts; you can, he

writes, “take out the kernel of them” and “make them your own” (1857-61, 7:123).[12] But what he seems to have valued most about the “Aphorismes and obseruations” he collected was that, as densely compressed subject-matter, they contained the potential to increase in “bulke and substance” (1996- 4:30).

In *The Advancement of Learning* Bacon identifies two kinds of “Appetites in creatures” corresponding to different forms of the good (1996- 4:139). The passive good of the saver reflects the desire of creatures “to preserve or continue themselves,” while the active good of the spender reflects a creaturely urge “to dilate or Multiply” (1996- 1:139). Since our condition as human beings is “mortal & exposed to fortune” we seek to expand it via those “enterprises, pursuits & purposes of life” which contribute to “a mans own power, glory, amplification, continuance” (1996- 4:139, 140). The notebook’s most recent editor, Alan Stewart, observes that there is a “symbiotic relationship” between spending and saving which can be seen in the economy of writing underpinning the notebook (Stewart 2012, 512). Bacon preserves the oral and literary goods laid into his notebook-storehouse precisely so that he can use them as the material for his intellectual labours, dilating and multiplying it in the form of new works. In this sense, notetaking is a form of investment in future production that guarantees both amplification and continuance, accumulation and growth.

One month after beginning the notebook, on January 4, 1595, Bacon wrote the first of three letters to the nineteen-year-old Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland and an adherent of Robert Devereaux, second earl of Essex (Hammer 2008). Recently appointed to the privy council and well-established as the Queen’s favourite, Essex represented an obvious path to preferment for ambitious young men on the fringes of the court. Bacon had joined the secretariat employed by Essex in order to counter the considerable information-gathering resources of the Queen’s chief advisor, Lord Burghley.[13] Tasked with providing advice to Rutland on his upcoming Continental tour, Bacon drew on the first of the aphorisms he had recorded from Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, “Suauissima vita in dies meliorem fierj” (“The pleasantest life is to become better day by day”) (1996- 1:536). As Andrew Hui points out, an aphorism “proliferates into an innumerable series of iterations,” so that it is always “growing, morphing and metastasizing” (2019, 3, 84). In the letter, the tag is developed into a lesson in self-improvement. Bacon tells Rutland that he must do more than acquire an “ordinary” knowledge of cities, manners, and languages, “for the greatest ornament is the inward beauty of the mind.” (1996- 1:639). It will be the “greatest delight” to feel every day that he is making himself more worthy and valuable. Bacon then turns to a strikingly agricultural

metaphor. Rutland's "end and scope" should be "that which in moral philosophy we call (*Cultura animi*) the tilling and manuring of your own mind." (1996- 1:639).

Bacon offers Manners a modern gloss on a passage from Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* which urges the curing of deficiencies and the cultivation of strengths through a process of self-examination. The discussion involves some extended punning on *cultus*, which means both "cultivated" and "tilled." Cicero warns that, just as "not all cultivated fields are productive," "not all educated minds bear fruit." Just as the ground "cannot be productive without cultivation," so the soul "cannot be productive without teaching." The "cultivation of the soul," he writes, "is philosophy" (*Cultura autem animi philosophia est*). Philosophy, a kind of mental weeding, "pulls out vices by the roots and makes souls fit for the reception of seed" producing "the richest fruit" (Cicero 1927, 159; 2.4.12).[14] As Stewart points out, there is an instructive contrast between Bacon's letter and one written earlier by Burghley to the third earl of Rutland, who had also toured Europe. While Burghley had discoursed on court life, military matters, and genealogies, displaying what Stewart calls a "fascination with nobility," Bacon's concerns are purely ethical (Stewart 2012, 613). "[M]ake your self an excellent man" he urges Rutland (1996- 1:613, 642). The young earl should seek, "by study, by conference, and by observation," to "attain to knowledge," which is "the very excellency of man," endowing him not with "ostentation or ability to discourse," but with "clearness and strength of judgment" (1996- 1:644, 642, 648).

The letter to Rutland circulated in manuscript form among what Hammer calls a "sophisticated target audience" (Hammer 1999, 150). In the so-called "bottleneck years" of the Elizabethan reign the universities and the Inns of Court had produced an over-supply of ambitious men seeking positions within the Tudor "information state" as secretaries, ambassadors, members of Parliament, or counsellors to the monarch (Ester 1966, 125; Popper 2018). Despite the support of Essex, Bacon failed to obtain the office of attorney-general in the spring of 1594. A prolonged suit for the post of solicitor-general in the following year also failed and Bacon was granted instead an unpaid and informal position as the Queen's counsel extraordinary.[15] In a famous 1592 letter to Burghley, Bacon complained of the "meanness" of his estate, contrasting his "vast contemplative ends" with his "moderate civil means" (1861-74, 1:108, 109). In the summer or autumn of 1597 Bacon told the Lord Keeper, Sir Thomas Egerton, that his estate was "weak and indebted, and needed comfort" because his father had "in his wisdom served me as a last comer." Bacon's inheritance was so insubstantial that it resembled "another man's ground reaching upon my house" – it might improve the view, but it would not, he said, "fill my barn" (1861-74, 2:61).[16] But the success

of Bacon's letter to Rutland indicated the existence of a market for a genre of advice literature that deployed classical humanist resources of introspection in the service of both virtue and pragmatic self-advancement. Drawing on his experience as a lawyer, member of parliament, and courtier Bacon set about preparing an up-to-date conduct book, "a series of formulae" designed to achieve "a particular species of self-fashioning" (Levy 1986, 112). Bacon saw an opening for an advice book that developed the humanist trope of teaching as cultivation into an idiom of inward self-improvement, a cultivation of the mind rather than of aristocratic brilliance, playfulness, and display. If land could be improved, then so could the self.

Early in 1597 Bacon published his *Essays*. In a dedicatory epistle to his older brother Anthony, Bacon highlights his lack of means, describing the essays first as "fragments of my conceits," then as fruits in an orchard gathered before they are ripe, and finally as "the late new half-pence, which though the Silver were good, yet the pieces were small" (1871, 4). The book -- "little more than loosely organized groups of sentences, taking up less than twenty-five pages of a slim octavo" -- displays a striking sense of constriction (Kiernan 1985, xix). Readers of the book have complained for a long time about the "disjointed quality" of its prose, the minimal use of transitions and connectives making it terse, epigrammatic, saltatory (Kiernan 1985, xxxi):

> Histories make men wise, Poets witty: the Mathematics subtle, natural Philosophy deep: Moral grave, Logic and Rhetoric able to contend. (1871, 10)

Reacting against the "round and clean composition" of the Ciceronian sentence with its sweetly falling clauses, Bacon asks for "weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument" (1996- 4:22). Let the words, he writes later on in *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (1623), "be sharp and pointed; sentences concised; a style in short that may be called "turned" rather than fused" (qtd. in Croll 1971, 14).[17] Bacon would have learned the habit of concision from the "pithy moral axioms" of Cato the Elder's *Distichs*, a staple of the grammar school curriculum in rhetoric (Mack 2002, 34):

> Continual practice can achieve all things.
> In adversity we recognise who our friends are.
> Familiarity makes hardship easier to bear (qtd. in Mack 2002, 33).

Latin compression and didactic drills work their way into the terse admonitions of Bacon's sentences with their "sensible and plausible elocution" (1996- 4:23).The *Essays* follow a rhetorical pattern based on the unwinding of a tightly compressed sequence of active verbs:

> Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. ("Of Study," 1871, 10)

> The honourablest part of talk, is to guide the occasion, and again to moderate and passe to somewhat else. ("Of Discourse," 1871, 14)

The presentation is aphoristic in that it consists of "compressed statements of serious ethical truths" listed "without artificial ordering or linking material" (Jardine 1974, 177).[18] The individual essays break down into what Bacon later called "distinct and disjoined aphorisms," as though the intense pressure placed on itemizing the capacities, skills, and qualities of the fringe courtier has found its ideal stylistic expression (1857-61, 7[2]:321).

Bacon planned to collect the "seeds" of "several arguments" in the form of "brief and acute sentences," to be placed in a "*Preparatory store*, for the Furniture of speech, and readiness of Invention." (1996- 4:130). In *De Augmentis scientarum* he complied a series of forty-seven *Antitheta rerum* or "Antitheses of Things," commonplaces rendered as "acute and concise sentences" for the writer to have "ready at hand, in which the question is argued and handled on either side" (1857-61, 4:472). "Long ago prepared and collected," these are, he says, "*seeds* only, not *flowers*" (1857-61, 4:492). As William Crane showed, each of the 1597 essays reveals a debt to the *Antitheta rerum* by beginning with an aphorism in the form of an "antithetical generalization" (1964, 144). "Of Expense" begins with the statement that "Riches are for spending, and spending for honour and good actions" (1871, 50). The first clause moves a noun, riches, towards an active verb, spending (1), which pauses at the comma and reproduces itself as spending (2), in the process generating two new nouns, honour and good actions, through a syntactical parallelism ("riches for"/"spending for"). The sentence works by embracing what Sylvia Adamson calls "the paratactic Period," which consists of "syntactically complete and independent clauses" that are "made to exhibit unity and interdependence not only by punctuation but by parallelisms of form or meaning" (1999, 587). The aphorism in turn generates a series of seven recommendations on household economy and practices of economizing -- ways of spending as little as possible in order to preserve one's estate -- which are enumerated one after the other, so that the essay takes the

form of a list. A "late Renaissance paratactic style" displays Bacon's talent for forensic enumeration, piling up the pros and cons of pursuing a particular course of action (Johnson 2010, 1100).

Bacon drew heavily on the Greek and Latin proverbs contained in Erasmus's *Adagia*, an early modern touchstone for the generative power of the compressed statement. There, a proverb is defined as "a saying in popular use, remarkable for some shrewd and novel turn" (1974- 31:4). Proverbs give "pleasure" by their "figurative coloring," and "profit" by "the value of their ideas" (1974- 31:4). The moral precept gains more force and applicability by being wrapped in an "outer covering" of metaphor, meaning that it requires the work of interpretation. The *Promus* notebook also contains multiple entries from John Heywood's *A dialogue of proverbs* (1587) -- "The rolling stone never gathereth moss," "To leap out of the frying pan in to the fire," "No smoke without some fire" (1996- 1:547, 552, 561).[19] A proverb, Erasmus writes, "seems a tiny thing," but it must be estimated not by its size but by its value. Adages are "gems" in which ancient wisdom has been preserved due to their "brevity and conciseness" (31:13, 14). Just as it requires skill "to set a jewel deftly in a ring," care is needed in order to "interweave adages deftly and appropriately" (19). To do so "is to make the language glitter with sparkles from Antiquity, please us with the colors of rhetoric, gleam with jewel-like words of wisdom" (17). Proverbs must be used sparingly, since "[o]vercrowding prevents them from letting their light shine" (19). The first *Essays* compile quotable fragments that are both gleaming jewels and kernels for future cultivation.[20]

Bacon's essays are based on the principle that writing "builds from gathered phrases and pre-existing formal structures" (Mack 2002, 30). He appears to have constructed "Of Ceremonies and Respects" from a single word entered in the *Promus*, "Real" (1996- 1: 546). From other uses in Bacon's early writings it's clear that by "real" he means "sincere, straightforward, honest." *Tribuit* (c.1591-2), a device to be performed for the Queen under the direction of Essex, declares that Julius Caesar had "the most real & effectual eloquence" as opposed to "a sounding & delightful eloquence" (1996- 1:253); *Certain observations upon a libel* (1593) has Burghley following "a round and real course in service," unmoved by "pomp and ostentat*i*on" (1996- 1:351). The next notebook entry is the Scholastic adage that "form confers being," indicating that a plain and direct manner will make a man genuine (1996- 1:546). This line of thought supplies the epigrammatic part of the essay's opening, "He that is only real had need have exceeding great parts of virtue"(1871, 24). Two other notebook entries appear on consecutive pages: "Virtue like a rich gem best plain set," and "a stone without foil" (1996- 1:535). Since a "foil" is "a thin leaf of metal placed under the stone

to improve its colour and lustre" the image sums up the idea of plain, unadorned virtue practiced for its own sake (1996- 1:775). The idea gives Bacon the metaphorical component of a freshly minted proverb: a sincere man must be virtuous in the same way that "the stone had need be rich that is set without foil" (1871, 24). But as the essay's argument develops a troubling ambiguity appears concerning the nature of virtue, namely whether it is practiced in a disinterested manner or for reasons of expediency.

The ambiguity was embedded in the image of the precious stone, which stands for virtue but has at the same time an obvious market value. Manners are considered in the rest of the essay in an economic idiom of gain and loss. Drawing this time on one of Heywood's proverbs, "light gains make heavy Purses," Bacon argues that a man who is courteous even in "small matters" will win "great commendation" (1996- 1:541; "Of Ceremonies and Respects," 1871, 24). By the same token, a man who talks too much about anything "maketh himself cheap" ("Of Ceremonies and Respects," 1871, 28). Bacon's recommendations proceed on the basis of a brisk, quantifying discourse. A patron must distribute favours among his clients unequally so that the "persons preferred" are "more thankful" and the rest "more officious" ("Of Followers and Friends," 1871, 36). An influential person from whom help is sought in gaining an office may favour the "less worthy" out of partiality or affection, as long as he does not disparage or disable the "better deserver" ("Of Suites," 1871, 42). Honour and reputation are "revealing of a mans virtue and worth," but he must "husband" his honour, managing and preserving it so as not to be "undervalued in opinion" ("Of Honour and Reputation," 1871, 68; 66). A man can "purchase more Honour" by performing new or difficult actions rather than by claiming recognition for what has already been done ("Of Honour and Reputation," 1871, 66). Spelling out a rigorously economizing conduct of life, these are moral sentences reduced to a bare formula, which is that prudential action produces tangible rewards.

Susceptible of growth

In *The Two Books of Francis Bacon: Of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning* published a month apart in August and September of 1605, the sense of constriction disappears. Arguments are developed and amplified, with copious illustrative examples, the prose densely packed with proverbs, sententia, and comparisons.[21] The pragmatic reason for this is that the books constitute an extended application for funding from the new King,

James I for the "deep, fruitful, and operative study" of the arts and sciences (1996- 4:58). Bacon's point is that knowledge should grow from an initial stock or fund: it should bear fruit in the mind and result in purposive and beneficial action. Knowledge constitutes "a rich Store-house for the glory of the Creator, and the relief of Mans estate;" its aim is "to preserve and augment whatsoever is solid and fruitful" as opposed to what is "empty and void" (1996- 4:32). Bacon tells James that he will make "a general and faithful perambulation of learning, with an inquiry what parts thereof lye fresh and waste, and not improved & converted by the Industry of man" (61). The metaphors of husbandry and estate management are apt since *The Advancement of Learning* is in its own way a survey of existing knowledge with a view to amending omissions and deficiencies, a careful treading over of the ground.

It has been recognized for some time that the key signposts for Bacon's survey of knowledge are provided by Virgil's *Georgics*, which asserts the value of "hard and incessant labor" against aristocratic ease and celebrates the lowly husbandman and farmer, "obscure private individuals who perform small tasks the cumulative effect of which is to transform society" (Low 1985, 6).[22] *The Advancement of Learning* is georgic in its assertion that the purpose of learning is not to aid leisured contemplation but to "instruct and suborn Action and active life" (135). In an extended sequence, Bacon develops the metaphor of learning as manure from its germ-form in the letter to Rutland. Learning disposes the mind "not to be fixed or settled" in its defects, but to be "susceptible of growth and reformation" (50). The "culture and manurance of Minds in youth" is therefore a theme worthy of elaboration (132). Virgil displayed as much "eloquence, wit, and learning" in the *Georgics* when making "observations of husbandry" as he did in relating "the heroical acts of *Æ*neas" (134). Bacon's "Georgics of the mind" concerning the "husbandry & tillage thereof" are no less worthy than "heroical descriptions of *virtue*, *duty, & felicity*" (135). In a section headed "De Cultura Animi" Bacon goes on to discuss moral philosophy as the "Husbandry" of the mind, a set of techniques that involve the tending and fostering of what nature and fortune have already "imposed" (146, 148). Knowledge of the dispositions of the mind and of the "perturbations & distempers" of the passions is like knowledge of "the diversity of grounds and Moulds" necessary for agriculture (149).

But what is less commented on are Bacon's prescriptions for virtuous conduct. How does an individual, cast adrift in a world of pure contingency, give a consistent and honourable form to his life? For Bacon, it was not enough to stoically withstand the blows of fate, philosophically accepting the turns of fortune's wheel. A deeper understanding of virtue suggested the "quality of personality" that "commanded good fortune" (Pocock 2003, 37). As

Markku Peltonen observes, Bacon makes the architecture of fortune into a kind of discipline, a "part of civil knowledge" (1995, 129). The discipline, aimed at teaching men how to "raise and make their fortune," consists of precisely formulated precepts (1996- 4:164). Make sure that you have good information about those you are dealing with, "their Natures, their desires & ends, their customs and fashions, their helps and advantages, and whereby they chiefly stand" (165). In this way, you will understand "their weaknesses and disadvantages," their reliance on particular friends and factions (165). Men in business must also "take good Information touching their own person," and "understand themselves" (169). This involves an objective and "impartial" process of "accounting," balancing one's "abilities and virtues" against one's "wants and impediments" (169). On the basis of this spiritual bookkeeping men can "frame" a career path or business plan. Is the "constitution of their nature" suited to "the general state of the times"? (169). Does it match particular "professions and courses of life"? (169). Do these fields have too many competitors? Just as important as self-understanding is the "well opening and revealing" of "a mans self" (170). Put the best gloss on your achievements but be careful not to "turn tedious and arrogant" (170). It is not enough to have an accurate grasp of one's own abilities: one has to sell one's self, and at a high valuation. This precept observes the "good principle of the Merchants, who endeavour to raise the price of their own commodities, and to beat down the price of others" (171). But the key skill that emerges in the course of this discussion is one that long preoccupied Bacon the courtier: flexibility.

The question forms the starting point of Bacon's letter to Savile. "Of all living and breathing substances," Bacon writes, man is "the most susceptible of help, improvement, impression, and alteration" (2008, 115).[23] He wonders at how "variously," and to what "high points and degrees," the "body of man" could be "moulded and wrought," as shown by the painful exertions of tumblers, rope-walkers, and acrobats (2008, 116). But how should men "bend themselves" in order to "reform" their "imperfections"? (2008, 115) How does a man become the maker of his own character? Answers had been supplied by Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513) with its insistence that men of ability should grasp the opportunity to "shape" the "material" of circumstance "into the form that seem[s] best to them" (1998, 20).[24] "We are successful," Machiavelli stated, "when our ways are suited to the times and circumstances, and unsuccessful when they are not" (1998, 85). Some men are incapable of "being sufficiently flexible," either because they do not have the right temperament or because they are reluctant to change methods that have worked for them in the past (86). Bacon was all-too aware that the pliability conducive to virtue also produced "imposters and

counterfeits," able to "wreath and cast their bodies in strange forms and motions" (2008, 116). It was a commonplace that "anyone who is dependent on fortune, with its sudden changes, will be like a chameleon, continually altering" (Erasmus, 1974- 31:136). At the Elizabethan court it was "ordinary" to find "profound dissimulations" (people hiding their real selves), as well as "lively simulations" (people pretending to be other selves) (2008, 117). But Bacon's use of the term "simulations" indicates that he and Savile were using a shared political discourse, a kind of code.

The term is derived from the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus, whose *Annals* portray Tiberius as an arch-dissimulator, his initial reluctance in assuming the role of emperor disguising a ruthless grasp of the mechanisms of power. An intellectually fashionable "Tacitism" was in many ways a disguised Machiavellianism focussed on pragmatic techniques rather than moral values, on "what men do and not what they ought to do" (Bacon 2008, 254).[25] Savile had himself published the first English translations of Tacitus, along with his own composition, *The Ende of Nero and the Beginning of Galba* (1591). But Bacon would also have been familiar with the work of the Louvain humanist Justus Lipsius, whose *Politica* (1589) provided an extended commentary on dissimulation. While carefully distancing himself from the idea that "Deceit and malice" should be given free rein Lipsius quoted from a wide range of classical authorities in order to show that there were situations in which it was legitimate and expedient to use "light" fraud (Lipsius 2004, 513). There was such a thing as "*honourable and praiseworthy cunning*" (511).[26] Bacon had offered Essex plenty of pointed, Lipsian advice. If you must flatter the queen, he told the earl, use a familiar manner and speak sincerely, rather than laying it on so thick that you sound like Tiberius trying to hoodwink the senate "in language too ostentatiously ornate for it to be believed" (Tacitus 2008, 32 [1.52]; Bacon 1996- 1:733). The queen is worried about your martial ambitions, so "pretend to be as bookish & contemplative as ever you were" (Bacon 1996- 1:735).

In the *Advancement of Learning* the superior form of cunning is exemplified by the story, told by Cicero, of how the eighteen-year old Octavian bested his older rival Mark Anthony. Before his assassination, Caesar had adopted Octavian as his own son. Anthony countered by erecting a statue of the dictator in the Forum with an inscription reading "To the most deserving parent." In an audacious speech, Octavian made a daring bid for a consulship, swearing by "his hopes of rising to his father's honours" while "stretching his hand out towards the statue," a gesture he performed "handsomely and ingenuously" (Cicero 1999, 28 [4:16.15]; Bacon 1996- 4:174).[27] The lesson is that, in the competitive struggle for honour

and power, one needs to be able to adapt and think on one's feet. Nothing hinders a man's fortune so much as an inflexible insistence on being himself at all times, remaining "viscous and enwrapped," "not easy to turn" (172). One must develop the ability to "frame the mind to be pliant and obedient to occasion" (172). The example to follow is that of the plebeian senator Cato the Elder, described by Livy as the embodiment of ancient Roman virtues, a man of "such force of mind and character" that he would have "made his fortune for himself" regardless of the station he had been born in. "Equally skilled in affairs of the city and of the farm," a skilled legal advocate and military commander, Cato possessed what Livy calls a "*Versatile Ingenium*" that was perfectly "adapted to everything" (Livy 1936, 349 [39.40]). It was this quality of "comprehensive genius" that allowed him to become "an Architect of fortune" (Bacon 1996- 4:172).

The elevated strategies of senators and emperors are taken as models for the kinds of skills and techniques that can be applied to the everyday life of business and negotiation. But these practices add up to more than the "prudential realism" or "extreme worldliness" typically ascribed to Bacon (Giglioni 2012, 162; Zagorin 1998, 24).[28] It's true that Bacon exhibits a "purely instrumental rationality," one that values a "cool, self-contained temperament" (Zagorin 1998, 10, 11). The aim of studies, regimens, and spiritual exercises, he writes, is to preserve the "Good estate" of the mind, to give it the strength and agility required for the management of "Business" and the manifold "duties of life" (Bacon 1996- 4:151, 156). But what is strikingly modern about Bacon's moral philosophy is the way in which it applies the techniques of artifice and calculation to the self. Bacon takes the self -- its thoughts, impulses, and passions -- as a "plastic and unformed substance" that can be objectively analysed and worked on in order to enhance its effectiveness in the world (Sayre 1964, 16). It was for this reason that he was fascinated by Julius Caesar, "a consummate master of simulation and dissimulation," a man "made up entirely of arts, insomuch that nothing was left to his nature except what art had approved" (1857-61, 6:342). The copious historical examples are summoned to prove Bacon's central case that the "sinews of fortune" – "Witte, Courage, Audacity, Resolution, Temper, Industry" -- are contained not in the world of circumstance but in "men's Minds" (Bacon 1996- 4:175). The mould of a man's fortune lies in his own hands.

Dilating and multiplying

Bacon's fortunes began to improve in 1602 when, after the death of Anthony Bacon, he succeeded to Sir Nicholas's Gorhambury estate. In 1605, Bacon married Alice Barnham, daughter of the wealthy London draper and Alderman Benedict Barnham, who brought with her a patrimony of entailed estates in Essex worth £6000.[29] His prospects were improved still further in 1607 when he finally obtained the long sought-after office of solicitor-general, a position worth £1000 a year.[30] In the last week of July, 1607, he began a new notebook in which he resolved "[t]o make a stock of £2000 always in readiness for bargains and occasions" (1861-74, 4:61).[31] He made a list of suitable persons to call on for loans (including "my bro. Nathan"), and considered ways of improving his lands and leases (1861-74, 4:40). Bacon would keep a keen eye on the latest of his wife's properties to be conveyed to him and consider how to let land and houses for "the best profit" (1861-74, 4:56). The notebook was divided into two sections: a diary, in which he recorded daily thoughts and occurrences, and a schedule in which "things of the same nature" were to be placed under headings "for better help of memory and judgment" (1861-74, 4: 61). It occurred to Bacon that the diary resembled a merchant's waste book or daily record of transactions in that he could enter in it "all manner of remembrance of matter, form, business, study, touching myself" (1861-74, 4: 62). The schedule functioned, in turn, like a merchant's ledger, in which a more systematic and analytical treatment could be made of the notes, grouped together thematically so that they acquired an order and "continuance" (1861-74, 4:62). The metaphor of the commonplace book as a storehouse has now acquired an even more explicitly economic register. Bacon is treating himself as a kind of business, an enterprise requiring precise records of its activities in order to expand.[32]

In 1612 and again in 1625 Bacon improved on the *Essays* by subjecting aphoristic seed to a process of exponential growth. The ten essays of 1597 average 325 words each. In *The Essays of Sr Francis Bacon Knight, the Kings Solicitor General* (1612) the same ten essays average 400 words, an increase of 25 per cent. In *The Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral, of Francis Lo. Verulam, Viscount St. Alban* (1625) the essays average 550 words, an increase of 50 per cent. The new essays added in 1612 average 490 words, increasing by 100 per cent to 980 words in 1625 (Vickers 1968, 218). The incremental swelling is revealed most clearly in Edward Arber's *A Harmony of the Essays* (1871), which prints the three published versions of each essay, along with an unpublished manuscript version prepared between 1610 and 1612, so that each of the first ten essays goes through four protean changes on the successive pages of the volume. Bacon's writing is revealed as a kind of investment strategy, the initial stock of subject matter amplified by "heaping examples, by dilating

arguments, by comparing of things together, by similitudes, by contraries, and by diuers others like" (Wilson 1909, 170).

The 1597 version of "Of Expense" describes the work of the promus, balancing spending against saving, "charges" or expenses against income or "gettings," so as to preserve the integrity of the household as an economic unit. "[E]xtraordinary" payments that might result in a man's poverty or "voluntary undoing" should be restricted to charitable donations and the good of his "country" (1871, 50). "[O]rdinary expense" should be "limited" according to the resources of "a mans estate" (50). It is not socially demeaning for even the highest to "descend" and "look into" their own accounts, and one should not be deterred by fears of becoming depressed by what one finds (51). The point is bolstered by the addition of a proverb, "*Wounds cannot be cured without searching*" (51-52). One should employ efficient bailiffs or stewards and replace them at regular intervals to keep them on their toes. If your estate is encumbered with debts, don't try to clear them too quickly by selling land: the losses incurred in a rising market may exceed the interest paid over the same period. If your estate is in trouble, look to make small savings rather than increases of income, since "it is less dishonourable to abridge petty charges then to stoop to petty gettings" (54). The occasional extravagance is permissible, provided that these rules are followed. Specific recommendations generate two additions in 1612. If you examine your accounts infrequently you will need to be even more precise in your calculations in order to "turn all to certainties" (53). The danger of clearing one's debts quickly by selling off assets is that one will lapse into bad habits; economizing establishes a "habit of frugality" that will produce gains for both one's peace of "mind" as well as one's "estate" (55). In 1625, Bacon adds an accounting rule which clarifies household economy into a set of mathematical ratios: in order to preserve one's estate at its current level, "*Ordinary Expenses*" should be kept at half the level of income, but ideally at one third (51). He also points out that spending more on one item means economizing on another (being "Plentiful in Diet" means "Saving in Apparel") (53; 56). The revisions enforce the moral dimensions of economic practices, with syntactical parallelism underlining the links between financial management, mental health, and social standing.

Bacon followed the same process of amplification with the new essays added in 1612. "Of Riches" begins with a tag from Seneca stored in the "Promus" that describes riches as "Divitiæ Impedimenta virtutis; The baggage of virtue" (1996- 1:535). The next sentence, "Of great *Riches* there is no real use," recycles an entry in the "Antitheses of Things:" "Of great riches you may have either the keeping, or the giving away, or the fame; but no use" (1871,

230; 1857-61, 4:475). The idea is expanded via a quotation from Ecclesiastes: "*Where much is, there are many to consume it, and what hath the owner but the sight of it with his eyes*?" (1871, 230). The traditional suspicion of wealth is reinforced with a further reflection: a man may have a "custody" of riches, "or a power of Dole and donative of them; or a fame of them," but they provide "no solid use to the owner," the "cumulative weight" of "a series of short parallel phrases" demonstrating the validity of the position (Bacon 1871, 230-231; Kiernan 1985, xxxix).[33] The essay returns to the "Antitheses" for its clinching rhetorical question: "Do you not see what feigned prices are set upon little stones, and rarities, and what works of ostentation are undertaken, because there might seem to be some use of great riches?" (231). "Seek not proud Riches," Bacon goes on "but such as thou maiest get justly; use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and leave contentedly," the verbal parallels drumming the point home (232). In the 1625 version, Bacon asks the reader to "Hearken also to *Salomon*, and beware of Hasty Gathering of *Riches*," adding a quotation from Proverbs in the Vulgate, *Qui festinate ad Diuitias, non erit infons* ("He who hastens to riches, shall not be innocent"). He salts in a sentence from his store of apothegms – "The Poets feign that when *Plutus*, (which is *Riches*,) is sent from *Jupiter*, he limps, and goes slowly; But when he is sent from *Pluto*, he runs, and is Swift of Foot" (235). Bacon provides an extended gloss on the image to the effect that wealth acquired by "Good Means, and Just Labour" accumulates "slowly" compared to wealth gained through "Fraud, and Oppression, and unjust Means" (235). At this juncture Bacon introduces a vital qualification to the scriptural and classical authorities he has been drawing on with respect to the subject of wealth. We do not, he points out, live in monasteries where riches can be treated with an "abstract" contempt. (232). We ought to recall what Cicero said of Gaius Rabirius: that, "[i]n striving to increase his wealth" he acted as "an instrument for goodness" rather than avarice (234-235). Although the ways to wealth are mostly "Foul" a parsimonious man is "not Innocent," since he offends against the virtues of liberality and charity (235).

The 1625 additions form an extended meditation on what we would now call ethical investing. How, Bacon asks, can wealth be managed so as to produce more wealth, while not offending against religious codes and moral values? He looks to the "*Improvement of the Ground*" as the "most Natural" means of "Obtaining of *Riches*," since it is "our Great Mothers Blessing" (235). Agriculture is "slow" in producing riches, but when "Men of great wealth, doe stoop to husbandry, it multiplieth *Riches* exceedingly" (235). He goes on:

> I knew a Nobleman in England, that had the greatest Audits, of any Man in my time: A great Grazier, A Great Sheep-Master, A Great Timber Man, a Great Collier, A Great Corn-Master, a Great Lead-Man, and so of Iron, and a Number of the like Points of Husbandry. So as the Earth seemed a Sea to him, in respect of the Perpetual Importation. (235)

According to Lawrence Stone, the nobleman referred to is George Talbot, sixth Earl of Shrewsbury, who had consolidated large holdings of land in the north and northwest of England (1965, 375-76). Talbot addressed his cash-flow problems by making land produce more than grain or wool, diversifying his interests among lead-smelting, iron and steelmaking, coal mining and the manufacture of glass. Talbot was also an investor in the first Muscovy Company voyage in 1574 and in subsequent trade and colonizing ventures. As Pitcher observes, the example of Talbot's boldly speculative enterprise lends a metaphoric and metamorphic energy to Bacon's prose, with "the earth transmogrified into the sea," a medium capable of "bringing in" or importing wealth rather than merely "giving out from the roots" (1985, 35-6).

Bacon is fascinated by the self-generating nature of wealth as capital. Although morally "doubtful," high finance, or the "*Gains of Bargains*," is the surest way to riches (1871, 237). A wealthy man can expect to manipulate commodity markets, striking bargains that few are capable of, entering into lucrative business partnerships, and lending money at interest, "the certainest Means of Gain, though one of the worst" (237). Simply "being the First in an *Invention*, or in a *Privilege*" can produce a "wonderful Overgrowth in *Riches*," as in the case of "the first Sugar Man, in the Canaries" (237). Holding a monopoly patent or cornering the market a particular commodity are both "great Means to enrich; especially, if the Party have intelligence, what Things are like to come into Request, and so store Himself before hand" (237). Bacon amplifies the Biblical proverb, "[r]iches have wings," by adding that "sometimes they must bee set flying, to bring in more" (238; 240). He draws on another Biblical proverb in considering the "True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates." In Matthew 13: 31 the kingdom of heaven is compared, "not to any great Kernel or Nut, but to a Grain of Mustard-seed" (471). Although this is "one of the least Grains," it has a "Property and Spirit hastily to get up and spread." In the same way, there are states, like Britain, that "have but a small Dimension of Stem," but are "yet apt to be the Foundations of Great Monarchies" (471). "Of Plantations" opens with a hymn to the cautious estate management that expects full "Recompense" only at the end of a twenty-year lease but shifts into the hope of the

"Speedy Profit" to be obtained from a "Pure Soil" (530). A list follows of "Victual or Esculent Things" – crops beloved of improving landlords at home such as "Parsnips, Carrots, Turnips, Onions, Radish, Artichokes of Jerusalem, Maize, and the like" -- which "grow speedily" (531). The agrarian capitalist lesson is that wealth cannot be simply left to accumulate. It must be "kept in circulation," "made to work for its owner, and society" (Jardine 1974, 237). The *Essays* follow the lesson by "piling up" subject matter and illustrative material -- aphorisms, apothegms, maxims, and proverbs – drawn from Bacon's own copious store (Jardine 1974, 237).

Human capital

According to the cultural logic of agrarian capitalism there was in each individual a germinal substance, an initial stock of capacities and powers that, once set in "expansionary motion," could be induced to grow (Harvey 2013, 111). This logic underlies the "pragmatic humanism" described by Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, which placed a premium on the practical utility of knowledge, the acquiring of transferable competencies and skills that would show a quantifiable return on the investments of time and money made in acquiring it (1986, 161-200).[34] If "efficient knowledge-gathering" was integral to the lives of fringe courtiers "jostling for power," then the *Essays* provide an "information retrieval system" making knowledge on specific topics available for "immediate application" (Jardine and Sherman 1994, 106, 115-116). The act of reading and reflecting on these topics is self-reflexive, involving the reader in "striving to increase and perfect" what he or she values rather than "merely conserving it," each individual performing continuous acts of "self-accounting" in order to determine "which ends [a]re in his power" and which are not (Zagorin 1998, 131, 133). This imperative has become so widespread that it forms "a truly general cultural phenomenon," an "event in thought" (Foucault 2005, 9, 11).

As is now well-known, a group of economists at the University of Chicago in the 1950s examined the distribution of incomes in the population and made what appeared to them to be a new discovery. Workers who spent longer in schooling and training were more productive and enjoyed a higher "life-flow of income" because they had invested in their own "human capital" (Mincer 1958, 301, 299).[35] In the United States, this meant getting a college education, undertaking on-the-job training, moving to a new job, eating a healthy diet, spending money on medical care, and "acquiring information about the economic system"

(Becker 1962, 9). As Foucault points out in his discussion of "neoliberalism," the concept of human capital involves extending an economic model of "investment-costs-profit" into the very texture of the individual's life, so that it becomes "a model of social relations and of existence itself" (Foucault 2008, 242). An investor in human capital does not see himself as a partner in a generalized "process of exchange" (Foucault 2008, 225). He acts alone as "an entrepreneur of himself," his efforts focussed on "being for himself his own capital." (Foucault 2008, 226). He is a "competitive creature," forever attempting to keep one step ahead of the game, his identity that of "a sort of permanent and multiple enterprise" (Read 2009, 28; Foucault 2008, 241).

Investing in his own human capital worked, eventually, for Francis Bacon, the gentleman-scholar as Foucauldian "abilities-machine" (Foucault 2008, 229). His story as I have told it indicates that humanity has always been "in the field of instrumentality," that culture is cognate with capital (Cheah 2006). There is no form of subjectivity without calculation, no interiority not bound up with cold hard cash. Our neoliberal condition, in Michael Feher's summary, "is that of human capital," our purpose "not so much to profit from our accumulated potential as to constantly value or appreciate ourselves -- or at least prevent our own depreciation" (Feher 2009, 27). Monitoring feeds, streams, and updates via digital media technologies, composing tweets, blogs, and posts, submitting ourselves to ever-more refined ranking systems, we seek to preserve our personal brand or reputation, an asset requiring "constant cultivation" (van Doorn 2014, 362). This makes the neoliberal subject "eminently governable," obliged to accept the increasingly callous logic of the self-regulating market as a "regime of truth" (Foucault 2008, 270, 271, 270). We know that the imperative to invest in ourselves is not supported by opportunities to gain a return on our investment, and so we find ourselves "rendered anxious, panicked and deeply depressed by the accelerated, over-stimulated, over-connected nature of life and work under twenty-first century capitalism," oscillating wildly between "aspiration and anxiety" (Hall 2013, 89; van Doorn 2014, 359). But human capital is not the invention of twentieth-century political economists in Germany and the United States. The seeds of the modern entrepreneur and the networked professional can be found in the rhetorical, ethical, and economic practices that enabled Francis Bacon to follow the evolving logic of agrarian capitalism and make his own fortune.

Notes

1. See also Hackel (2005), 145, 143; for detailed examinations of commonplace books and their makers see Grafton and Jardine (1986), 122-160; Beal (1993); Mack (1993), 259-279; Vine (2019), 30-62.

2. For discussions of Renaissance copia see Greene (1982); Cave (1979), 18-24; Shinn and Vine (2014).

3. On the "analogy" between commonplacing and primitive accumulation see also Halpern (1991), 91.

4. For discussions of the literature of agrarian improvement see Thirsk (1992); McRae (1996), 135-151, 198-212; Montaño (2011), 52-58; Warde (2011). On Sir Nicholas Bacon's management of his East Anglia estates see Simpson (1961), 64-84.

5. See Allison (1957); Postgate (1973); Griffiths (2015), 226. On the exploitation by landlords of their seigneurial rights see Campbell and Overton (1993), 77-78.

6. For the construction of the haven and granary see Nathaniel Bacon (1979-2010), 1:163, 46, 69, 76; for Stiffkey's coastal and international trading connections see 1:75, 76, 156, 262, 263.

7. For historical and theoretical discussions of agrarian capitalism see Brenner (1977), 43-44; 75-77; Brenner (1976), 61-64; Wood (2002), 95-121. On agrarian capitalism in Norfolk see Whittle (2000), 17-26.

8. See Canny (2001), 42-58. On agrarian improvement as a priority of Tudor policymakers see Montaño (2011), 58-63. For a discussion of Bacon's involvement in Irish policy see Morgan (2019).

9. On late sixteenth- and early-seventeenth chorography see Helgerson (1992), 107-147; McRae (1996), 231-261.

10. See Grafton and Jardine (1986), 132-133; Skinner (1996), 111-120.

11. For more on the derivation and meaning of "promus" see Stewart (2012), 511-512; Vine (2019), 214-215.

12. On Bacon's use of apothegms see Jardine (1974), 207-210.

13. On the Essex secretariat see Hammer (1994); Hammer (1999), 299-315. For a wide-ranging discussion of "pragmatic" reading strategies see Jardine and Sherman (1994).

14. For the Ciceronian origins of *cultura animi* see Harrison (2012), 139. The broader intellectual context is examined in Corneanu (2011), 48-52. On the Stoic concept of education as the cultivation of both *semina virtutis* and *semina scientiae* see Horowitz (1998), 21-31, 155-180. On the analogy between culture and cultivation in Renaissance pedagogy see Bushnell (1996), 73-116.

15. On Bacon's failed suit see Stewart and Jardine (1998), 146-77; Hammer (1999), 328-329, 346-349. For a reading of Bacon's career as a courtier that focuses on the ambiguities of the client-patron relationship see Wootton (1999).

16. On Bacon's financial problems (which briefly included imprisonment for debt), see Jardine and Stewart (1998), 198-208.

17. On Bacon's anti-Ciceronianism see Vickers (1968), 103-115.

18. On Bacon's use of aphorism see also Vickers (1968), 60-95; Snider (1988); Hui (2019), 103-120.

19. On the sixteenth-century vogue for proverbs see Habenicht, (1963), 1-28; Fox (2002), 112-172.

20. On Erasmus's metaphors see Hui (2019), 90-96. For a discussion of the relationship between semantic compression and expansion in Erasmus see Greene (1982).

21. On the rhetorical technique of amplification see Skinner (1996), 133-37; Mack (2002), 42-3, 90-5.

22. See also Tillman (1975); McRae (1996), 264-274; Wallace (2006).

23. On the Stoic topos of sense impressions as the imprinting of the mind see Horowitz (1998), 24-25.

24. On Bacon and Machiavelli see also Kahn (1994), 113-19; Tinkler (1996), 250-58.

25. On "Tacitism" see Burke (1969); Womersley (1991); Smuts (1994). On Tacitus and the Essex circle see Tuck (1993), 39-64; 105-112. On Tacitus's Tiberius see Syme (1958), 420-34. For the argument that Bacon rejects "Tacitean pessimism" in favour of a classical humanist conception of virtue see Peltonen (1995) 139-145, esp. 134.

26. See Morford (1993).

27. For a discussion of this episode see Koortbojian (2013), 37-8.

28. See also Lewis (2014).

29. See Jardine and Stewart (1998), 291.

30. See Jardine and Stewart (1998), 298.

31. On Bacon's *Commentarius solutus* ("loose notes") see Vine (2019), 215-23.

32. On the affinity between commonplacing and bookkeeping see Vine (2011), 201-209; for a detailed analysis of how mercantile bookkeeping practices influenced humanist notetaking see Vine (2019), 125-157.

33. See also Vickers (1968), 135-136.

34. On the "discourse of capacities" underpinning humanist pedagogy see Halpern (1991), 85-100.

35. On the second Chicago School see Jones (2012), 89-100; Dilts (2011). For a discussion of the neoliberal conception of human capital and its influence on higher education in the United States see Brown (2015), 175-200.

Works Cited

Adamson, Sylvia. 1999. "Literary Language." In *The Cambridge History of the English Language, Vol 3: 1476-1776*, edited by Roger Lass, 1476-1776. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Allison, K. J. 1957. "The Sheep Corn Husbandry of Norfolk in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries." *Agricultural History Review* 5: 12-30.

Bacon, Francis. *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England, A New Edition*. Edited by Basil Montagu. 16 vols. London: William Pickering, 1825-36.

------ . *The Works of Lord Bacon: With an Introductory Essay, and a Portrait.* 2 vols. London: William Ball, 1837-38.

------ . *The Works of Francis Bacon*. Edited by James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath. 7 vols. London: Longman Green and Co., 1857-61.

------ . *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon*. Edited by James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath. 7 vols. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1861-74.

------ . 1871. *A Harmony of the Essays, etc. of Francis Bacon*, edited by Edward Arber. London.

------ . *The Oxford Francis Bacon.* Edited by Daniel C. Anderson et al. 15 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996-.

------ . 2008. *The Major Works*, edited by Brian Vickers. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bacon, Nathaniel. *The Papers of Nathaniel Bacon of Stiffkey*. Edited by A. Hassell Smith, Gillian M. Baker, and R. W. Kenny. 6 vols. London: Norfolk Record Society, 1979-2010.

Beal, Peter. 1993. “Notions in Garrison: The Seventeenth-Century Commonplace Book.” In *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance Text Society, 1985-1991*, edited by W. Speed Hill, 131-147. Binghampton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies.

Becker, Gary. 1962. “Investment in Human Capital: A Theoretical Analysis,” *Journal of Political Economy* 70 (5): 9-49.

Blair, Ann. 2010. *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Brenner, Robert. 1977. “The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism,” *New Left Review* 104: 25-92.

--------. 1976. “Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe.” *Past and Present* 70: 30-75.

Brown, Wendy. 2015. *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution*. New York: Zone Books.

Burke, Peter. 1969. “Tacitism,” *Tacitus*, edited by T. A. Dorey, 149-171. New York: Basic Books.

Bushnell, Rebecca W. 1996. *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Campbell, Bruce M. S. and Mark Overton. 1993. “A New Perspective on Medieval and Early Modern Agriculture: Six Centuries of Norfolk Farming, c.1250-c. 1850.” *Past and Present* 141: 38-105.

Canny, Nicholas. 2001. *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cave, Terence. 1979. *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cheah, Peng. 2006. "Humanity in the Field of Instrumentality." *PMLA* 121 (5): 1552-1557 (2006).

Cicero. 1999. *Letters to Atticus, Vol. 4*, translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Cicero, 1927. *Tusculan Disputations*, translated by J. E. King. London: Heineman.

Cochrane, Rexmond C. 1958. "Francis Bacon and the Architect of Fortune." *Studies in the Renaissance* 5: 176-195.

Collinson, Patrick. 1980. "Sir Nicholas Bacon and the Elizabethan *via media*," *The Historical Journal* 23 (2): 255-273.

Corneanu, Sorana. 2011. *Regimens of the Mind: Boyle, Locke, and the Early Modern Cultura Animi Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Crane, Mary Thomas. 1993. *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Crane, William G. 1964. *Wit and Rhetoric in the Renaissance: The Formal Basis of Elizabethan Prose Style*. Gloucester, MA: Smith.

Croll, Morris W. 1971. "Attic Prose: Lipsius, Montaigne, Bacon." In *Seventeenth Century Prose: Modern Essays in Criticism*, edited by Stanley Fish, 3-25. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dilts, Andrew. 2011. "From 'Entrepreneur of the Self' to 'Care of the Self:' Neo-liberal Governmentality and Foucault's Ethics." *Foucault Studies* 12, 130-146.

Doorn, Nils van. 2014. “The Neoliberal Subject of Value: Measuring Human Capital in Informational Economies.” *Cultural Politics* 10 (3): 354-375.

Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Collected Works of Erasmus.* Edited by Manfred Hoffman. 89 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974- .

Ester, Anthony. 1966. *The Aspiring Mind of the Elizabethan Younger Generation*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Feher, Michel. 2009. “Self-Appreciation; or, The Aspirations of Human Capital.” *Public Culture* 21 (1): 21-41.

Foucault, Michel. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collége de France, 1978–1979*, translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Foucault, Michel. 2005. The *Hermeneutics of the Subject*: *Lectures at the Collége de France, 1981-1982*, translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Picador.

Fox, Adam. 2002. *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Giglioni, Guido. 2012. “Philosophy According to Tacitus: Francis Bacon and the Inquiry into the Limits of Human Self-Delusion.” *Perspectives on Science* 20 (2): 159-182.

Goy-Blanquet, Dominique. 2010. “Lord Keeper Bacon and the Writing on the Wall.” *Law and Humanities* 4 (2): 211-228.

Grafton, Anthony and Lisa Jardine.1986. *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe*. London: Duckworth.

Greene, Thomas M. 1982. “Erasmus’s “Festina lente:” Vulnerabilities of the Humanist Text.” In *Mimesis: From Mirror to Method, Augustine to Descartes*, edited by John D. Lyons and Stephen G. Nichols, 132-148. Hanover: University Press of New England.

Griffiths, Elizabeth. 2015. “Draining the Coastal Marshes of North-West Norfolk: The Contribution of the Le Stranges at Hunstanton, 1605 to 1724.” *Agricultural History Review* 63 (2): 221-242.

Habenicht, Rudolph E. 1963. *John Heywood’s “A Dialogue of Proverbs.”* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hackel, Heidi Brayman. 2005. *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hall, Gary. 2013. “#Mysubjectivation.” *New Formations* 79: 83-102.

Halpern, Richard. 1991. *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hammer, Paul E. J. 1999. *The Polarization of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, 1585-1597*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hammer, Paul E. J. 1994. “The Use of Scholarship: The Secretariat of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, c.1585-1601.” *English Historical Review* 109 (430): 26-51.

Hammer, P. 2008. “Manners, Roger, Fifth Earl of Rutland (1576-1612).” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Web.

Harrison, Peter. 2012. “Francis Bacon, Natural Philosophy, and the Cultivation of the Mind,” *Perspectives on Science* 20 (2): 139-158.

Harvey, David. 2013. *A Companion to Marx’s Capital, Vol. 2*. London: Verso.

Helgerson, Richard. 1992. *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Horowitz, Maryanne Cline. 1998. *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hui, Andrew. 2019. *A Theory of the Aphorism: From Confucius to Twitter*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jardine, Lisa. 1974. *Francis Bacon: Discovery and the Art of Discourse*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Jardine, Lisa and Alan Stewart. 1998. *Hostage to Fortune: The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon*. London: Gollancz.

Jardine, Lisa and William Sherman. 1994. "Pragmatic Readers: Knowledge Transactions and Scholarly Services in Late Elizabethan England." In *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, edited by Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts, 102-124. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, Christopher D. 2012. "N+2, or a Late Renaissance Poetics of Enumeration." *MLN* 127 (5): 1096-1143.

Jones, Daniel Stedman. 2012. *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kahn, Victoria. 1994. *Machiavellian Rhetoric: From the Counter-Reformation to Milton*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kiernan, Michael. 1985. "General Introduction." In *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, edited by Michael Kiernan, xix-lii. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Koortbojian, Michael. 2013. *The Divinization of Caesar and Augustus: Precedents, Consequences, Implications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leinwald, Theodore B. 1986. *The City Staged: Jacobean Comedy, 1603-1613*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Levy, F. J. 1986. "Francis Bacon and the Style of Politics." *English Literary Renaissance* 16 (1): 101-122.

Lewis, Rhodri. 2014. "Francis Bacon and Ingenuity." *Renaissance Quarterly* 67 (1): 113-163.

Lipsius, Justus. 2004. *Politica: Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction*, translated by Jan Waszink. Assen: Royal Van Gorcum.

Livy. 1936. *History of Rome, Vol. 11: Books 38-39*, translated by Evan T. Sage. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Low, Anthony. 1985. *The Georgic Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

McRae, Andrew. 1996. *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500-1660*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. 1988. *The Prince*, translated by Russell Price. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mack, Peter. 2002. *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

--------. 1993. *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic*. Leiden: Brill.

Mincer, Jacob. 1958. "Investment in Human Capital and Personal Income Distribution." *Journal of Political Economy* 66 (4): 281-302.

Montaño, John Patrick. 2011. *The Roots of English Colonialism in Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Morford, Mark. 1993. "Tacitean Prudence and the Doctrines of Justus Lipsius." In *Tacitus and the Tacitean Tradition*, edited by T. J. Luce and A. J. Woodman, 129-151. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Morgan, Hiram. 2019. "Francis Bacon and Policy-Making in Ireland under Elizabeth and James." *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature 119C:* 1-26.

Moss, Ann. 1991. "Printed Commonplace-Books in the Renaissance." In *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Torontonensis*, edited by Alexander Dalzell, 509-518. Binghampton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies.

Pitcher, John. 1985. "Introduction." In Francis Bacon, *The Essays*, edited by John Pitcher, 13-45. London: Penguin Classics.

Peltonen, Markku. 1996. "Bacon's Political Philosophy." In *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon*, edited by Markku Peltonen, 283-310. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

------ . 1995. *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought, 1570-1640*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pocock, J. G. A. 2003. *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Popper, Nicholas. 2018. "An Information State for Elizabethan England." *Journal of Modern History* 90 (1): 503-535.

Postgate, M. R. 1973. "The Field Systems of East Anglia." *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles*, edited by Alan R. H. Baker and R. A. Butlin, 313-322. London: Cambridge University Press.

Read, Jason. 2009. "A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity." *Foucault Studies* 6: 25-36.

Rosenberg, Daniel. 2003. "Early Modern Information Overload." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (1): 1-9.

Sayre, Robert F. 1964. *The Examined Self: Benjamin Franklin, Henry Adams, Henry James*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Shinn, Abigail and Angus Vine. 2014. "Theorizing Copiousness." *Renaissance Studies* 28 (2): 167-182.

Simpson, Alan. 1961. *The Wealth of the Gentry 1540-1660: East Anglian Studies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Skinner, Quentin. 1996. *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, A. Hassell. 2002. "Concept and Compromise: Sir Nicholas Bacon and the Building of Stiffkey Hall." In *East Anglia's History: Studies in Honour of Norman Scarfe*, edited by Christopher Harper-Bill, Carole Rawcliffe, and Richard George Wilson, 159-188. Woodbridge: Boydell Press.

------ . 1989. "Labourers in Late Sixteenth-Century England: A Case Study from North Norfolk (Part One)." *Continuity and Change* 4 (1): 11-52.

Smuts, R. Malcolm. 1994. "Court-Centered Politics and the Uses of Roman Historians, c. 1590-1630." In *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, edited by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake, 21-44. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Snider, Alvin (1988) "Francis Bacon and the Authority of Aphorism," *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism* 11 (2): 60-71.

Stewart, Alan. "Promus of Formularies and Elegancies (1594-1595): Introduction." 2012. *The Oxford Francis Bacon, Volume 1: Early Writings 1584-1596*, edited by Alan Stewart and Harriet Knight, 507-532. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Stone, Lawrence. 1965. *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Syme, Sir Ronald. 1958. *Tacitus, Vol. 1*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Tacitus, Cornelius. 2008. *The Annals: The Reigns of Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero*, translated by John Yardley. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thirsk, Joan. 1992. “Making a Fresh Start: Sixteenth-Century Agriculture and the Classical Inspiration.” In *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, edited by Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor, 15-34. Leicester: Leicester University Press.

Tillman, James S. 1975. “Bacon’s Georgics of Science,” *Papers on Language and Literature* 11 (4): 357-366.

Tinkler, John F. 1996. “Bacon and History.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon*, edited by Markku Peltonen, 232-259. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tuck, Richard. 1993. *Philosophy and Government, 1572-1651*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vickers, Brian. 1968. *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vine, Angus Edmund. 2011. ‘Commercial Commonplacing: Francis Bacon, the Waste-Book and the Ledger,’ *English Manuscript Studies* 16: 197-218.

------ . 2019. *Miscellaneous Order: Manuscript Culture and the Early Modern Organization of Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wallace, Andrew. 2006. “Virgil and Bacon in the Schoolroom.” *ELH* 73 (1): 161-185.

Warde, Paul. 2011. “The Idea of Improvement, c. 1520–1700.” In *Custom, Improvement and the Landscape in Early Modern Britain*, edited by Richard Hoyle, 127-148. Farnham: Ashgate.

Whittle, Jane. 2000. *The Development of Agrarian Capitalism: Land and Labour in Norfolk, 1440–1580*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, Thomas. 1909. *Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique 1560*, edited by G. H. Mair. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Womersley, David. 1991. "Sir Henry Savile's Translation of Tacitus and the Political Interpretation of Elizabethan Texts." *Review of English Studies* 42 (167): 313-342.

Wood, Ellen Meiksins. 2002. *The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View*. London: Verso.

Wootton, David. 1999. "Francis Bacon: Your Flexible Friend." In *The World of the Favourite*, edited by J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss, 184-204. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

Zagorin, Perez. 1998. *Francis Bacon*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.