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FRANCIS BACON AS A PHILOSOPHER, ESSAYIST, AND CHAMPION OF MODERN
SCIENCE IN THE AGE OF ELIZABETH: AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the breadth of intellect and worldly wisdom of 17th century author Francis Bacon was the founder of the modern scientific method Francis Bacon, the legend of 17th century made his footprint in the field of literature as a scientific and Natural Philosopher. Francis Bacon as a great philosopher who belonged to an Elizabethan age divides his philosophy into three Great branches that include his philosophy works. Bacon is credited with the formulation of modern Scientific thought. His essays is widely admired for its worldly witticisms and has become a classic of the form. Bacon pointed out the need for clear and accurate thinking showing that any mastery of the world in which man lives was dependent upon careful understanding. The understanding is based solely on the fact of this world and not as the ancients held it in ancient philosophy. This new modern science Provides the foundation for modern political science.

Key words: Bacon ,Elizabeth, the Renaissance, England, monarchy, scholastic Philosopher, inventor, science, nature, empirical method.

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There are certain periods in worlds history which have a special attraction for the intellectuals and moral development of mankind. Such a period is the age of Socrates and Sophists in Greece, an age when the belief in an old mythology was being shattered, and tradition authority and custom were no longer accepted as adequate sanction for moral rules and political institutions. In a word a spirit of rational inquiry and criticism was supervening upon an age of child like faith. Such a period again is the Sixteenth century, the age of the Reformation and the Revival of Learning, marked by a similar revolt of reason against authority.

In this case the authority of the church on its religious side, the new movement was, in its essence, a revolt in favour of high spiritual principles. On its secular side, it was a free and generous interest in the new world presented by literature, and in the promises of science.

With the Sixteenth Century the modern world begins. The Spirit of its religion, its philosophy, and its Science is our spirit. Bacon is one of the most interesting figures of that interesting age He represents its deep patriotism, its patient effort, its wide interest, its high aims, its lofty enthusiasm. His earliest and chief interest

in life was the reform of scientific method. By the time of Elizabeth the Renaissance, as it was called, had made itself strongly felt in England.

In particular, there was an ardent revival in the study of Greek which brought a dazzling light into many dark places of the intellect. The new passion for classical learning, in itself a rich and worthy enthusiasm, became quite a danger to language. After the lean years of the preceding epoch the prodigal issue of the Elizabethan age is almost embarrassing. Bacon as a philosopher we can only say that he is one of the founder of modern systematic thought. In choice of subject and approach, they reveal his breadth of intellect, his worldly wisdom, his concern with public life and material advancement.

They are impersonal, objective, and orderly in thought, and reflect a cool and scientific detachments. Bacon developed a friendship with the Earl of Essex, who was a favorite of the queen. In 1593 the attorney general post became vacant and Essex used his influence to get the job for Bacon. But Essex's effort went in vain and that gave a disappointment to Bacon. The accession of James gave Bacon a turning point.

A noted lawyer and statesman of Renaissance England. Bacon defended the prerogative of the crown and endorsed the divine right theory of monarchy. In a rapid rise to power, he became England's attorney-general in 1613 and Lord Chancellor in 1618. In 1625 he published his third edition of *Essays*. His essays consisted of his experiment, history, scientific articles and novel. Then he added additions to his *Instauratio Magna*, the great philosophical work. Bacon's reputation and legacy remain controversial even today. While no historian of science or philosophy doubts his immense importance both as a proselytizer on behalf of the empirical method and as an advocate of sweeping intellectual reform, opinion varies widely as to the actual social value and moral significance of the ideas that he represented and effectively bequeathed to us.

On the one side, then we have figures like the anthropologist and science writer Loren Eiseley, who portrays Bacon (whom he calls "the man who saw through time") as a kind of proto-Enlightenment culture hero. He praises Bacon as the great inventor of the idea of science as both a communal enterprise and a practical discipline in the service of humanity. On the other side we have writers, from Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Lewis Mumford to more recently Jeremy Rifkin and eco-feminist Carolyn Merchant, who have represented him as one of the main culprits behind what they perceive as Western Science's continuing legacy of alienation, exploitation and ecological oppression.

In a way Bacon's descent from political power was a fortunate fall, for it represented a liberation from the bondage of public life resulting in a remarkable final burst of literary and scientific activity. As Renaissance scholar and Bacon expert Brian Vickers has reminded us, Bacon's earlier works, impressive as they are, were essentially products of his "spare time".

- Two substantial volumes of *History and Biography*, the history of the reign of King Henry the Seventh and the history of the reign of King Henry the Eighth.
- *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (an expanded Latin version) of his earlier *Advancements of Learning*.
- His utopian science-fiction novel *The New Atlantis*, which was published in unfinished form a year after his death.
- Various parts of his unfinished magnum opus *Magna Instauratio*, including a "Natural History of Winds" and a "Natural History of Life and Death".

These late productions represented the capstone of a writing career that spanned more than four decades and encompassed virtually an entire curriculum of literary, scientific and philosophical studies. It is never easy to summarize the thought of a prolific and wide-ranging philosopher. Yet Bacon somewhat simplifies the task by his own helpful habits of systematic classification and catchy mnemonic labeling. Bacon began to struggle with tradition as early as 1603. Though Aristotle provided specific axioms for every scientific discipline, Bacon found the lacking of master principles, which could apply to all branches of natural philosophy. In Bacon's thought we encounter a relation between science and social philosophy, since his ideas concerning a utopian transformation of society presuppose and integrate into the social framework of his program concerning natural philosophy and technology as the two forms of the maker's knowledge. According to Bacon, *The Book of God* refers to his will, *The Book of Nature* to his works.

He never gives a hint in his work that he has concealed any message of unbelief for the sophisticated reader, but he emphasized that religion and science should be kept apart that they were nevertheless complementary to each other.

Bacon as a philosopher, we can only say that he is one of the founder of modern systematic thought. Francis Bacon has been described by Alexander Pope as "The Wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind". The essay as a distinct literary form was born in the 16th century with publication of Frenchman Montaigne's *Essays*. Bacon borrowed the form from him but suited it to his own purpose. The first edition of essays, ten in number was published in 1597.

The first edition describes his observations. The Second edition, 38 in number appeared in 1612 and the third edition containing 58 essays was published in 1625 and the edition covered almost all the subjects related to life of man. Many of essays were made up of extract, taken from other books and his other published works. Though his essays are short, they contained the wisdom of the world. Therefore Tennyson said, "there is more wisdom compressed into small volume than into any other book of the same size that I know". His most important literary work is his essays, which might be describe as an appendix to his longer works, especially *The Advancement of learning*, in that it provides a practical everyday philosophy of the life his own world.

Although Bacon was not a great scientist, he gave impetus to the development of modern inductive science. In place of speculation and the deductive logic emphasized by the scholastic philosopher he proposed "a new method of reasoning that derives general principles from the study of particular facts or instances, with the use of experiments when possible.

Bacon's new mode of using human understanding implies a parallelism between striving towards human power and constituting human knowledge. Bacon presents a thorough going collective life in society and science both of which are based on revealed religion. In the end we can say that he was one of the giant figures of intellectual history and as brilliant and flawed, a philosopher as he was a statesman.

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