

VERITAS FILIA TEMPORIS, VERITAS DE TERRA ORTA EST.
THE FAMILY ROMANCE OF BACONIAN TRUTH

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Francis Bacon's strategic use of two ancient *topoi*, "Truth is the daughter of Time" and "Truth sprouts out of the Earth," provides a textbook example of an early modern author struggling to break free from the grip of a barren scientific tradition at the same time as he promulgates a "true philosophy" ["*philosophia vera*"]. Bacon represents this emergent philosophy as being inspired by two great forces, masculine Time and feminine Earth, neither of which can be controlled, let alone transcended, by the solitary efforts of a single scientist. The complex network of family relations that Bacon plots out for the newborn female called Truth can be best discussed through a combination of psychoanalytic, deconstructionist, and feminist approaches, and specifically by resorting to these three concepts: the family romance (Freud), the instituting of the author's desire (Derrida), and the uncertainty of paternity that haunts the male from moment of generation (Ginsburg).

El empleo selectivo que hace Francis Bacon de dos *topoi* antiguos, "La verdad es hija del Tiempo" y "La verdad brota de la Tierra", proporciona un caso típico de un autor renacentista que lucha por liberarse del control de una tradición científica estéril a la vez que promueve una "filosofía verdadera" ["*philosophia vera*"]. Bacon representa esta filosofía en ciernes como deudora de dos magnas potencias, el Tiempo (principio masculino) y la Tierra (principio femenino), ninguna de las cuales puede ser controlada ni por supuesto vencida por el esfuerzo solitario de un solo científico. La compleja urdimbre de lazos familiares que Bacon teje para la neonata llamada Verdad es susceptible de un interesante estudio psicoanalítico, desconstruccionista y feminista. En concreto, en mi análisis recurriré a los conceptos del romance familiar (Freud), la institucionalización del deseo del autor (Derrida) y la incertidumbre de la paternidad que asola al varón desde momento de la concepción (Ginsburg).

The aphorism "Truth is the daughter of **Time**" originates from a Latin phrase in Aulus Gellius: "Another one of the old poets, whose name has escaped my memory at present, called Truth the daughter of Time" ["*Alius quidam veterum poetarum, cuius nomen mihi nunc memoriae non est, Veritatem Temporis filiam esse dixit*"] (*Attic Nights* 12.11.7). With these words Gellius brings to a conclusion a chapter of his prose meditations where he also quotes Sophocles's statement that Time is an all-hearing, all-seeing force which does not allow vice to go unpunished and virtue unrewarded for too long. Modern editors and commentators have been unable to trace the source of Gellius's felicitous phrasing. In the first half of the sixteenth century this same turn of phrase, "Veritas filia Temporis," is taken up by Pietro Aretino and Desiderius Erasmus and becomes a political motto of great currency in the decades immediately following the Protestant schism¹.

In his classic study of pictorial and emblematic representations of this commonplace, Fritz Saxl comments briefly on its fleeting appearance in Francis Bacon's *The New Organon* (*Novum Organum* [1620]), but neglects to link it in any substantial way to Bacon's epistemology. To my knowledge, no one has noted so far that Bacon also uses the aphorism "Veritas filia Temporis" in an earlier treatise, *The Masculine Birth of Time* (*Temporis Partus Masculus* [1603; pub. 1653]), where it takes place in conjunction with the related Old Testament topos "Veritas de Terra orta est" ["Truth sprouts out of the Earth"]. In this essay I seek to contextualize these two aphorisms by relating them to Bacon's repeated use of metaphors of biological reproduction and family relations to represent the diffusion and institutional implementation of his ideas.

Bacon's immensely influential commonplace and courtly book, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (1597; 3rd enlarged ed., 1625) begins with a short meditation on the inconclusive meanings that earlier authors from Lucretius to Montaigne have assigned to different manifestations of (the) Truth—moral, philosophical, and political. Bacon characteristically avoids giving a definition of the word "truth," choosing instead to put forth a postmodern tautology of the sort "truth is truth is truth." Thus he writes: "Truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature" (1860-1864, vol. 12: 82). Truth is here endowed with the joint faculties of self-reflexivity and self-effacement: it judges itself and reveals itself as it pleases to those who romantically pursue it. Whereas in the English-language *Essayes*

¹Two lesser occurrences can be found in two sixteenth-century treatises on the education of princes: Fr. Antonio de Guevara's *Relox de príncipes* (1529) and Francesco Patrizi's *De regno et regis institutione* (1531). I am indebted to my colleague at A Coruña and Guevara scholar, Emilio Blanco, for these two references. See in particular page 68 of Blanco's edition of the *Relox*.

Truth is designated by means of the co-referential pronoun “it,” in the Latin treatises it is designated as “she.” Yet in either case Truth is invariably personified, commonly appearing involved in a series of legal and filial relationships with the authors who seek to apprehend it. That is to say, the personification and feminization of *Veritas* (and its related expressions, *philosophia vera* and *scientia vera*) is reinforced by the fact that in Latin abstract moral nouns usually carry feminine gender. At the same time, this grammatical feature should perhaps not be seen as the deciding factor in the gender identification of *Veritas* and the *scientia vera*. As historian Londa Schiebinger (1988: 675) writes:

Scientia, then, is feminine in early modern culture because it is feminine in the language, but also because the scientists—the framers of the scheme—are male: the feminine Scientia plays opposite the male scientist. In order to unite in a creative union with the female, the male scientist images his science as his opposite, or feminine. But more than that, the scientist imagines that a feminine science leads him to the secrets of nature or the rational soul.

Bacon commonly resorts to the language of male-female generation, natural growth, and maturation to present as inevitable the otherwise arbitrary connections that he makes between the two poles in each of these binarisms: cause and effect, past and future, and origin and succession. This work of naturalization of what are essentially constructed realities becomes particularly daring when it takes the form of a parent-and-child relationship. To put it briefly, Bacon often forces two unrelated entities or concepts into a filial relationship. In so doing, the entity designated as child becomes separated from its arbitrary origin and is put under the tutelage of another entity—its adoptive parent. This is the case with Truth and Time.

The Freudian concept of the “family romance” can be usefully adjusted to characterize Bacon’s presentation of how Truth comes into existence. In his 1908 essay entitled precisely “Family Romances,” Freud explained how a child often indulges in the fantasy that those who call themselves his parents are not his real progenitors, and that he was separated at birth from certain high-born personages—his true parents—whom he might randomly have met or heard about (1957b: 238-39). After this traumatic separation, the child was reduced—or so he thinks—to living *like* and *with* ordinary people. The family-romance narrative is an important component of children’s fairy tales, and in general of any type of writing that explores the fantasies of a discontented and ambitious individual, including the struggling artist and the solitary scientist².

²See Bettelheim (1977: 61-73, 243-52). Bettelheim explores, through the concept of the family romance, the role of the “evil stepmother” in children’s spontaneous fantasies as well as in traditional fairy tales (in *Snow White* and *Cinderella*, among others).

In the acting out of the family romance Freud distinguishes two stages: a pre-sexual one, in which the child repudiates both biological parents, and a sexual one, in which the child “no longer casts any doubts on his maternal origin” but increases his aggressiveness toward his father (1957b: 239). Since Bacon identifies Nature with a prolific and benign mother, and seeks with his science to emulate and increase *her* reproductive capability rather than destroy it, it is quite clear that his scientific discourse operates exclusively in the sexual stage of the family romance, often taking the form of a competition between a father and a child for the exploitation and control of the mother’s sexuality. The historical Bacon did not rebel against his biological father (Sir Nicholas, Lord Keeper of the Seal), who died in 1579, before he could do anything to advance the career of his son at Elizabeth’s court. As regards Bacon’s attitude toward paternal authority, a more general question must be asked in these terms: who is the metaphorical father figure more insistently criticized by innovative Renaissance authors, from Leonardo and Copernicus to Cervantes and Bacon? It is no other than Aristotle, whom Bacon accuses, in *The Refutation of Philosophies* [*Redargutio Philosophiarum* [1608; pub. 1734]] of committing parricide in the person of his spiritual father, the atomist Democritus (Farrington, 1966: 110). According to Bacon, Aristotle was the only ancient philosopher capable of dominating both his predecessors and his successors. Since this domination originates in an act of violence—the slaying of Democritus—Bacon advises his reader to act likewise with Aristotle. He asks that they kill Aristotle (Farrington, 1966: 114). The metaphorical killing of a metaphorical father and the ensuing adoption of a figurative lineage of disciples are two typically Baconian gestures connected to the pattern of obsessive repudiations and allegiances that Freud identifies with the family-romance structure. The family romance is an open-ended narrative admitting all kinds of incestuous and competitive combinations, including the Oedipus complex and the fiction of self-creation³. What I wish to emphasize in this essay is that Bacon invents a noble origin for his project of reforming the sciences, and that he personifies this reformation in the figures of a father and a daughter—Time and Truth. When Bacon attributes to Time the paternity of Truth, he is arguing at least two interrelated points: first, that science should be based on experience rather than doctrine, specifically the doctrines of Aristotle; and second, that in the course of time, true and legitimate science will be separated from its illegitimate counterpart.

³See References for a complete list of the shorter texts in which Freud uses the metaphors of the “family romance” and the “parvenu” to comment on several forms of competition for authority and prestige taking place in his patients’ consciousness and among rival schools of psychoanalysis.

Generally speaking, the Renaissance linking of Time and Truth in a relationship of filial procreation was meant to transform rhetorically a situation of disadvantage for a person into a promise or a prophecy of future success. Recourse to the family romance to explain how noble origins and promising beginnings have gone awry was characteristic of early modern providentialist ideologies. In late-sixteenth-century England the topos “*Veritas filia Temporis*” was actualized around the event of Elizabeth Tudor’s accession (Saxl, 1963: 208-10; Warner, 1985: 318). Like the humanists who suffered the hostility of rival philosophers and epistemologies, Elizabeth had to undergo great trials (including parental neglect, sibling rivalry, and even incarceration) before she rose to the throne in 1558. Similarly, for the humanist scholar, “*Veritas filia Temporis*” came to mean three interconnected things: (1) Time conquers Calumny; (2) Time is the deliverer of Truth from persecution and oppression; and (3) Time in the end brings honor and reputation to the author formerly persecuted (Saxl, 1963: 202). It is the third of these three connotations that interests Bacon the most. In fact, his favorite construction of the prophetic or paradoxical unfolding of time—a flow of time which is momentarily interrupted only to be restored in an unspecified future—would typically begin as follows: I, Francis Bacon, am in exclusive possession of the first true philosophy, one which will revolutionize the world of learning; however, since I live surrounded by ignorant and envious people, my ideas will be suppressed by rival philosophers. It therefore befalls the scientists who come after me—my posterity—to carry my ideas into practice at some point in the future. I will then make a second coming, like a Messiah of science, to have my name and work restored and consecrated⁴. In acting out this fantasy, Bacon arrogates to himself the role of father to anyone who might succeed in implementing the reforms he advocates. Accordingly, several of Bacon’s shorter treatises address the reader with the vocative “*filie*” or “*son*,” placing him in the position of a child about to be initiated by his father into the mysteries of science. If the reader should reach the end of the treatise, he would be enacting rhetorically an experience of conversion to—and an initiation into—Baconian science. He would become a Son of science, a gregarious individual forever infantilized as the late-coming issue of an earlier, ground-breaking author.

As minister of God’s science Bacon appears at the origin of the projected instauration of the experimental sciences, a process which he dubbed “*masculine Time*.” The series of initiation rituals conducted by the Fathers of science with their Sons in historical time results in a “*succession of wits of all times*,” just as the mutually enlightening interplay between natural histories and

⁴For the full account of this Baconian design see Rodríguez García (1999).

methods establishes a durable “succession of books.” These linear structures of succession collectively give birth to Time. The birth is announced in the title of the posthumously published treatise, *Temporis Partus Masculus*, written in 1603 (an even earlier treatise with a similar title, *Temporis Partus Magnus*, has not survived). The linearity of Baconian Time appears in opposition both to the cyclical time of *Natura* and to transcendental time (the *aeternitas* of the divine substance). Human efforts at mastering Nature have failed because of chronic deficiencies in scientific planning, a widespread disdain for the types of knowledge derived from sense-perception and experimentation, and literary misrepresentations of natural philosophy and the mechanical arts as solitary endeavors. These are the “limitations,” as Bacon calls them, which have historically prevented the development of an experimental scientific tradition (Farrington, 1966: 114; Bacon, 1860-1864, vol. 7: 70). By contrast, when philosophers agree to work cooperatively across time and space guided by the ruling idea bequeathed to them, Time will father a much-needed female issue named Truth. By attributing the paternity of Truth alternately to Time and to an earthly philosopher (a persona of himself), what Bacon in fact does is to hypostatize his own personal fantasies of self-empowerment into the actions of higher, unreachable beings.

Now “*Veritas filia Temporis*” occurs in section 17 of *Thoughts and Conclusions* (*Cogitata et Visa* [1607; pub. 1653]), in the context of Bacon’s linking of the ideal of a *pax perpetua* to the flourishing of the sciences:

All concur that truth is the daughter of time. How pusilanimous, then, to grovel before authors but to allow to Time, the author of authors and of all authority, less than his due! Nor were Bacon’s hopes drawn only from the universal character of time, but from the prerogative of our own age.

[Omnium enim consensu veritatem Temporis filiam esse. Summae igitur infirmitatis et pusillanimitatis esse, authoribus infinita tribuere, authori autem authorum, atque omnis auctoritatis, Tempori, jus suum denegare. Neque solum de Temporis communi jure, sed et de nostrae aetatis praerogativa bene sperabat]. (Farrington, 1966: 94; Bacon, 1861, vol. 7: 131-32)⁵.

In a religious context, the phrase “author of authors,” like others such as “king of kings,” can only refer to the first mover of things—God. In a scientific context like this, it specifically refers to what Michel Foucault, in his influential essay entitled “What Is an Author?,” has aptly called an “initiat[or] of discursive practices,” a pioneer whose charismatic writing has the power to leave a permanent imprint on all the texts of the future written in the same

⁵For the occurrence in *The New Organon*, see Bacon (1860-1864, vol. 1: 291; vol. 8: 117).

field even as the inaugurative value of his ideas is rechanneled, redirected, and at times even diluted in different ways in those later elaborations (1977: 133). Bacon claims to have initiated a new praxis of discourse—rational empiricism—but he also realizes that he lacks the material means and the institutional support to carry his ideas into practice. Significantly, in the *Prooemium* for the unwritten *De Interpretatione Naturae* (1603) he selected a mechanistic metaphor rather than a biological one to argue his case for the implementation of experimental science: “I hold it enough to have constructed the machine, though I may not succeed in setting it to work” [“satis profecisse si machinam ipsam ac fabricam exstruxerim, licet eam non exercuerim aut moverim”] (1861-74, vol. 3: 80; 1860-1864, vol. 6: 449). Although Bacon is an ardent defender of technological progress, he very rarely mentions inventions other than the widely used gunpowder, the nautical compass, and the printing press. This is due to the fact that he was not a practical scientist himself, and just as important, that he did not think his audience was ready to accept the urgent intellectual and social changes demanded by the new science. Indeed, only in his one work of narrative fiction did Bacon undertake an inventory of the discoveries and inventions that the new science would soon make possible, namely in the Father of Science’s account of Bensalem’s house of experiments in the posthumously published *New Atlantis* (1623; pub. 1627). What becomes apparent in passages such as the one just quoted from the *Prooemium* is that, since Bacon cannot demonstrate experimentally the validity of the inductive method by setting to work the machine of science and technology, he needs to resort once again to the most perfect creative force known to humankind, Nature, whose effects can be easily perceived through sense perception. All Bacon can do to keep the flame of experimental science alive is to conceptualize his project in terms intelligible for—and congenial to—a wider audience that also admires the mechanisms of biological reproduction, in both the vegetal and the animal species. Hence, too, the importance he assigns to the tropes of human procreation.

Bacon also uses a revealing botanical metaphor to describe the earthly and feminine origin of scientific Truth: “True philosophy, torn away from its roots in experience, whence it derived its first vigorous shoot and growth, droops and dies” [“Quare omnem philosophiam veram ab experientiae radicibus ex quibus primum pullulavit et incrementum cepit avulsam, rem mortuam esse”] (Farrington, 1966: 97; Bacon 1860-1864, vol. 7: 136). The daughter of masculine Time, Truth is nevertheless born of feminine Earth. Bacon’s emphasis on the organicist growth of Truth is no doubt indebted to the Christian aphorism “Veritas de Terra orta est,” which in turn is based on a loose Latin rendition of Psalms 85: 11-12. Although Bacon translated from Latin some of the Psalms—“during a fit of sickness in 1624,” as Spedding

reports (1860-1864, vol. 14: 109)—number 85 was not one of them. The Countess of Pembroke's contemporaneous version, composed at some time in the 1590s, reads as follows: "Truth shall spring in ev'ry place,/ As the hearb, the earthes attire" (Sidney, 1963: 204). But the most widely circulated rendition in Bacon's time was to be that of the King James Bible, published in 1611, which runs like this: "Truth shall spring out of the earth ... and our land shall yield her increase" (Psalms 85: 11-12)⁶.

Marina Warner (1985: 315), in her review of the iconography of "Nuda Veritas," has similarly connected Truth with the ideas of innocence, naturalness, and plentifulness, although she strangely neglects to take account of Truth's kinship with Time:

The wholly naked human body, carrying within it multiple meanings of nature, integrity, and completeness, transmitted by the allegorical tradition, generated a personification of truth as a female form, often entirely naked, because Truth has nothing to hide and can never be less than whole. *Nuditas naturalis* and *nuditas virtualis* both inform the renaissance personification of "naked truth"; truth possesses an eschatological body, transfigured and innocent; "sprung out of the earth," she is also primordial and aboriginal, like nature, the origin of living things.

Bacon repeatedly uses images of gardening and subterranean mining to express the idea that one must go beyond the world of appearances in order to get at the origin and the truth of natural phenomena⁷. Only on a physically more profound knowledge of natural causes and effects can one build the foundations of a sound experimental science: "[T]he rule is that what discoveries lie on the surface exert but little force. The roots of things, where strength resides, are buried deep" ["cum radices demum rerum virtute validae, eadem situ abditae sint"] (Farrington, 1966: 93; Bacon, 1860-1864, vol. 7: 130). For Bacon, then, Truth will always be found buried deep within the bosom of the Earth. The scientist must literally get his hands dirty with soil if he is to refute once and for all the damaging assumptions about Nature transmitted over the generations ever since Aristotle's time. Furthermore, in

⁶In the 1952 revised edition of the Oxford Annotated Bible, which incorporates many emendations made in the 1611 text of the King James version by a team of editors between 1881 and 1885, the same passage runs thus: "Faithfulness will spring up from the ground ... and our land will yield its increase."

⁷Mining also functions in Bacon as a sort of autotelic metaphor. In mining, as in geographical and scientific exploration generally, one must always go *plus ultra*: "But in the arts and sciences, as in mining for minerals, there ought everywhere to be the bustle of new works and further progress" ["in artibus autem et scientiis, tanquam in metalli fodinis, omnia novis operibus et ulterioribus progressibus strepere debere"] (*Thoughts and Conclusions* [Farrington, 1966: 79; Bacon, 1861, vol. 7: 110]).

The Masculine Birth Truth is also said to be like a plant in that it has the capacity to multiply itself: "Truth ... is constant and gives birth to an identical twin" ["Veritas constans et quoda gemina est"] (1860-1864, vol. 7: 30; Lat. text adjusted; my translation). Truth is capable of producing a *geminatio propriae suae*. She can issue exact clones of herself one after another in a sort of perverse self-creation which is also an instance of incestuous reproduction. This self-reflexive turn should perhaps be seen as yet another manifestation of Bacon's argument for the self-sufficiency and independence of the new philosophy, which does not need the intervention or insemination of another source of authentication for its own growth and reproduction⁸.

We may thus conclude that the marriage or coupling of Time and (the) Earth results in the procreation of Truth: this would be a logical inference from the combined reading of the topoi "Truth sprouts out of the Earth" and "Truth is the daughter of Time." It is quite obvious that Bacon manipulates these abstract notions in favor of his project, pointing to the various associations of Time and Earth with a philosophical emphasis on materialism, experience, and change. It is just as obvious that Time and Earth also evoke the magnitude and sheer energy of the natural forces that humankind has not yet been able to control but which it seeks to emulate⁹. To be sure, in this distribution of roles, *woman* is demoted to a subordinate position. Because of her association with Nature, nakedness, and a primal Earth, *woman* is placed outside culture; she only participates in the creative process of science and civilization as passive (Warner, 1985: 324-25; Rodríguez García, 1998)¹⁰. It is then important that we look at other ways in which Bacon constructs for the male scientist positions of domination over feminine Truth.

In the *Refutation* Bacon says that the sixteenth century has witnessed important geographical discoveries (such as the encounter with the world of the Americas) and a revival of providentialist constructions of time (such as

⁸The gesture toward disengaging oneself from the inertia of tradition by effecting a turn inwards is an important feature of Descartes's cogito. In fact, as argued by Le Doeuff and Llasera in connection with the Baroque's habit of presenting philosophical arguments in the form of episodic narratives, both Bacon and Descartes aspired to create each in his own way "le modèle d'une pensée capable de se penser elle-même" (1983: 176).

⁹To borrow Laqueur's succinct formulation, "Generation mirrors both earthly hierarchy and the wonders of creation" (1990: 116).

¹⁰A feminist reading of this situation would emphasize the ulterior motives in the male's self-representations as (pro)creator of institutions and abstractions, such as his envy and fear of woman's *natural* procreative capacity (Friedman, 1989: 78-79). For Ruth Ginsburg, such male-created institutions as patrimony, constitutional monarchies, religions of eternal deities, and above all, the patriarchal family are meant to provide the male with a sense of continuity and to make up for the "uncertainty of paternity" resulting from his physiological exclusion from the genetic sequence of conception, pregnancy, and birth from the moment of ejaculation (1991: 361).

the Protestant understanding of typology and eschatology). The seventeenth century will in turn be an age of great scientific discoveries. Just as the sixteenth century saw the opening up of the sea by navigation, the seventeenth will usher the opening up of the earth by experimental science (Farrington, 1966: 131-32; Bacon, 1860-1864, vol. 7: 93). In this project Bacon reserves for himself not the role of mere witness or chronicler of the birth of Truth, but that of Truth's forebear. Thus, in the *Refutation* he casts himself in the act of giving birth to the book that the reader is about to read, the subject matter of which is the substitution of the *philosophia vera* for the fallacies of Aristotelian and Platonic traditions¹¹.

At other times, Bacon exchanges the role of father for that of brother. In the *Prooemium*, he explains that he alone has an innate rather than acquired affinity with Truth:

For myself, I found that I was fitted for nothing so well as for the study of Truth; as having a mind nimble and versatile enough to catch the resemblances of things (which is the chief point), and at the same time steady enough to fix and distinguish their subtler differences; as being gifted by nature with desire to seek, patience to doubt, fondness to meditate, slowness to assert, readiness to reconsider, carefulness to dispose and set in order; and as being a man that neither affects what is new nor admires what is old, and that hates every kind of imposture. So I thought my nature had a kind of familiarity and relationship with Truth [*Quare naturam meam cum veritate quandam familiaritatem et cognationem habere judicavi*]. (1861-74, vol. 3: 85; 1860-1864, vol. 6: 447)¹².

This passage elaborates profusely the imagery of companionship and kinship in order to conceal the constructed realities of disciplinary mentorship and domination built into the argument. If at the opening of the *Refutation* Bacon calls himself the Father of an innovative and true philosophy—the progenitor of the book called *The Refutation of Philosophies*, which he is about to write—here he appears alternately as Truth's close relation. Interestingly, the term *cognatio* used in the *Prooemium* designates a relationship of consanguinity between members of the same generation: it is more or less synonymous with siblinghood¹³. In the *Glass Elizabeth*, whose name can be *made* to mean

¹¹For a detailed discussion of the “book-as-child” metaphor in Bacon and other ancient and early modern authors, see Rodríguez García, 1998.

¹²Compare Milton's retrospective mythologizing of his own youthful efforts: “All my mind was set/ Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,/ What might be public good; myself I thought/ Born to that end, born to promote all truth,/ All righteous things” (1939: 3).

¹³Other contemporaneous instances of an individual claiming to be the kinsperson of a higher power include Elizabeth Tudor's *The Glass of the Sinful Soul*, a prose translation of a poem by Marguerite de Navarre on spiritual and physical incest. Elizabeth undertook her translation when she was a girl of eleven, in 1544, and the work was published by John Bale in 1548.

something like *sponsa Christi*, identifies herself with the “sweet virgin Mary,” which allows her to claim the related roles of “Mother of God,” of his “sister,” and of his “wife” (Shell, 1993: 120-22). When Elizabeth had the *Glass* reprinted in 1568, 1582, and 1590, the imagery of biological and spiritual kinship took on a new political significance. As she was now the Queen of England, she was widely perceived—in both her writings and those of others—as the “spiritual *mama*” of the realm and the lawful “*sponsa Angliae*” (Shell, 1993: 64-73). In short, Truth has also become Bacon’s sister.

What Bacon once again unwittingly discloses by invoking a brother-and-sister relation alternating with that of father-and-daughter is the incestuous and self-reproducing character of the interactions between author and text. Bacon represents himself in the act of metaphorically and performatively procreating Truth, which in turn authorizes him to call himself an author and a father. All this is expressed by resorting to legal jargon, since the primary meaning of the Latin verb *judicare*, used at the end of the passage in the accusative—in Ciceronian manner—is that of “to pronounce as a judge.” Bacon is the judge, witness, father, and brother of Truth. In fact, he relates to Truth in so many different yet interconnected ways that the reader is led to believe that in this family romance only Bacon is at all times in physical contact (sexual or otherwise) with Truth. In this connection, Derrida has argued that when the instigator of a new type of discourse invokes family relations as a legitimating strategy (Derrida’s example is Freud’s use of his daughter and grandson in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*), he may be acting with a view to establishing “the institution of his desire” and prolonging “the abyss of an untermiated self-analysis [that] produce[s] offspring, multiplying the progeny of its splits.” In fact, both effects are mutually dependent, since the subject’s institution of his desire marks “the start of his own genealogy” (1978: 116, 121). In a family romance thus constituted, the legitimacy of Truth is no longer subjected to the test of experience, but rather is based upon the bonds of trust and loyalty established among members of the same family.

In *The Masculine Birth* Bacon refers to the initiation of his Sons into the experimental method as a “legal wedlock with things themselves” [“legitimum connubium cum rebus ipsis”]; to the discourse whereby he conducts this initiation as an *epithalamium*; and to the product of that marriage as a “blessed race of Heroes” [“beatissima proles Heroum”] (Farrington, 1966: 72; Bacon, 1860-1864, vol. 7: 31). Through a complex network of marriage alliances and a careful parenthood plan Bacon endows rhetorically his proposed program for the reformation of the sciences with a legitimacy that the program would have lacked otherwise. The legal metaphors are almost as important as the biological ones, since both invoke forms of legitimation in which individual authority is overpowered by the authority of the community (in the case of the legal

metaphor) or by that of Nature (in the case of the biological metaphor). It could even be said that Bacon's family romance of how Truth and the "true philosophy" will be born into this world is directed by nothing less than a *Law-of-the-Father* (any other name would be teasingly euphemistic). Specifically, this is a law of succession, of how Truth is going to be procreated following the *will* of a Father who is imaginary rather than real, endogamic rather than exogamic, and authoritarian rather than indulgent. Appropriately enough, metaphors of testamentary law also abound in Bacon's writings. For example, in the *Refutation* he characterizes the experimental method as a "Spartan testament" ["haereditas Spartana"], meaning that this method "equalizes men's wits," but also implying that the proposed Spartan discipline will leave all his successors letter-bound, quite literally enslaved to the letter of the law. In representing himself and his project in this manner, through a series of biological and legal metaphors, Bacon unwittingly exposes his obsessive attempts at controlling rhetorically the reception of his ideas on the implementation of experimental science.

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