Saying What Goes without Saying:
The Rhetoric of Bacon's *Essays*

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From *The Rhetoric of Fiction* through *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*, Wayne Booth has devoted himself to showing how literature can make us into better, or worse, people. His work is rhetorical not only in that he is concerned with the effects of literature on an audience, but because his terms of analysis are rhetorical, viewing literature as a transaction between writers and readers. Like Sidney's *Apology*, his defenses of literature and his exposition of its powers translate traditional defenses and expositions of the powers of persuasion into a new realm. But Booth's work also departs from traditional rhetoric by directing attention to literature, and novels above all, which achieve practical effects through an independence from the institutional setting and practical purpose that were essential to classical rhetoric.

While he expands the range of materials to which rhetorical criticism applies to include literature, he also narrows the scope of the literary, and of his criticism, by excluding didactic writing. The preface to the first edition of the *Rhetoric of Fiction* begins by excluding "didactic fiction" to look at "the rhetorical resources available to the writer of epic, novel, or short story as he tries, consciously or unconsciously, to impose his fictional world upon the reader." He defends this restriction by...
claiming that the “problems raised by rhetoric in the sense [mentioned above] . . . are seen more clearly in non-didactic works” (xiii).

Someone not educated and chastened by Booth might call the situation ironic. Booth’s shift of rhetorical attention from the didactic to the literary was revolutionary and productive. But that change of focus was meant to expand the field of rhetoric to include the fictional, not to shift it from the didactic to fiction. This chapter is designed to see some significance in the above quotation from Booth. If “problems raised by rhetoric . . . are seen more clearly in non-didactic works,” then it is time to see how much light can be reflected back on rhetoric’s more traditional home among the didactic.

I want to ask Boothian questions about a kind of discourse or literature that he does not consider, a kind that is didactic by design, and ask how reading Francis Bacon’s Essays can make us better (or worse) people. The noninstitutional character of literary rhetoric becomes especially interesting in looking at works whose purpose is to teach. The Essays are not a random choice for a test case, because they occupy middle ground between traditional instances of oratory and genres like the novel, which have freed their purposes from institutional settings. Without entering into the extensive debates concerning the ideology of the novel, I think it fair to say that the Essays are worth exploring because, while not tied to institutions or particular practical decisions, neither author nor reader is fully abstracted from specific ethical and political context. The individualism that is often a part of the presuppositions and outcome of the ethics of the novel, and which I think is presupposed by Booth, will itself be called into question by an ethics of the essay that is simultaneously self-asserting and self-effacing.

Bacon explains what the Essays are for and how they work in the Advancement of Learning. He says that it is strange that wisdom concerning the “husbandry” as opposed to the “fruit” of life, has not been presented: “This part therefore, because of the excellency thereof, I cannot but find exceedingly strange that it is not reduced to written inquiry: the rather, because it consisteth of much matter, wherein both speech and action is often conversant; and such wherein the common talk of men, (which is rare, but yet cometh sometimes to pass), is wiser than their books” (Advancement 2.22.3, 167–68).\(^1\) He supplies the beginning for an explanation for the puzzling fact that this wisdom has not yet been collected: “This part of knowledge we do report also as deficient: not but that it is practised too much, but it hath not been reduced to writing” (2.23.13, 188). But why has something so useful not been re-
duced to writing? It has not been “reduced to writing” because to do so transforms the nature of such knowledge. Unlike the secrets of nature, which are given up only when she is tortured, truths that are unknown because we so far lack the right method of investigation, this kind of learning is deficient for a different reason. Secrecy is connected not to obscurity and difficulty but to darkness and shame. Bacon notices that there are things that are best left unsaid because they are not decent to talk about: “some things are secret because they are hard to know, and some because they are not fit to utter” (2.23.47, 205). Consequently, and here is the central point to the rhetoric and ethics of the Essays, if reducing this knowledge to writing transforms it, performing these sorts of actions from learning transforms the nature of the acts. If negotiation is an object of knowledge, then successful negotiating can be taught, can become a commodity, potentially accessible to everyone, and potentially matter for specialization and profit. When something becomes a craft, then it can be used for ends outside itself. It can be displayed as well as used. It is ungentlemanly to try too hard to succeed; much better to be upright and let success follow as God and luck allow.

What is most interesting and troubling in the Essays is what happens to What Everybody Knows when it becomes publicly stated and collected into an art, how What Everybody Knows becomes transformed into something quite different simply by being known, and, more specifically, by being collected, by being presented in writing. The novelty of the Essays and their moral force is in their existence, not just in what they say. If these things have until now been tacit, there is good reason why. The transformations involved in making common knowledge explicit are enormous, and make more complicated the claim that Booth makes in the afterword to the second edition to The Rhetoric of Fiction: “The reader whom the implied author writes to can be found as much in the text’s silences as in its overt appeals. What the author felt no need to mention tells us who he thinks we’ll be—or hopes we’ll be. . . . The same holds for our beliefs about values: what the author feels no need to mention, of the values the story depends on, tells us who he thinks we are before we start to read” (423). Those silences may be signs of tacit agreements, but some of them, including those that bear most directly on moral teaching, will be signs of agreements to hold certain things tacit. An author may “feel no need to mention” things that everyone knows, because to mention such things proves that either author or audience is not part of that community in which they go without saying. The things that go without saying might go without saying
because they are too obvious, or because they are hidden too deep to be seen—some foundations don’t work when they’re above ground—or because they are unsightly. Writers and readers are parts of communities, communities of silence as well as of speech. *The Rhetoric of Fiction* considers “authorial silences,” but Bacon brings to our attention communal silences.

The *Essays* present what everybody knows, and by the act of presentation change the nature of such knowledge. Everybody knows that necessity and fortune create gaps between what is and what ought to be and between what should be and what can be. To be ignorant of that fact is the ethical immaturity called youthful idealism. But to announce that necessity creates such discrepancies is in bad taste, and to acknowledge that one realizes that such gaps exist is to accuse oneself of bad character and loose living. It is part of sociability and individual goodness to present a face to others that insists that goodness is rewarded, that we are all equally submissive to the demands of what should be. There is, for example, an affront to decency in Bacon’s declaration in “Of Ambition”; “Since we have said it were good not to use men of ambitious natures, except it be upon necessity, it is fit we speak in what cases they are of necessity” (*Essays* 113). Such declarations are in questionable taste, and are signs of bad character, because it is an easy road from admitting that circumstances sometimes create exemptions to moral laws to declaring that the *speaker* is exempt from those laws. We want presidents who say that they will not negotiate with hostage-takers, and we want them to negotiate. When someone points out a gap between what should be done and the demands of necessity, there is at least the danger that that gap increases by being mentioned.

We all know that sometimes necessity dictates that we not act as we would like, that we not do what is right, but the more we admit necessity as an excuse, the easier it becomes to appeal to necessity as an excuse, and the more often we act against reason and goodness. Excuses become justifications; we start out doing wrong because it is necessary, and end up thinking that because it’s necessary, it’s not wrong after all. Among the excuses that become justification, the notion that Everybody Does It must be high on the list, and so stating what everybody knows, through the act of exposure, widens the discrepancy between what is and what ought to be. Once *ought* no longer implies *can*, obligations seem less compelling. Maybe it’s better not to mention such things.

Bacon himself sees the connection between saying what goes without saying and turning to necessity and fortune. When he claims in the
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Advancement of Learning that the novelty of his approach is to note the existence of wisdom that exists but which has not yet been collected in writing, he simultaneously proposes to offer practical advice concerning fortune as well as goodness: “Fortune layeth as heavy impositions as virtue; and it is as hard and severe a thing to be a true politique, as to be truly moral” (2.23.13, 188). But he does not tie the project of “collecting” to its subject matter, fortune and necessity. Expanding the realm of the practical to fortune seems innocent and optimistic, but it turns out that acting in the face of necessity can often become acting in the guise of necessity. Consequently Bacon’s moral teaching—both his didactic practice and the practice he preaches—inverts Aristotle’s advice to the rhetorician: “Do not seem to speak from thought [dia­noias] as men now do, but from choice [prohaireseos]. Say, for example, ‘I wished this. Indeed, I chose this. But if I gained nothing, still this is better.’ For the one way of speaking is the mark of a practically wise man [phronimou], the other way is the mark of a good man [agathou]. The practically wise man is involved in pursuing the advantageous, but the good man in pursuing the noble” (Rhetoric 3.16.1417a24–28). Instead of that advice of Aristotle’s, Bacon shows that recognizing the force of necessity provides an all-purpose excuse and denial of responsibility, one that applies to the Essays themselves. And so Bacon says in “Of Cunning,” “In things that a man would not be seen in himself, it is a point of cunning to borrow the name of the world; as to say, The world says, or, There is a speech abroad,” (Essays 69). The inversion of Aristotle’s point goes beyond persuasiveness: if knowledge of things outside our control, rather than our attitude towards things we can do something about, determines success, then such knowledge is now to be valued over goodness. By stating what everybody knows, Bacon offers a kind of knowledge that is a substitute for character. Hence the inversion of Aristotle’s precept.

Bacon’s writing is more than just another case of the moral act of saying what goes without saying; it makes discursively accessible the entire realm that must go without saying, the realm of necessity, the fortuitous, those things that lie outside human control. There are many rhetorical genres that say what everybody knows, debunkings and exposés among them. But fortuna is the realm of events for which people, especially powerful people, cannot be held accountable. Making necessity and fortune amenable to advice and teaching threatens the excuses that prevent misfortunes from being read as injustices. When Bacon presents an art for dealing with necessity, necessity becomes at the same
time both more available and more suspect as an excuse and rationale. The realm of the practical is things within our power as opposed to things we cannot do anything about. The realm of the ethical is reliably located in our characters as opposed to the vicissitudes of the fortuitous external world. The realm of the moral, finally, is those things for which praise and blame are accorded regardless of outcome, as opposed to an amoral realm in which success is the measure of goodness. Making husbandry, negotiation, and fortune subjects for teaching and for practice threatens conventional equations between the practical, the moral, and the ethical.

Stating what everybody knows also widens the reference of everybody as stating rules for action makes successful action accessible to new, upstart, actors. The moral thing to do is right regardless of consequences, but only people who possess sufficient wealth and power can afford to act without regard for consequences; the rest of us have to worry about success, and when Bacon's *Essays* present an art of husbanding one's fortune, he legitimizes the unseemly concerns of us outsiders.

In making negotiation and dealings with fortune subject to teaching, Bacon upsets the division of labor between the moral realm in which consequences do not count and the nonmoral domain in which consequences are everything, a division of labor that seems conveniently equivalent to a division of classes in society between those who act gracefully and those who must be industrious. His work can be read as domesticating the fortuitous, making chance subject to policy, and so leading the moral into new territory, civilizing something still in a state of nature. It can also be read as a process of infection and corruption running in the opposite direction, with vulgar considerations of worldly success tainting the moral and the ethical.

Although it is easy to think that Bacon's project is one of undermining conservatism and replacing it with selfish opportunism, the opposite case can be made equally well: he expands the realm of the moral to match the broadened domain of the practical. Saying what goes without saying is alternatively conservative and upsetting, preserving and overthrowing traditional moral rules and the social roles that are aligned in a privileged way with the practical, the moral, and the ethical. While it is easy to see a concern for successfully making it in the world as a leveling one, Horkheimer, for example, insightfully argues instead that success is an essentially conservative concept: "The pragmatic concept of truth in its exclusive form ... corresponds to limitless trust in the existing world. If the goodness of every idea is given time
and opportunity to come to light, if the success of the truth—even after struggle and resistance—is in the long run certain, if the idea of a dangerous, explosive truth cannot come into the field of vision, then the present social structure is consecrated. . . . In pragmatism there lies embedded the belief in the existence and advantages of free competition. 8

The reason that Bacon's rules for making it in the world can seem alternatively conservative and destabilizing, can appear either to extend or to contract the territory of the moral, is that in different circumstances, the same teaching can either serve to expose hypocrisy in others or it can itself become instruction in manipulation. Those circumstances are not themselves contained within the Essays. 9 Therefore, the ethics of the Essays is a rhetorical problem in that its ethical value and effect depend on circumstances and purposes outside itself, unlike a purely aesthetic object, if such a thing exists, which carries its principles of application within itself, and unlike a traditional rhetorical appeal, which is tied to its circumstances of production and reception. 10 Because those circumstances of application cannot be given within the Essays themselves, reducing this wisdom into writing opens up possibilities for manipulation that did not exist before. 11 Bacon has made a way of acting into a rule-guided technique, and by that transformation his wisdom becomes something that can be used for any purpose, good or bad. When Aristotle noted that character is to be preferred to knowledge, his evaluation relies on just that morally indeterminate feature of knowledge: character is oriented towards ends, knowledge looks back to its justifying principles. There were good reasons why these things went without saying, at least good reasons for the people who knew them but didn't say them. 12 Saying them makes them into matters of technique by loosening the bonds between action and circumstance. The very act of announcing how people act brings into question the appropriateness of actions.

The distinctions Booth develops in The Company We Keep permit a more sophisticated statement of the problem of character and knowledge as he distinguishes the moral effects of reading from the moral work in the act of reading itself. It is true that the moral effects of reading depend on circumstances of reception outside the text. But the moral values of the activity of reading are something within the control of the author. Every method for confronting fortune and for success in business and negotiation can be used for good or bad external purposes. In addition, corresponding to Booth's idea of the morality in reading, each method for confronting fortune articulates a set of prin-
ciples that define a person; the rhetoric of fiction and, more generally, of noninstitutional discourse, develops a conception of character that is relatively independent of circumstances. Consequently, such character can be understood as a set of principles used by a person, and so it becomes a kind of knowledge that substitutes for character. Every precept and example can be read and then can be imitated as a kind of faking or as a kind of incorporation. They are all, that is, subject to use in what The Company We Keep calls upward and downward hypocrisy.

For this inner, ethical side, which Booth expresses as the moral experience in the act of reading, therefore, Bacon not only has to teach his readers how to act—that is the easy idea of reading literature as causing moral effects—but also has to teach them how to read, to read his directions on how to act—the more sophisticated idea of reading literature as itself an ethical activity. To that extent Stanley Fish is right to direct the attention of the critic to the experience of reading the Essays, although it does not follow at all, as Fish claims, that that experience of reading is therefore the "subject" of the Essays. That latter inference is not only a danger for the literary critic, but for the moral agent as well.

The practical equivalent to thinking that the experience of reading is the subject of the Essays is the thought that what one learns from the Essays is a certain ability to use language, not to refer to what language is about but to use language to refer to and thereby define oneself as a certain kind of person, a person who speaks the right way. The danger of the Essays is not Booth’s general conception of the downward hypocrisy of the sophist who uses a better mask to cover a worse cause, but a quite specific kind of hypocrisy, subject to frequent attention in the Renaissance, that uses a mask to substitute for any face at all, the kind of chameleonlike concealing that occurs when knowledge replaces character. In terms to which I will return, mention becomes a substitute for use, as aesthetic style becomes a substitute for practical action. As Johnson puts it in a sentence (Idler 84) that perfectly fits the difficulties with Bacon, “The examples and events of history press, indeed, upon the mind with the weight of truth; but when they are reposed in the memory, they are oftener employed for shew than use, and rather diversity conversation than regulate life.”

Without thinking about how to read Bacon’s precepts and examples, the critic will be forced to make the elisions from “ambiguity” to “secrecy” to “unintelligibility” that Hexter makes in talking about More’s Utopia: “While ambiguity may enhance the value of certain special kinds of poetry, it does not enhance the value of social comment.
We should think rather poorly of any present-day social thinker whose intention was inscrutable or mysterious, and unintelligibility is no more a virtue in a criticism of society written four hundred years ago than it is in current social criticism" (11). Hexter’s thesis makes sense only if Bacon, or any social thinker, need not teach the readers how to read, only if reading consists in drawing out some informative content. If part of Bacon’s project must be to teach his readers to read, then ambiguity can have more intelligible functions. This further dimension is essential to Bacon’s enterprise, since without reading the Essays prudently, the reader will either make them, and himself, into aesthetic objects, or make them into amoral techniques and instruments distinct from any particular uses.

Bacon’s practice in the Essays has the dual function that imitations have of both providing a model and providing an authority, offering both resources for action and resources for argument in support of actions one wants to undertake anyway, including the future resource of citing Bacon’s arguments. That provision of authority offers the dimension in which his arguments can be mentioned as well as used, the sense in which mention becomes an unusually efficient and productive form of use. Mentioning becomes a form of use, since to cite Bacon, and to cite Bacon’s citations, is a way of authorizing one’s behavior. In negotiation and in confronting fortune, everybody knows what to do, namely to win; Bacon’s teachings offer a way of respectably clothing one’s actions. His teachings are then used for ownership and display. Analogous to the use/mention distinction applied to language is the distinction between use value and exchange value applied to commodities. While it might seem obvious, and while it is true on a grammatical as opposed to a rhetorical understanding of language, that use is prior to mention, Bacon shows ways in which mentioning a rule, moral principle, authority, or example is prior to or constitutive of using it, ways in which displaying a line of argument is its use. In the same way, an understanding of economics that grounds economic value in demand and need will naturally make use value prior to exchange value, but the range of economic activity obviously explained by a connection to demand seems so small that instead needs become products of economic activity, not its genesis, and exchange value determines use value. We can learn what is good for us by what sounds good.

So the essay “Of Usury” begins by distinguishing between the many, who have made “witty invectives” against usury and Bacon himself, who will speak “of usury usefully,” constructing a new kind of didactic
rhetoric that realigns the practical, the moral, and the ethical. Speaking usefully means, it turns out, first pointing to the “discommodities of usury” (Essays, all 123), then its advantages, and finally of the “reformation and reiglement of usury; how the discommodities of it may be best avoided, and the commodities retained” (125). What begins as a necessary evil turns out to be necessary, and therefore not evil after all. (Rhetorically, there is an important innovation here: Aristotle says that deliberative rhetoric concerning the useful and epideictic rhetoric about the good are convertible by a change of phrase [Rhetoric 1.9.1367b37-1368a10]. The differences between witty invectives and useful maxims are greater than that.) The essay ends with a formula that captures Bacon’s intent of saying what goes without saying: “If it be objected that this doth, in a sort, authorize usury, which before was in some places but permissive; the answer is, that it is better to mitigate usury by declaration, than to suffer it to rage by connivance” (126, emphasis added). According to that ending, saying what goes without saying and speaking usefully reduce rather than expand the gap between is and ought.\(^\text{18}\)

But, I have been claiming, such reduction and consequent realignment of the practical, the moral, and the ethical is possible only if Bacon teaches a method of reading as well as a method of acting and imitating what one reads, which is in turn possible only if he grounds the ethical in the activity of prudent reading itself. Only then will speaking usefully have the added dimension of doing more than providing seemly clothing for what one wanted to do anyway; only then can we learn what is good for us by what sounds good.

In the Advancement of Learning, Bacon makes the activity of the learner turn on the method of presentation drawn through a series of “diversities of method.” I want to show how some of them permit a characterization of prudent reading, and then add a couple of diversities of method of my own that seem to me to capture the work of the Essays more specifically. First, the method of probation is opposed to the magistral method, which is founded on a “kind of contract of error between the deliverer and the receiver: for he that delivereth knowledge, desireth to deliver it in such form as may be best believed, and not as may be best examined; and he that receiveth knowledge, desireth rather present satisfaction, than expectant inquiry; and so rather not to doubt, than not to err: glory making the author not to lay open his weakness, and sloth making the disciple not to know his strength” (2.17.3, 141 [4, 449; cf. De Augmentis 10, 123]). The Essays will have an internal ethical
side, as well as external practical effects, if the author instead employs the method of probation, and if the reader recognizes that this is what the author is doing. "Knowledge that is delivered as a thread to be spun on, ought to be delivered and intimated, if it were possible, in the same method wherein it was invented: and so is it possible of knowledge induced" (ibid.). The reader acquires a character, and not just knowledge, by imitating Bacon's process of invention, including his processes of observation, qualification, quotation, and appropriation.  

Next, Bacon contrasts "the delivery of knowledge in aphorisms" as opposed to delivery in method: aphoristic writing is, among other things, a better test of whether the writer has something to say. Moreover, "methods are more fit [than aphorisms] to win consent or belief, but less fit to point to action"; finally, "Aphorisms, representing a knowledge broken, do invite men to inquire farther; whereas methods, carrying the show of a total, do secure men, as if they were at farthest" (2.17.7, M2).

For the subject of the Essays, though, inquiring further would not be directed towards the growth of knowledge, but towards further husbanding of fortune. The civil or ethical project is not of a piece with scientific investigation. Bacon's method for scientific investigation, as spelled out in the New Organon, is based on a grammatical analogy between language and nature, in which elements and rules of combination are fundamental to both. His method for articulating and teaching conduct is based on a rhetorical analogy between language and action, stressing competence and performance.  

Neglect of this difference leads Fish fallaciously to suppose that because the essays are scientific and descriptive, they cannot be practical or prescriptive. Similarly, Box thinks that the Essays are not scientific or even Baconian because they do not contribute to a kind of progress that would be inappropriate to business and negotiation.  

Bacon's series of contrasts of methods—there are more—concerns the quite general problem of how writing makes its readers active, and so I think the Advancement of Learning is a fundamental theoretical contribution to the general problems of the ethics of teaching to which Booth has forced attention. More specifically, these distinctions bear on the perennial problem of moral education, how to make readers active rather than passive, how to make readers regard one's teaching as engaging character rather than a narrower kind of knowledge. Although these first diversities of methods are quite general, later in the Advancement of Learning he offers a further contrast specifically designed to
show how discourse about negotiation, husbandry, and fortune can be organized to issue in activity rather than passivity on the part of its readers. The first dichotomy is worth quoting at length:

The form of writing which of all others is fittest for this variable argument of negotiation and occasions is that which Machiavel chose wisely and aptly for government; namely, discourse upon histories or examples. For knowledge drawn freshly, and in our view, out of particulars, knoweth the way best to particulars again; and it hath much greater life for practice when the discourse attendeth upon the example, than when the example attendeth upon the discourse. For this is no point of order, as it seemeth at first, but of substance: for when the example is the ground, being set down in history at large, it is set down with all circumstances, which may sometimes control the discourse thereupon made, and sometimes supply it as a very pattern for action; whereas the examples alleged for the discourse's sake are cited succinctly, and without particularity, and carry a servile aspect towards the discourse which they are brought in to make good. (2.23.8, 186 [5, 56])

The realm of fortune is the realm of particulars resistant to generalization in rules, and so examples rather than precepts are the best teachers. Fortune is unpredictable, and the behavior appropriate to managing and husbanding fortune is similarly resistant to statement in rules. Consequently, the reader who successfully learns Bacon's lessons will know how to follow a rule loosely and conveniently. In classical rhetoric, the best art is the art that looks natural and hides its artful quality, and the rules Bacon teaches must be followed in a similarly disguised and ingenuous-looking way. No one is supposed to be fooled into thinking that one is acting naturally; it's just that here is something new that goes without saying. In a realm in which examples rather than precepts are authoritative, the place of rules must be loose and tacit. The aristocratic lack of concern for consequences is universalized into a nonchalance, sprezzatura, towards rules of good behavior. His description in "Of Ceremonies and Respects" applies to his method of teaching throughout the Essays:

To attain [good forms] it almost sufficeth not to despise them; for so shall a man observe them in others; and let him trust himself with the rest. For if he labour too much to express them, he shall lose their grace: which is to be natural and unaffected. Some men's behaviour is like a
verse, wherein every syllable is measured; how can a man comprehend
great matters, that breaketh his mind too much to small observations?
Not to use ceremonies at all, is to teach others not to use them again; and
so diminisheth respect to himself; especially if they be not omitted to
strangers and formal natures; but the dwelling upon them, and exalting
them above the moon, is not only tedious, but doth diminish the faith
and credit of him that speaks. And certainly there is a kind of conveying
of effectual and imprinting passages amongst compliments, which is of
singular use, if a man can hit upon it. (6, 500–501)

I want to suggest two further “diversities of method” not mentioned
in the *Advancement of Learning* that also characterize the ethics of the
*Essays*, and characterize Bacon’s contribution to the ethics of moral edu­
cation. First, there is a diversity of method between transparent writing
that puts the reader’s attention on what is said, and more opaque prose
that directs attention to itself. The structure and tactics of the *Essays*
are apparent on the surface as Bacon uses techniques in a way that
makes his audience aware of those techniques: His style constantly di­
 rects attention to itself not, though, as an object for delight, but instead
to increase a certain kind of reflection and suspicion. In the description
of the “rhetoric” best suited for negotiation quoted above, he recom­
 mends “knowledge drawn freshly, and in our view,” and the *Essays*
work by constantly keeping the acts of fresh drawing in view. The pru­
dence needed to read the *Essays* is less an increased facility at a method
of reasoning than an increased facility at speaking a new language,
and Bacon’s teaching resembles that required for teaching a second,
nonnative language, allowing foreigners, or social upstarts, to pass for
natives. This facility at a second language is rhetorical rather than gram­
matical, centering on rules of application and performing appropriately
rather than competence at correctness and well-formedness.

Although the things that go without saying are not difficult to know,
they have been left unsaid. There is a further reason, beyond the fact
that it is not only a sign of ill-breeding and social climbing to admit
that one is acting from knowledge rather than nature. These things
seem unknowable because of their particularity or, as Bacon also puts,
it, their immersion in matter. This immersion in matter is character­
istic of practical problems of confronting fortune, as opposed to ethics
and practical problems of directing one’s own intentions, and so the
neglect of knowledge of fortune comes from the particularity of the
accidental. Bacon will have to change the meaning of counsel accord—
ingly. Things which from one point of view are shameful to talk about are also too indeterminate to say anything dignified about. As they are made more discursively accessible, the nature of counsel must transform the manifold that counsel is about, the realm of fortune, and change the relation between the useful and the noble, and consequently the relation between the useful and the shameful.

Given the "immersion in matter" and ascendancy of examples that characterize negotiations with fortune, it would be just the sort of passivity Bacon wants to avoid to make his teachings into rules. By making explicit What Everybody Knows, mentioning as well as using principles of action, he transforms such knowledge, transforms what it means to follow, or violate, a rule. Following a rule loosely, or prudently, or opportunistically—in a word, rhetorically—is different from the grammatical conception of following a rule that authorizes its instances. What it means to follow a rule is made problematic when following naturally is distinct from following the rule artfully and loosely, thus changing the nature of advice and the rhetoric of the Essays. Following a rule prudently cannot be an excuse for bad behavior, the way obeying a law removes one's accountability for bad consequences: "Don't blame me; I was obeying the law when I arrested the shoplifter; if she subsequently killed herself that's none of my business." Following a rule does not remove the need for thought and responsibility.

Making his own persuasive tactics explicit, while it has one advantage, seems in another respect to backfire. In order to make his readers active, and thereby increase their chances for success in the world, Bacon shows them how he is working, exhibits the lack of fit between rule and example, between goodness and utility, between what we say and what we do. But the more we understand Bacon's method, the less we should in fact follow it. The rules he offers work only if actors do not look as though they are following rules. In other words, they work only when they go without saying. Bacon the teacher must lay bare his own techniques and therefore act tactlessly so that his audience can become decorous.

I think that it is to address that problem and those possibilities for rule following, rule citing, and exploitation that we need a final "diversity of method" to characterize Bacon's moral teaching in the Essays. These Essays, especially in comparison with their model in Montaigne, are astonishingly impersonal, especially in contrast to the self-assertion they enjoin, but that too is a part of their teaching. Knowledge once again becomes valued over character; in this final paradox and final
diversity of method morality becomes separated from self-knowledge. Once there are rules for success, Bacon's method will suppress the role of individual talent or nature in ethics as much as in science.\textsuperscript{29} Common knowledge is common, available to all, and so exploitations are different from deviations based on individual insight. It is hard to see how character, and ethics, can survive such publicity and impersonality, but of course the history of ethics is full of transformations of the relations of knowledge and character that suppress individuality.

The innovation of the \textit{Essays} is to teach successful negotiation with fortune, and such success takes knowledge, not character. "It is not possible to join the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove, except men be perfectly acquainted with the nature of evil itself; for without this, virtue is open and unfenced; nay, a virtuous and honest man can do no good upon those that are wicked, to correct and reclaim them, without first exploring all the depths and recesses of their malice" (\textit{De Augmentis}, 5, 17).\textsuperscript{30} In the end, then, the moral geography of the world is revised. In Bacon's world (both the world in which he writes and the world constructed and implied in his writing) the task of discriminating prudence from opportunism, moderation from perfidiousness, accommodation as a form of making one's values real and accommodation as a form of deviating from one's values, is a permanent job.\textsuperscript{31} There are no sure signs that make the discrimination for the reader; it simply takes prudence. (Or opportunism.) It is no easier or safer to tell whether one is oneself being accommodating in the one way or the other than it is to make that decision about others. The lack of reflection on one's inner life and conscience in the \textit{Essays} directs the reader's attention to acts, circumstances, and consequences, rather than intentions, but it is only a judgment of intention—a judgment one no longer has available—that can make a distinction between prudence and opportunism. Perhaps this is a world that one gains only by losing one's own soul.

In such a world, one learns not to avoid evil but to use it. Evil thereby becomes neutralized in being used. As part of that process, its dangers are deflated, and so he says in "On Cunning," "There be that can pack the cards, and yet cannot play well." Facility at rule exploiting is unseemly, but not very dangerous, since the contraction of attention becomes self-defeating. Moreover, by a kind of parody of the economy of nature, the more someone practices deception and relies on the gullibility of others, the more he himself turns out to be credible. Just as the principal purpose of intelligence agencies is to counter other intel-
ligence agencies, and the main use of advertising seems to be to negate competing advertising campaigns, so Bacon pictures the cunning use of rules and the cunning display of rule following to be an activity mainly directed at others engaged in similar practices: “If we observe, we shall find two differing kinds of sufficiency in managing of business; some can make use of occasions aptly and dexterously, but plot little; some can urge and pursue their own plots well, but cannot accommodate or take in; either of which is very imperfect without the other” (Advancement 2.23.35, 198). The more loosely we follow the rules of business, Bacon implies, the less harm will be done by cunning. Cunning is the false form of prudence (in Booth’s terms it is hypocrisy downwards rather than upwards), but it works by promoting a misunderstanding of what it means to follow a rule concerning what everybody knows. Therefore Bacon associates the “delight in deceiving, and aptness to be deceived”:

This vice [which concerneth deceit or untruth] therefore brancheth itself into two sorts; delight in deceiving, and aptness to be deceived; imposition and credulity; which, although they appear to be of a diverse nature, the one seeming to proceed of cunning and the other of simplicity, yet certainly they do for the most part concur: for as the verse noteth, Percontatorem fugito, name garrulue idem est an inquisitive man is a prattler; so, upon the like reason a credulous man is a deceiver: as we see it in fame, that he will easily believe rumours, will as easily augment rumours, and add somewhat to them of his own; which Tacitus wisely noteth, when he saith, Fingunt simul creduntque: so great an affinity hath fiction and belief. (Advancement 1.6.8, 28)\textsuperscript{12}

But this neutralizing of the vices cannot supply too happy an ending. The virtues too become neutralized in being used, and so Bacon will describe the good and bad uses of the virtues: “Virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and calm” (“Of Great Place,” Essays 33). The goodness of virtues then consist in their use and their appearance: it is good to have friends because they can praise you when it would not be decent to praise yourself. Once they can be used, and once exchange, display, and mention become prominent forms of as well as use—they are not good and evil in any stable sense any longer: Misanthropi “are the very errors of human nature; and yet they are the fittest timber to make great politics of; like to knee-timber, that is good for ships that are ordained to be tossed, but not for building houses that shall stand firm” (“Of Goodness, and Goodness of Nature,” Essays 38). If the instability
of the distinction between prudence and opportunism is permanent, then "there is no better way to moderate suspicions, than to account upon such suspicions as true, and yet to bridle them as false" ("Of Suspicion," Essays 100). Ultimately, we have no place left from which to judge the morality of the Essays. Instead of making such judgments, we learn to "speak usefully."

What can Bacon, and the Essays, show about the rhetoric and ethics of reading? Bacon's attention to the social uses of saying, and not saying what goes without saying, opens an expanded set of connections between writer, reader, and the material talked about. If one conceives the rhetoric of fiction to be a transaction between authors and readers completely defined by the written object, saying what goes without saying might be bad manners, but nothing more. Bacon constructs a momentous work out of what might otherwise be simply a breach of etiquette. Social silence has problems of its own that reach beyond those of authorial silence narrowly considered. Bacon shows that there are ways of being didactic that increase ethical activity by the reader. I would hope—although it cannot here be more than a hope—that this display of how Bacon works might force a reconsideration of the explicitly didactic purposes of novels, dramas, and poems, purposes that we are currently too inclined to discount. Regardless of that hope, Bacon's Essays add to the dimensions of how literature can make us better, and worse, people. Bacon's exhibition of a readjustment of the practical, the moral, and the ethical makes the rhetoric of fiction and the ethics of reading all the more central to how we ought to live.

Notes


2. Gadamer, Truth and Method 16–17: "By 'tact' we understand a particular sensitivity and sensitiveness to situations, and how to behave in them, for which we cannot find any knowledge from general principles. Hence an essential part of tact is inexplicitness and inexpressibility. One can say something tactfully; but that will always mean that one passes over something tactfully and leaves it unsaid, and it is tactless to mean to avert the gaze from something, but to watch it in such a way rather than knock against it, one slips by it. Thus tact helps one to preserve distance, it avoids the offensive, the intrusive, the violation of the intimate sphere of the person."
3. Contrast White, “Thinking About Our Language” 1975: “Part of maintaining a community is maintaining the agreement not to speak or ask about the ways in which its language means differently for different members,” with Bernard Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy 102: “It is one aspiration, that social and ethical relations should not essentially rest on ignorance and misunderstanding of what they are, and quite another that all the beliefs and principles involved in them should be explicitly stated. That these are two different things is obvious with personal relations, where to hope that they do not rest on deceit and error is merely decent, but to think that their basis can be made totally explicit is idiocy.”

4. That the Essays’ intent is one of removing gaps between is and ought is noted by Levy. “Bacon shifted his emphasis from man’s ability to train and control himself to resist the onslights of fortune to man’s ability to control fortune herself, to be the architect of fortune. That shift was heralded by replacing the effort of cultum animi by an examination of the arts of rising at court, that is, by replacing how to ‘be’ with how to ‘seem’” (113). See also, more generally, Maclntyre, “Epistemological Crises.”

5. Plato notes the connection between claims of necessity and rationalization for what one wanted to do anyway at Rep. 6.493b–c: The sophists know “nothing in reality about which of these opinions and desires [sc. those of the many] is honorable or base, good or evil, just or unjust, but should apply all these terms to the judgments of the great beast, calling the things that pleased it good, and the things that vexed it bad, having no other account to render of them, but should call what is necessary just and honorable, never having observed how great is the real difference between the necessary and the good.”

6. Whigham, Ambition and Privilege 170: “To the established aristocrat these [new competitive forms of political advancement] were, in Bacon’s term, not virtues but ‘activity.’ Political accomplishments based on new kinds of ability were now read as subversive of the old order. But the members of that order had long recognized the role of ability (those raised as humanists could do no less); the powers manifested by the promotions therefore had to be denied qua virtues. Political success was redefined as failure, that is, as moral ugliness; political failure was redefined as a moral purity in one who chooses to turn aside from public life rather than to occupy its roles at the expense of integrity. . . . This attitude has long been familiar as a way of mystifying the direct engagement of a leisure class in political dominance by denying its engagement in the most obvious manifestations of power.”

7. So Levy 120: “The man of judgment, the friend of the great, could offer two sorts of advice: how best to wear a mask, and how to discover the reality behind the masks of others.”


9. Whigham x–xi: “The received sense of personal identity, seen as founded on God-given attributes such as birth, was slowly giving way to the more modern notion that the individual creates himself by his own actions.
This new view was enticing to those on the rise, but it threatened those who resisted sharing their positions or who feared they would be displaced. The latter proposed the distinction found in courtesy theory in order to maintain their preeminence; the former read the courtesy books, hoping to avoid being too distinguished. The effect of this practical intellectual struggle was to articulate a sophisticated rhetoric, indeed an epistemology, of personal social identity—a new understanding of how people tell who they are."

10. White, *Heracles' Bow* 65: "One way to identify what is misleading about the form of a legal rule might be to say that it appears to be a language of description, which works by a simple process of comparison, but in cases of any difficulty it is actually a language of judgment, which works in ways that find no expression in the rule itself. In such cases the meaning of its terms is not obvious, as the rule seems to assume, but must be determined by a process of interpretation and judgment to which the rule gives no guidance whatever. The discourse by which it works is in this sense invisible."

11. Levinson 112-13: "There is a fundamental way in which a full account of the communicative power of language can never be reduced to a set of conventions for the use of language. The reason is that wherever some convention or expectation about the use of language arises, there will also therewith arise the possibility of the non-conventional exploitation of that convention or expectation. It follows that a purely conventional or rule-based account of natural language usage can never be complete, and that what can be communicated always exceeds the communicative power provided by the conventions of the language and its use." Dewey 26: "Just because circumstances are really novel and not covered by old rules, it is a gamble which old rule will be declared regulative of a particular case, so that shrewd and enterprising men are encouraged to sail close to the wind and trust to ingenious lawyers to find some rule under which they can get off scot free."

12. Whigham 41: "Obscurantism is the code of the religious and courtly ruling elites; disruptive literalism is that of the unruly oppressed, ambitious for social and religious mobility."

13. For a suggestive remark that indicates just why texts like Bacon's *Essays* should be central to an ethics of literature, see *Company* 253n23: "Along with the strange history of the word 'hypocrisy,' we should add the ambiguous history of the word 'practice.' The earliest recorded sense of the word is 'the action of scheming or planning; artifice; a trick or plot.' Yet the word quickly developed more favorable senses, since—as we say—practice makes perfect." For details, see Orsini, "'Policy' or the Language of Elizabethan Machiavellianism." Booth's discussion of hypocrisy, a crucial but not deeply examined factor in his account of the ethics of fiction, would be enriched by consideration of the complexities of Renaissance debates about imitation, both literary and practical. While the literature is enormous, for some of the interesting details, see Greene, *The Light in Troy."

14. See Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts*. I was glad to be confirmed in my as-
essment of Fish's readings of Bacon by Richard Strier's unpublished consideration of the image of the reader and the reader's experience in *Self-Consuming Artifacts*. See also Whitney, *Francis Bacon and Modernity*.

15. For an application to the *Essays*, see Fish 80–81: "The characterization of the *Essays* as objective, dispassionate, and concisely analytic is hardly borne out by the collective response of those who so characterize them. An impersonal report does not leave its readers wondering about the inner life of the author; nor does it encourage speculation as to whether its own focus is 'traditional,' 'utilitarian,' 'moral,' or blurred."

16. For some purposes it is useful to distinguish several species of mention, all opposed to use. Equally, though, it is important to see how *in use* these different practices of mention run together. The Searle-Derrida debate turns in part on whether, as Searle claims in the name of common sense and logic, use is primary and mention parasitic, or whether, as Derrida more perversely claims, mention is primary and use derivative. For some complications, see Farrell, esp. 56: "I do not see that Derrida distinguishes clearly among four sorts of things: the mentioning of an expression in our talking about it; the quoting of a speaker's earlier speech; the sort of citing we do when, in using an expression rather than mentioning it, we deliberately make a reference to an earlier use of the expression (as when I use the phrase 'Parting is such sweet sorrow' not in order to quote it but to make an assertion to a friend); and the use of language in a play or poem when I am not making assertions about the world." That the idea of *use* includes a diverse set of phenomena, including what goes without saying, is noticed in Cohen 174: "Wittgenstein remarked that under normal conditions it would be odd to say, when I have a pain, *I know I am in pain*. But perhaps this oddity tells us nothing of interest about the meaning of *know*, since it may be due just to the oddity of saying things that are too obvious to be worth saying. The 'use' terminology tends to confuse problems about the conditions under which a concept is applicable to problems about the conditions under which it is appropriate to make utterances involving the concept.” See also Sperber and Wilson, "Irony and the Use-Mention Distinction."

17. Whigham 29–30: "All these texts function as commodities, in two ways. First, each offers a specimen of its author's worth, epideictically; many criteria are at work here besides interior intellectual ones. Second, each offers itemized concepts that may be traded anew by its consumer. . . . The Renaissance conversation in which such coin was spent was often organized by the canons of the *querelle*, wherein the conduct of argument was primarily epideictic and formal, rather than substantive. In such a case ideas as quotable segments of texts may be analyzed in terms of exchange value rather than use value."

18. *Pace* Fish 118: "Bacon is not rejecting the *ideal* of goodness, but pointing out how far from it are the practices of men. It is this that distinguishes him from Machiavelli, or at least from the Machiavelli of popular reputation, a cynic who counsels self-interest at the expense of morality. Bacon is neither
immoral or amoral, but premoral. He accepts the moral ideal as a point of departure, and measures everything against it. The conclusions that follow, then, are conclusions to matters of fact, not directives for future action. When Bacon has finished, the ideal remains; what does not remain is any illusion we may have had about the ease of living up to it. And without illusions, Bacon would argue, our chances of doing just that are much better.” On the more general question of what happens when rules become explicit, see Schneewind 535: “Explicit articulations make sense where unspoken consensus seems to have reached its limits. An appeal to principle is a way of seeing whether that consensus can be projected into a novel area of controversy. Statements of rules and principles thus have a social function in this sort of context, one quite different from that envisaged by moral philosophers but important nonetheless.”

19. Fish 92: “The Essays are to be read not as a series of encapsulations or expressions, but as a refining process that is being enacted by the reader; and to some extent, the question, in any one essay, of exactly what abstraction is being refined, is secondary.” I have already argued against Fish’s tacit and qualified inference to the conclusion that “to some extent” the emphasis on teaching the audience to read prudently somehow makes the content of that teaching irrelevant. See also Box 42: “Most of the essays of 1625 present an initial declaratory statement followed by qualifications and exceptions that undermine our confidence in the initial claim. The effect of this is unsettling but far from provocative in the Baconian scientific sense.”

20. Booth, Rhetoric of Fiction 424: “The fictive experience, in contrast to the experience of most narrative in history and journalism, is thus made out of a special kind of double role-playing: as the actual listener or viewer, capable of joining an unlimited number of authorial audiences, I am ‘made’ to join the ones that are postulated by this particular story—to join them, as we might say, really and not just in pretense; but as a member of the narrative audience, I pretend to go much further and may even weep tears that I know to be ‘false’ even though they are physically real.

“The resulting tension between belief systems (a tension ordinarily not brought into consciousness) is the essential mark of the domains of fiction and it is the source of many distinctive effects, including our freedom to dwell in worlds expanded beyond what we could permit ourselves to dwell in ‘really.’ And it is utterly missing from all historical narratives except those that deliberately and openly contradict what the auctorial audience believes about historical fact—in short, those that become fictional.”

21. Rossi 15. “Bacon analysed substances to determine their primal natures or irreducible qualities, so that gold becomes a combination of yellowness, specific weight, a degree of pliancy, malleability and so forth. This process is akin to that of reducing a word to its component letters, and so these primal natures are ‘nature’s alphabet’ and constitute the ultimate elements to which the whole of nature can be reduced.”

22. Fish 94. “Such a morality, [Bacon] implies, may well be immoral (use-
less), for it leaves a man ignorant of and defenseless against the real complexity of the situations that will confront him. . . . The essays advocate nothing (except perhaps a certain openness and alertness of mind); they are descriptive, and a description is ethically neutral, although, if it is accurate, it may contribute to the development of a true, that is, responsible, ethics.” Box, after refuting some of Fish’s stranger mischaracterizations of Bacon’s aphoristic method, questions whether Bacon’s description of the method in fact applies to the Essays. “It would seem a simple matter to decide whether the Essays are aphoristic and therefore scientific in Bacon’s sense. Unfortunately, this is not the case because . . . the Baconian aphorism is defined by use and effect rather than by length, pithiness, or any other structural quality. . . . Accordingly, in passing judgment on the scientific style of Bacon’s writing it is necessary to pay more attention to the effects of the content on the reader than to the actual form of the work in question. The question is whether the Essays, by presenting fragmentary but suggestive data, exert a ‘pressure in the direction of “further enquiry”’ [quoting Fish quoting Bacon]. . . . The later essays are not aphoristic in the ‘Baconian’ sense. Rather, the systematic presentation of assertions followed by qualifications is intended to impart to the reader a sense of the uncertainty and contingency of social life” (34).

See also Whitney 183: “Like the Novum Organum, the Essays reveal the modern paradox of the aphorism, that the literary effort to present the naked truth with all the force of its flashing moment of discovery occludes, veils, or all but dissolves naked truth.”

23. “There is no greater impediment to action than an over-curious observance of decency, and the guide of decency, which is time and season” (2.23.3, 180). “Behavior seemeth to me as a garment of the mind and to have the conditions of a garment. For it ought to be made in fashion; it ought not to be too curious; it ought to be shaped so as to set forth any good making of the mind, and hide any deformity; and above all, it ought not to be too strait, or restrained for exercise or motion” (2.23.3, 181).

24. Kant, Critique of Judgment, sec. 29. 136/275: “Simplicity (artless purposiveness) is, as it were, nature’s style in the sublime. Hence it is also the style of morality, which is a second (namely, a supersensible) nature, of which we know only the laws, without being able to reach, by means of intuition, the supersensible ability within ourselves that contains the basis of this legislation.”

25. For an elementary treatment of this distinction, see Lanham, Style: An Anti-Textbook.

26. 2.17.13, 145: “. . . rule unto what degree of particularity a knowledge should descend. . . . For certainly there must be somewhat left to practice; but how much is worthy the inquiry. We see remote and superficial generalities do but offer knowledge to scorn of practical men; and are no more aiding to practice than an Ortelius’ universal map is to direct the way between London and York. The better sort of rules have been not unfitly compared to glasses
of steel unpolished, where you may see the images of things, but first they must be filed: so the rules will help, if they be laboured and polished by practice." Compare the following: "Of Seditious and Troubles" (Essays 45): "For the remedies [of seditions]; there may be some general preservatives, whereof we shall speak; as for the just cure, it must answer to the particular disease, and so be left to counsel rather than rule." "Of Counsel" (Essays 65): "Neither is it enough to consult concerning persons secundum genera, as in an idea or mathematical description, what the kind and character of the person should be; for the greatest errors are committed, and the most judgment is shewn, in the choice of individuals." 2.23.1, 179 (5, 32): "Civil knowledge is conversant about a subject which of all others is most immersed in matter, and hardliest reduced to axiom. Nevertheless, as Cato the Censor said, That the Romans were like sheep, for that a man might better drive a flock of them, than one of them; for in a flock, if you could but get some few to go right, the rest would follow: so in that respect moral philosophy is more difficult than policy." (Cf. 2.23.15, 189: "Although the knowledge itself falleth not under precept, because it is of individuals, yet the instructions for the obtaining of it may.") 2.25.11, 214: "As to brevity, we see, in all summary methods, while men purpose to abridge, they give cause to dilate. For the sum or abridgement by contraction becometh obscure; the obscurity requireth exposition, and the exposition is diduced into large commentaries, or into common places and titles, which grow to be more vast than the original writings, whence the sum was at first extracted."

27. For what it means simultaneously to follow a rule and to be active, see Vining 45: "How does one imagine oneself going about following a decision? What are called 'the rules laid down by a decision' are verbal formulations of the reasons relied upon by a decision maker in making the decision. Those reasons are values, importances; any decision maker acting in a particular role necessarily gives relative weights to them in making a particular decision. One follows the decision by focusing upon the values appropriate for that role and discovering the weights used by the decision maker."

28. Cf. Cavell 307: "No rule or principle could function in a moral context the way regulatory or defining rules function in games. It is as essential to the form of life called morality that rules so conceived be absent as it is essential to the form of life we call a game that they be present."

29. Rossi 33. "What debars magic and alchemy from the status of science ... is precisely the burden they entrust to individual judgment and skill."

30. Advancement of Learning, 2.21.9, 165–66: "Men of corrupted minds presuppose that honesty growth out of simplicity of manners, and believing of preachers, schoolmasters, and men’s exterior language: so as, except you can make them perceive that you know the utmost reaches of their own corrupt opinions, they despise all morality; Non recipit stultus verba prudentiae, nisi ea dixeris quae versantur in corde ejus." This view is expressed in the Republic by Adiamantus: "Except that a man by inborn divinity of his nature disdains
injustice, or, having won to knowledge, refrains from it, no one else is willingly just, but that it is from lack of manly spirit or from old age or some other weakness that men dispraise injustice, lacking the power to practice it” (2.366d).

31. Consider, for example, the first essay, “Of Truth.” We are told both that a pure truth is less and more desirable than one mixed with falsehood: “Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that sheweth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that sheweth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure” (Essays 3). On the other hand: “It will be acknowledged even by those that practise it not, that clear and round dealing is the honour of man’s nature; and that mixture of falsehood is like allay in coin of gold and silver; which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it” (Essays 4). For a similar sentiment in the Advancement of Learning, see 2.23-33, 197: “These grave solemn wits, which must be like themselves, and cannot make departures, have more dignity than felicity.”

32. See also 2.23-35, 198, quoted previously, and 2.14.6, 131: “This part concerning elenches is excellently handled by Aristotle in precept, but more excellently by Plato in example; not only in the persons of the Sophists, but even in Socrates himself; who, professing to affirm nothing, but to inform that which was affirmed by another, hath exactly expressed all the forms of objection, fallacy, and regardation. And although we have said that the use of this doctrine is for regardation, yet it is manifest the degenerate and corrupt use is for caption and contradiction, which passeth for a great faculty, and no doubt is of very great advantage: though the difference be good which was made between orators and sophisters, that the one is as the greyhound which hath his advantage in the race, and the other as the hare which hath her advantage in the turn, as it is the advantage of the weaker creature.” See also Advancement 6, 268-69, discussing “lesser forms” or “those parts of a speech which answer to the vestibules, back doors, antechambers, withdrawing-chambers, passages, &c., of a house; and may serve indiscriminately for all subjects. Such are preaces, conclusions, digressions, transitions, intimations of what is coming, excusations, and a number of the kind. For as in buildings it is a great matter both for pleasure and use that the fronts, doors, windows, approaches, passages, and the like be conveniently arranged, so also in a speech these accessory and interstitial passages (if they be handsomely and skilfully fashioned and placed) add a great deal both of ornament and effect to the entire structure.”

33. In addition to The Company We Keep, the final section of Critical Understanding is an important reflection on connections between “flesh and blood” authors and readers and implied and constructed authors and readers.
Bibliography


V

Booth, Assent, and Argument