

Francis Bacon and the Rank-Raglan Mythotype

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Abstract

This article explores features of the heroic archetype or “monomyth” in the biography of Sir Francis Bacon, working from the 22-point list developed by Lord Raglan. Beginning with the latter half of the list, we find several points of correspondence, then turn to the first half, beginning with *the hero is born to a royal virgin*, presenting evidence in support of the long-held conjecture that Bacon was the son of Elizabeth I (the virgin queen) and Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. At some point after learning of his true origin, I argue, Bacon formed a conception of the heroic archetype, based on his knowledge of mythology, with which he personally identified. If true, this is critical for understanding the genesis of Bacon’s grand projects, and hence the modern era; in the words of Albert Schweitzer, “Bacon drafted the programme of the modern world view.”

The heroic archetype

A number of writers have attempted to explain the significance of recurring or archetypal features of mythology, particularly the “monomyth” popularized in the work of Joseph Campbell. Otto Rank’s *Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (1909, English translation 1914) frames the general question of the archetype as such:

The prominent civilized nations—the Babylonians and Egyptians, the Hebrews and Hindus, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans, as well as the Teutons and others—all began at an early stage to glorify their national heroes—mythical princes and kings, founders of religions, dynasties, empires, or cities—in a number of poetic tales and legends. The history of the birth and of the early life of these personalities came to be especially invested with fantastic features, which in different nations—even though widely separated by space and entirely independent of each other—present a baffling similarity or, in part, a literal correspondence.¹

¹ Rank, Otto. *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero and Other Essays*. New York: Vintage, 1959. p. 3

Rank, then a twenty-five-year-old student of Sigmund Freud, interpreted the hero pattern along Oedipal lines, the dynamic of the “family romance,” a child’s desire to replace the father as an object of the mother’s affection. In Bacon’s case, the “killing of the father” motif seems meaningful; the hero myths deal with an abandoned prince who returns to overcome his father, and Bacon gave us modern science, the tool with which humanity challenges our common Father. If this statement raises objections over Bacon’s relative importance, the new critical edition of *Novum Organum* by Oxford University Press asks:

Where else in the literature before Bacon does one come across a stripped-down natural-historical programme of such enormous scope and scrupulous precision, and designed to serve as the basis for a complete reconstruction of human knowledge which would generate new, vastly productive sciences . . . Where else does one find a concept of scientific research which implies an institutional framework of such proportions that it required generations of permanent state funding to sustain it?

Bacon also invented the first binary code, the basis of computers, which (according to some) will finally supplant dirty reality once and for all; so if we end up in the Matrix, you will know who to blame.

Rank mentions *Hamlet* as an example of the archetype: “The fable of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* also permits of a similar interpretation, according to Freud . . . mythological investigators bring the Hamlet legend from entirely different viewpoints into the correlation of the circle of myths.”² Rank’s remarks on *Hamlet* are of interest; without noting that the first printed edition appeared soon after Elizabeth died in 1603, he does conjecture:

it seems to me not improbable that the inspired poet portrayed himself in the Danish prince, so that he might with impunity utter high treason . . . the participation of Hamlet in his entrapping play might be explained from the fact that powerful opponents of Elizabeth did really use the poet as a means to attack her and stir her conscience. In this case, we should have a reflection, in Hamlet’s editing of the “play,” of the part important friends of the poet actually had in his work.³

Like Freud, Rank voiced doubts over the canon’s attribution: “we know so little of his actual life and even doubt his authorship. Shakespeare’s work

² *Ibid.*, p. 3

³ *Ibid.*, p. 237

and the biographical material that has been gathered about the Stratford butcher's son have just as much psychological connection as have the Homeric poems and our scanty information about the blind Ionian singer."⁴

Rank eventually broke with Freud over the primacy of the Oedipal concept. Another student of Freud's, Jung, offered a different explanation for archetypes in the "collective unconscious," described as "a psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals." In turn a student of Jung's, Erich Neumann, addressed the monomyth in *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, stating an interesting possibility latent in Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*: the hero story represents God's autobiography, so to speak, or the implementation of monotheistic religion:

The hero, as bringer of the new, is the instrument of a new manifestation of the father-god. In him the patriarchal gods struggle against the Great Mother, the invaders' gods against the indigenous gods, Jehovah against the gods of the heathen. Basically it is a struggle between two god images or sets of gods, the old father-god defending himself against the new son-god, and old polytheistic system resisting usurpation by the new monotheism, as is exemplified by the archetypal wars of the gods.⁵

Several of Neumann's remarks will be seen to have remarkable correspondences in Bacon's life.

In 1936 Lord Raglan published *The Hero, A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama*, outlining a 22-point list of hero myth attributes. Raglan insisted on the ahistorical nature of the stories, ascribing their common features to ritual, after Frazer's *Golden Bough*: "the traditional narrative has no basis either in history or in philosophical speculation, but is derived from the myth; and that the myth is a narrative connected with a rite."

[T]here is no justification for believing that any of these heroes were real persons, or that any of the stories of their exploits had any historical foundation . . . although several of the incidents are such as have happened to many historical heroes, yet I have not found an undoubtedly historical hero to whom more than six points can be awarded, or perhaps seven in the case of Alexander the Great.⁶

⁴ Ibid., p. 199

⁵ Neumann, Erich. *The Origins and History of Consciousness* New York: Pantheon Books, 1954. p. 177

⁶ Somerset, Fitzroy. *The Hero, a Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama*. London: Watts & Co., 1949 p.189

Raglan does not mention Bacon, who scores anywhere from seven to perhaps ten or eleven points, depending on whether “virgin princess” attributes are counted. The omission is slightly curious, as Bacon himself wrote a book of allegorical interpretations of Greek myths, *Wisdom of the Ancients*, originally published in Latin in 1609. He begins with a preface outlining his reasons for seeking deeper meaning in the stories: “my judgment is, that a concealed instruction and allegory was originally intended in many of the ancient fables”:

the argument of most weight with me is this, that many of these fables by no means appear to have been invented by the persons who relate and divulge them, whether Homer, Hesiod, or others; for if I were assured they first flowed from those later times and authors that transmit them to us, I should never expect anything singularly great or noble from such an origin.

Bacon pointedly tells us he does not believe the works of Homer and Hesiod were composed by their purported authors; is this a sly allusion to Shakespeare?

Let us now turn to Raglan’s list, beginning with the latter half.

13. Becomes king

As Lord Chancellor, Bacon was second in command to King James, but he briefly became temporary regent of England while James was in Scotland for his golden jubilee visit in 1617. Taking his seat at the Court of Chancery in Westminster Hall, Bacon dressed head to toe in purple, as he did for his wedding⁷; by law, only royals could wear purple, the amount depending on rank; the first biography of Bacon appeared in Pierre Amboise’s *Histoire Naturelle de Mre. Francois Bacon* (1631) which states he was “born in the purple and brought up with the expectation of a great career.”

14. For a time reigns uneventfully

This may fall outside the scope of Bacon’s story, but Raglan’s comments are relevant to the point immediately below:

⁷ Letter from G. Gerrard to Sir D. Carlton, 9 May 1617. *Calendar of State Papers: Domestic Series: James I*, vol. xc ii, no.15

Our hero has now become king, and what does he do? It might be supposed that, having shown himself so brave and enterprising before coming to the throne, he would forthwith embark upon a career of conquest; found an empire and a dynasty; build cities, temples, and palaces; patronize the arts; possess a large harem; and behave generally as the conquering heroes of history have behaved, or tried to behave. The hero of tradition, however, in this as in most other respects, is totally unlike the hero of history. He does none of these things, and his story, from the time of his accession to the time of his fall, is as a rule a complete blank. The only memorial of his reign, apart from the events which begin and end it, is the traditional code of laws which is often attributed to him. As a fact, however, a code of laws is always the product of hundreds, if not thousands, of years of gradual evolution, and is never in any sense the work of one man. One man, a Justinian or a Napoleon, may cause laws to be codified, or may alter their incidence, but it has never been suggested that all, or even any, of the laws in their codes were devised by these monarchs. It is well known, in fact, that they were not.

15. He prescribes laws

Bacon served as Solicitor General, Attorney General and Lord Chancellor; he wrote the charters for the Virginia Colony and the death sentence of Sir Walter Raleigh. As noted above, he did not impart a whole new code of law, however he was compared with the Greek lawgiver Solon in *Minerva Brittana* (1612), which will appear later. The first *History of the Royal Society* (1667) hails Bacon as a kind of scientific Moses:

Bacon, like Moses, led us forth at last,
The barren wilderness he past,
Did on the very border stand
Of the blest promis'd land,
And from the mountain's top of his exalted wit,
Saw it himself and shew'd us it.

Indeed, at times Bacon tried to act as a sort of moral lawgiver for science, as is apparent in *Valerius Terminus*:

Wherefore seeing that knowledge is of the number of those things which are to be accepted of with caution and distinction; being now to open a fountain, such as it is not easy to discern where the issues and streams thereof will take and fall; I thought it good and necessary in the first place, to make a strong and sound head or bank to rule and guide the course of the waters; by setting down this position or firmament,

namely, "That all knowledge is to be limited by religion, and to be referred to use and action."

But yet evermore it must be remembered, that the least part of knowledge passed to man by this so large a charter from God, must be subject to that use for which God hath granted it, which is the benefit and relief of the state and society of man.

Many have claimed that Shakespeare's legal knowledge strongly suggests he was a lawyer; for example, in *Merchant of Venice* alone over fifty legal terms are used with easy precision. It is true that the Earl of Oxford was admitted to Gray's Inn, but he never worked as a lawyer and certainly didn't attain the level of expertise possessed by the mastermind of Shakespeare, as Bacon did. As Mark Twain put it in his book on the authorship question, *Is Shakespeare Dead?* (1909):

Shakespeare couldn't have written Shakespeare's works, for the reason that the man who wrote them was limitlessly familiar with the laws, and the law-courts, and law-proceedings, and lawyer-talk, and lawyer-ways . . . a man can't handle glibly and easily and comfortably and successfully the argot of a trade at which he has not personally served. He will make mistakes; he will not, and cannot, get the trade-phrasings precisely and exactly right; and the moment he departs, by even a shade, from a common trade-form, the reader who has served that trade will know the writer hasn't.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the earliest printed mention of Shakespeare or his work is found in Robert Greene's *Menaphon*, published in 1589, in a preface written by Thomas Nashe that states:

It is a common practice now-a-days amongst a sort of shifting companions, that run through every art and thrive by none, to leave the trade of noverint [lawyer's clerk] whereto they were born and busy themselves with the endeavours of art, that could scarcely Latinize their neck-verse if they should have need; yet English Seneca read by candlelight yields many good sentences, as *Blood is a beggar*, and so forth, and if you entreat him fair in a frosty morning, he will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls, of tragical speeches.

Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* (1601) is said to portray Bacon as Ovid Junior, a law student who spends his time reading poetry instead of studying law, upsetting his father:

Ovid Sr. Are these the fruits of all my travail and expenses? Is this the scope and aim of thy studies? Are these the hopeful courses wherewith I have so long flattered my

expectation from thee? Verses? Poetry? Ovid, whom I thought to see the pleader [lawyer], become Ovid the play-maker?

Ovid Jr. No, sir.

Ovid Sr. Yes, sir; I hear of a tragedy of yours coming forth for the common players there, call'd *Medea* . . . What? shall I have my son a stager now?

Ovid Junior tells his father “*I am not known upon the open stage: nor do I traffic in their theatres*” (emphasis added). *Medea* is of course known for killing her own sons; this seems to be a pointed reference to Elizabeth. Interestingly, the second part of *Don Quixote*, published in Spanish in 1615 and English in 1620, also portrays a father who is upset for the same reason:

‘I, Sir Don Quixote,’ answered the gentleman, ‘have a son, whom if I had not, perhaps you would judge me more happy than I am – not that he is so bad, but because not so good as I would have him. He is about eighteen years of age, six of which he hath spent in Salamanca, learning the tongues, Greek and Latin: and, when I had a purpose that he should fall to other sciences, I found him so besotted with poesy, and that science, if so it may be called, that it is not possible to make him look upon the law, which I would have him study, nor divinity, the queen of all sciences . . . All the day long he spends in his criticisms, whether Homer said well or ill in such a verse of his *Iliads*, whether Martial were bawdy or no in such an epigram, whether such or such a verse in Virgil ought to be understood this way or that way. Indeed, all his delight is in these aforesaid poets, and in Horace, Persius, Juvenal, and Tibullus.’⁸

Another legal linguistic parallel is in Bacon’s note to Elizabeth: “the cessation and abstinence to execute these unnecessary laws do mortify the execution of such as are wholesome.” This idea is also found in *Measure for Measure*: “In time the rod becomes more mocked than feared,” as well as *Don Quixote*: “Statutes not kept are the same as if they were not made.”

17. Driven from throne and city

In the spring of 1621, four years after becoming Lord Chancellor, Bacon was charged with twenty-three counts of bribery and corruption. The charges were drawn up by his lifelong rival Coke, who used a process revived after 161 years of disuse. It appears Bacon pled guilty on the understanding that much of the punishment would be mitigated by pardon from James; he

⁸ *Don Quixote*, part II ch. xvi (Shelton translation).

wrote "I wish that as I am the first, so I may be the last of sacrifices in your time." The results were as follows:

- (1) A fine of £40,000 (approximately £9,000,000 today).
- (2) Imprisoned in the Tower of London, released at James's discretion.
- (3) That he shall forever be incapable of any office, place, or employment, in the State or Commonwealth.
- (4) That he shall never sit in Parliament nor come within the verge (twelve miles) of the Court.

Bacon was released from the Tower after two days; James eventually gave him a full pardon and allowed the £40,000 fine to be assigned as a crown debt, effectively cancelling it. In 1625 Bacon was summoned to Parliament.

In evaluating his actual guilt, several points are worth noting. First, despite his talents as an orator, Bacon did not earn much money at the law; for most of his life he was in debt, as he died; he lived beyond his means, but did not display a nature devoted principally to financial gain:

In some of [Bacon's] accounts we learn that he earned somewhere between four and five thousand guineas a year at the height of his private practice . . . Near contemporaries earned sums more than ten times as much as Bacon. It was rumored that Coke earned a steady fifty thousand guineas and sometimes nearly double that.⁹

In fact, Bacon had actually been working to change the system of legal payments to state salaries, instead of voluntary and irregular contributions:

mainly though the speeches and the writings of Bacon himself, a feeling began to show itself against the payment of judges, registrars, and clerks by uncertain fees . . . An unpaid Bench, though all that society wished for its defence under feudal or Brehon law, may obviously become a dangerous power in a highly artificial and litigious age . . . through the growth of riches and the purification of law, the system of various and precarious fees may be wisely abandoned for a system of payments by the State.¹⁰

Notably, this change was opposed by Coke, who as mentioned did very well in the old system; the *History of Parliament Online* remarks "Bacon despised those whom he regarded as plodding lawyers, like Sir Edward Coke":

⁹ De Montpensier, Roy. "Bacon as Lawyer and Jurist." *Archives for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy* 54, no. 4 (1968): 449–83. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23678418>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Bacon and Coke had a lifelong professional and personal rivalry. They competed for the hand of the same woman, they vied for top government positions, they tussled over the superiority of the courts that they each headed, and they were opposing lawyers in landmark cases.¹¹

Secondly, Bacon worked incredibly hard as Lord Chancellor; within a few months of taking office, he had cleared the massive backlog of cases he inherited, despite the gout that troubled his foot (as Oedipus?).¹² In four years he gave judgement in 8,000 cases; he was so efficient, in fact,

At this period judges and officials of the Common Law Courts had lost and were losing valuable fees and emoluments by reason of plaintiffs and petitioners to the much safer and speedier proceedings in the Court of the Lord Chancellor and his assistants... He had in effect taken away the work of the Common Law Courts for more speedy progression in the Chancery.¹³

If true, this would mean Bacon was costing Coke a lot of money, which would further cloud his motives in drawing up charges. Several writers have taken up the cause of defending Bacon's record as Chancellor, so it is not necessary to labor the point; suffice to say he was "driven from throne and city."

18. Meets with mysterious death

Bacon is presented as a martyr to science, catching pneumonia by experimenting with using snow to preserve a chicken carcass. This was in early April, an unlikely time for enough snow to be present for such an experiment; and in any case Bacon had already written about this. In their biography *Hostage to Fortune: The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon*, Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart write:

Accounts of the circumstances surrounding a prominent death in early modern England need to be taken with more than a pinch of salt. Just like the anecdote of Sir Nicholas Bacon dispensing his last *bon mot* on the barber who thoughtfully left open a

¹¹ <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/bacon-sir-francis-1561-1626>

¹² Raglan 192: "Sometimes, it would seem, the child itself was wounded in the leg; hence perhaps the name 'Oedipus,' 'swell-foot,' and the many heroes who are lame, or who have scars on their legs."

¹³ *American Baconiana*, Vol. 1. November 1923

window for fresh air (that contained the 'cold' that killed him), this account of Bacon's end is carefully constructed.¹⁴

The authors speculate that the story was concocted to conceal the true cause of death, an overdose of opiate. Another possibility is that it was faked; but why would this be necessary?

Bacon predicted a civil war, *propter mores quosdam non ita pridem introductos* "on account of morals not long ago," four decades before it came to pass.¹⁵ The truth appears to be that the English Civil War was at least partly due to the behavior of two royal favourites, Robert Dudley (the Earl of Leicester) in Elizabeth's reign, and Buckingham in James's. Between them, they poisoned a number of prominent members of the aristocracy, alienating the crown; Leicester's victims likely included Sir Nicholas Bacon, adoptive father of Francis. Both Leicester and Buckingham were the subject of widely circulated pamphlets accusing them of numerous murders, apparently not without cause; an incomplete copy of *Leicester's Commonwealth* was included in the Northumberland Manuscript, a contemporary document linking Bacon and Shakespeare.

¹⁴ Jardine, Lisa and Stewart, Alan. *Hostage to Fortune: The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1999. P. 503

¹⁵ is Spedding's preface to *The Interpretation of Nature* vol. 3:

Another thing in the paper before us, not to be found elsewhere in Bacon's writings, is the prophecy of civil wars; which he anticipates *propter mores quosdam non ita pridem introductos* [on account of morals not long ago]; a prediction well worthy of remark, especially as being uttered so early as the beginning of James the First's reign.

^{friend}
honorificabilitudine Loycesters Common Wealth ^{more than external} Incor
^{speech} Leij ^{Dymouth} Adam
Orations at Graues Inne revele
Earle of Arundles ^{Dys} Queenes Mate ^{ma}
letter to the Queenes ^{most} By Mr. Francis Bacon Bacon
Essaies by the ^{same} author ^{By}
By Mr. Francis William Shakespeare
Bacon Richard the second Shakesp
Francis

Northumberland Manuscript (detail) with "Francis Bacon," "William Shakespeare," "Leycester's Commonwealth," and "honorificabilitudine" from *Love's Labour's Lost*. Richard the Second is visible at bottom as well, and interestingly we find "Earl of Arundel"; Bacon purportedly died at Arundel's estate in Highgate.

Buckingham eventually offended James by corresponding on his behalf without consultation; he then poisoned James, whose son Charles I was at least tacitly complicit in the murder and coverup. This sensational story is in *The Murder of King James I*, published by Yale University Press in 2015. Bacon had served the crown faithfully throughout his life, often in tasks that were disagreeable, such as writing propaganda and torture. However, dismissed from Charles's Privy Council, he felt a cold wind and started revising his will. A month before he died, he made moves to circumvent his creditors on behalf of his heirs; then, allegedly, caught a cold and died at the Earl of Arundel's estate in Highgate. Later the same estate would house the Royal Society for several years after the Great Fire of London in 1666. At the time of Bacon's purported death, Arundel was being held in the Tower; Jardine and Stewart remark "In other words, then, Bacon's presence at the house of Arundel—of all people—at this time—of all times—was highly charged." Bacon's last letter is to Arundel, thanking him for his hospitality and

explaining that like Pliny the Elder, who perished inhaling the fumes of Vesuvius, he was likely to die in the cause of science. Bacon's will bequeaths his papers as follows:

Take care that of all my writings, both of English and of Latin, there may be books fair bound, and placed in the King's library, and in the library of the University of Cambridge, and in the library of Trinity College, where myself was bred, and in the library of Bene's College [Corpus Christi, Cambridge], where my father was bred, and in the library of the University of Oxford, and in the library of my Lord of Canterbury, and in the library of Eton. Also, I desire my executors, especially my brother Constable, and also Mr. Bosvile, presently after my decease, to take into their hands all my papers whatsoever, which are either in cabinets, boxes, or presses, and tell them to seal up until they may at their leisure pursue them.

Of course, the Stratford will makes no mention of any books or papers. The 1632 Second Folio of Shakespeare contains almost 1,700 revisions to the First Folio; these are often of a highly technical nature and collectively suggest that the real Shakespeare mastermind was alive to perform them:

The very suggestion that the enormous 1,679 amendments, revisions, corrections and improvements concerning the dramatic action, stage-craft, metre, verse, language and style in the Second Shakespeare Folio were executed by a combination of the printer, anonymous compositors and correctors or some unknown editor is simply absurd. Not only would these imagined individuals needed to have been classical scholars and linguists (Greek, Latin, French, and Italian-languages familiar to Bacon) they would have had to possess a necessary sophisticated comprehension of English grammar and syntax. They would also have needed to possess a practiced and superior literary skill to write and rewrite lines and exercise stylistic preferences. The printer, compositors, correctors, or the editor (or any combination thereof) would also have needed to have been seasoned poets and dramatists and have professional and practical experience of the theatre to equip them with the knowledge and skills to introduce the appropriate speech prefixes and various stage-directions. Perhaps most importantly, the revisions, corrections and improvements required the unnamed and unidentified individuals to inhabit the very structure and architecture of the plays as well as possess an intimate familiarity with their fictive world, the kind of course, known and understood by the author himself, Francis Bacon, the very person responsible for them.¹⁶

¹⁶ Phoenix, A. "Did Francis Bacon Die in 1626?" <https://aphoenix1.academia.edu/research#papers>

19. Dies at the top of a hill

Highgate, where Bacon purportedly died, is a hill overlooking London.

20. His children, if any, do not succeed him

Bacon had no children; as Jardine and Stewart state, “The real legacy of Francis Bacon did not lie in land or property, and its route to posterity did not lie through his blood lineage.”¹⁷

So far, six or perhaps seven points; let us now return to the beginning of Raglan’s list:

1. Born to a royal virgin

Elizabeth’s virgin queen role was intended as a Protestant alternative to the Virgin Mary; archetypal “virgin princess” hero births include Apollo, Heracles, Oedipus, Dionysus, Romulus and Perseus. As noted, Bacon wrote a book about allegory in Greek mythology, so he would have likely known these stories from youth; he was reading Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in Latin at age seven. Writers who ascribe the Shakespeare works to Bacon often claim he was the son of Elizabeth and Dudley, and that the couple had another son, Robert Devereaux, the Earl of Essex, born four years later. Before the possibility of such outrageous fortune is dismissed out of hand, it is worth reflecting that it would help explain the power of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, otherwise thought to have originated in the vortex of Shakespeare’s imagination. Bacon has been criticized for his prosecution of Essex, his friend and patron, for treason in 1601; but if Bacon and Essex had the same parents, it would mean Francis Bacon was born of a “virgin,” a born king (but as it turned out, not of this world – his library was dukedom enough), and he prosecuted his rebellious brother who attempted to take the throne by force. Perhaps an awareness of these parallels with Jesus gave Bacon the boldness to proclaim that he was more than a man:

Now if the utility of any single invention so moved men, that they accounted *more than man* him who could include the whole human race in some solitary benefit, that invention is certainly much more exalted, which by a kind of mastery contains within itself all particular inventions, and delivers the mind from bondage, and opens it a

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 516

road, that under sure and unerring guidance it may penetrate to whatever can be of novelty and further advancement.¹⁸

This 1697 engraving (detail) of Elizabeth, by Cornelis Martinus Vermeulen, features three children: one holding a quill, another holding an antique ship's rudder (symbolizing the helm of state), while in the background a third child in shadow prepares to extinguish the vestal flame of Elizabeth's virginity. Concerning the child in shadow –

Certain 'Oxfordians' believe that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was in fact that suspected child of Princess Elizabeth and Thomas Seymour, and passed off as the son of John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford, and his second wife, Margery Golding. But Edward de Vere was, according to records, born the son of the Earl and Countess of Oxford on 12 April 1550 at the family's ancestral home, Hedingham Castle. Moreover, he received a gilded christening cup on his christening from Edward VI, after whom he is thought to have been named in order to honour the king. The christening took place on 17 April 1550, five days after the birth as per normal, with the christening cup being authorised as a gift from the King by the Privy Council. It is highly unlikely that a 15-month-old baby could have been passed off as a new-born child, which would have had to have been the case if the child had been Princess Elizabeth's.¹⁹



Pierre Amboise's *Histoire Naturelle de Mre. Francois Bacon* (1631) states that Bacon was "born in the purple and brought up with the expectation of a great career," purple of course being the color reserved for royalty. William

¹⁸ *Thoughts concerning the Interpretation of Nature*, Tr. Basil Montagu *The Works of Francis Bacon* London: William Pickering 1834

¹⁹ McClinton, Brian. *The Shakespeare Conspiracies: Untangling a 400-Year Web of Myth and Deceit*. Aubane: Aubane Historical Society, 2015.

Rawley, Bacon's trusted amanuensis and chaplain who lived with Francis from 1616-26, states in his account:

Francis Bacon, the glory of his age and nation, the adorning and ornament of learning, was born in York House, or York Place, in the Strand, on the two and twentieth day of January, in the year of our Lord 1560 [1561].

The question of Bacon's birthplace, whether York House or York Place (certainly known to Rawley), imports more than might appear; York House was the London home of Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne Bacon, next door stood York Place or the palace of Whitehall, main residence of Queen Elizabeth and Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. At the time, a rumor that Elizabeth was pregnant bruited abroad; in August of 1560 one Anne Dowe of Brentwood, a sixty-eight-year-old widow, was the first of several arrested for speaking thus publicly. Soon after, the Spanish ambassador met with William Cecil, Elizabeth's chief counselor (soon to be Francis Bacon's uncle), and wrote of the encounter

[Cecil] said that the Queen was going on so strangely that he was about to withdraw from her service . . . Lord Robert had made himself master of the business of the state and of the person of the Queen, to the extreme injury of the realm, with the intention of marrying her, and she herself was shutting herself up in the palace to the peril of her health and life. That the realm would tolerate the marriage, he said he did not believe . . . Last of all, he said that they were thinking of destroying Lord Robert's wife. They had given out that she was ill, but she was not ill at all; she was very well and taking care not to be poisoned . . . Since writing the above, I hear the Queen has published the death of Robert's wife.²⁰

Amy Dudley was found at a friend's home near Oxford with a broken neck. Leicester did not attend the funeral and the court ruled it an accident; four months later, Francis Bacon was born. More diplomatic correspondence substantiates the claim that Bacon was the result of the union of Elizabeth and Dudley.

The Story of the Learned Pig (1786), a pamphlet printed under the pseudonym "Transmigratus," contains a subtle allusion to Bacon's royal descent, plainly stating he was behind the Shakespeare works:

My parents, indeed, were of low extraction; my mother sold fish about the streets of this metropolis, and my father was a water-carrier celebrated by Ben Jonson in his

²⁰ Letter to the Duchess of Parma, dated 11 September 1560

comedy of *Every Man in his Humour* . . . I soon after contracted a friendship with that great man and first of geniuses, the 'Immortal Shakespeare,' and am happy in now having it in my power to refuse the prevailing opinion of his having run his country for deer-stealing, which is as false as it is disgracing. The fact is, Sir, that he had contracted an intimacy with the wife of a country Justice near Stratford, from his having extolled her beauty in a common ballad; and was unfortunately, by his worship himself, detected in a very awkward situation with her. Shakespeare, to avoid the consequences of this discovery, thought it most prudent to decamp. This I had from his own mouth. With equal falsehood has he been father'd with many spurious dramatic pieces. *Hamlet, Othello, As You Like It, the Tempest, and Midsummer's Night Dream*, for five; of all which I confess myself to be the author.

While the *Learned Pig* does not specifically mention Bacon by name, the "water-carrier celebrated by Ben Jonson" is a character named Cob; when he appears onstage the following exchange takes place (emphasis added):

Cob. I sir, I and my lineage ha' kept a poor house, here, in our days.

Mat. **Thy lineage, Monsieur Cob, what lineage, what lineage?**

Cob. Why Sir, **an ancient lineage, and a princely. Mine ance'try came from a King's belly, no worse Man**

...

Cob. I Sir, with favour of your Worship's nose, Mr. Matthew, why not the ghost of a herring Cob, as well as the ghost of **rasher-bacon?**

Mat. **Roger Bacon**, thou wouldst say?

Cob. I say **Rasher-Bacon**. They were both broil'd o' the coals; and a man may smell broil'd meat, I hope? you are a scholar, upsolve me that, now...

...

Mat. Lie in a water-bearer's House! A Gentleman of his havings! Well, I'll tell him my mind.

Bacon was born in the sign of Aquarius, or the house of the water bearer; here it might be relevant to cite the oldest representative of the heroic archetype, Sargon of Akkad, founder of Babylon:

Sargon, the mighty king, King of Agade, am I. My mother was a vestal, my father I knew not, while my father's brother dwelt in the mountains. In my city Azuripani, which is situated on the bank of the Euphrates, my mother, the vestal, bore me. In a hidden place she brought me forth. She laid me in a vessel made of reeds, closed my door with pitch, and dropped me down into the river, which did not drown me. The river carried me to Akki, the water carrier. Akki the water carrier lifted me up in the kindness of his heart, Akki the water carrier raised me as his own son, Akki the water carrier raised me as his own son, Akki the water carrier made of me his gardener. In my work as a gardener I was beloved by Ishtar, I became the king, and for forty-five years I held kingly sway.



Pregnancy portrait of Elizabeth with Acteon as a stag, Hampton Court Palace

Bacon's account of Acteon in *Wisdom of the Ancients*:

Acteon, undesignedly chancing to see Diana naked, was turned into a stag, and torn to pieces by his own hounds . . . For they, who are not intimate with a prince, yet against his will have a knowledge of his secrets, inevitably incur his displeasure; and therefore, being aware that they are singled out, and all opportunities watched against them, they lead the life of a stag, full of fears and suspicions. It likewise frequently happens that their servants and domestics accuse them, and plot their overthrow, in order to procure favour with the prince; for whenever the king manifests his

displeasure, the person it falls upon must expect his servants to betray him, and worry him down, as Acteon was worried by his own dogs.

More from Neumann:

The virgin mother, connected directly with the god who engenders the new order, but only indirectly with the husband, gives birth to the hero who is destined to bring that new order into being and destroy the old . . . The hero's descent from the reigning family is symbolic of the struggle for the system of rulership, for that is what the struggle is really about.

As A. Jeremias has pointed out and amply proved, the essence of the mythological canon of the hero-redeemer is that he is fatherless or motherless, that one of the parents is often divine, and that the hero's mother is frequently the Mother Goddess herself or else betrothed to a god . . . mythology represents the hero as having two fathers: a personal father who does not count or is the father of the carnal lower man, of the mortal part; and a heavenly father who is the father of the heroic part, of the higher man, who is "extraordinary" and immortal.

These mothers are virgin mothers, which is not to say that what psychoanalysis has attempted to read into this fact is necessarily correct. As everywhere in the ancient world, virginity simply means not belonging to any man personally; virginity is in essence sacred, not because it is a state of physical inviolateness, but because it is a state of psychic openness to God.

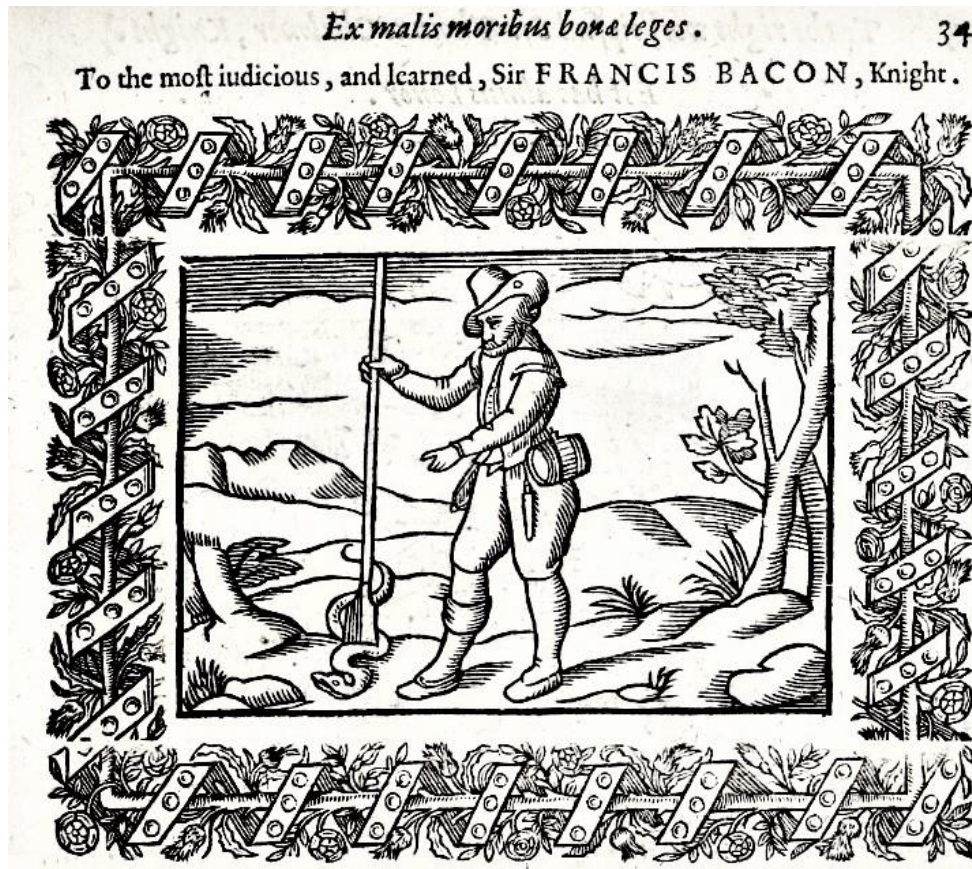
[T]he hero myth is never concerned with the private history of an individual, but always with some prototypal and transpersonal event of collective significance ... Although they appear as inner events, the victory and transformation of the hero are valid for all mankind; they are held up for our contemplation, to be lived out in our own lives, or at least re-experienced by us.²¹

11. Is victor over king, giant, dragon or wild beast.

Bacon's victory was over ignorance, conquering nature on behalf of mankind; as Rank says "we must not forget that man is not only a product of his natural environment, since the essence of every culture is determined by the greater or less degree of its domination of nature and independence of her influences." In Bacon's words:

²¹ Neumann, Erich. *The Origins and History of Consciousness*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970 p. 197

And if the ordinary ambitions of men lead them to seek the amplification of their own power in their countries, and a better ambition than that hath moved men to seek the amplification of the power of their own countries amongst other nations: better again and more worthy must that aspiring be, which seeketh the amplification of the power and kingdom of mankind over the world.



From *Minerva Britanna* (1612); the verses under Bacon read:

The Viper here, that stung the shepherd swain,
(While careless of himself asleep he lay,)
With Hyssop caught, is cut by him in twain,
Her fat might take, the poison quite away,
And heal his wound, that wonder tis to see,
Such sovereign help, should in a Serpent be.

By this same Leach, is meant the virtuous King,
Who can with cunning, out of manners ill,
Make wholesome laws, and take away the sting,
Wherewith foul vice doth grieve the virtuous still:

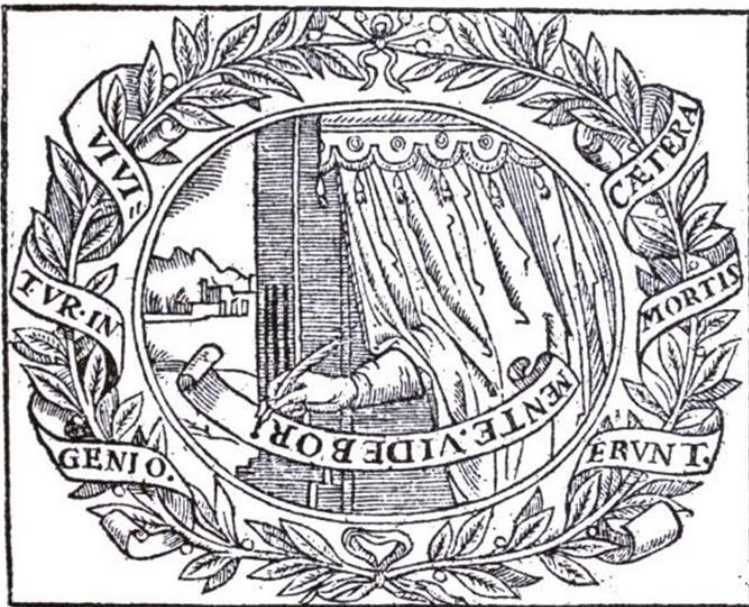
Or can prevent, by quick and wise foresight,
Infection ere it gathers further might.

Notice in the second stanza: "Who can with cunning, out of manners
ill/Make wholesome laws."

The facing page features an armored hand brandishing a spear; in the 1623
Shakespeare First Folio, Ben Jonson's prefatory poem states

he seemes to shake a lance,
As brandish't at the eyes of ignorance.

The title page of *Minerva Britannia* features a
curious illustration of a writing hand emerging
from behind the curtain of a theatre
proscenium. Entwined among laurel leaves, the
legend translated reads "One lives in one's
genius, other things depart in death." The hand
has just written *mente videbor*, "By the mind I
shall be seen."



Neumann again:

The transformation of the hero through the dragon fight is a transfiguration, a
glorification, indeed an apotheosis, the central feature of which is the birth of a higher



WHO thirsteth after Honor, and renowne,
By valiant act, or lasting worke of wit:
In vaine he doth expect, her glorious crowne,

mode of personality. This qualitative and essential change is what distinguishes the hero from the normal person.

It is precisely the persecutions and dangers heaped upon him by the hateful father figure that make him a hero. The obstacles put in his way by the old patriarchal system become inner incentives to heroism, and, so far as the killing of the father is concerned, Rank is quite right when he says that "the heroism lies in overcoming the father, who instigated the hero's exposure and set him the tasks." It is equally right to say that the hero, "by solving the tasks which the father imposed with the intent to destroy him, develops from a dissatisfied son into a socially valuable reformer, and conqueror of man-eating monsters that ravage the countryside, an inventor, a founder of cities, and bringer of culture." But only if we take the transpersonal background into account do we arrive at an interpretation which does justice to the hero as a maker of human history, and which sees in the hero myth a great prototypical event honored by all mankind.

So, did Bacon conceive himself as the incarnation of the archetype? This would partly explain his grand projects; here he should be quoted at length:

Whereas, I believed myself born for the service of mankind, and reckoned the care of the common weal to be among those duties that are of public right, open to all alike, even as the waters and the air, I therefore asked myself what could most advantage mankind, and for the performance of what tasks I seemed to be shaped by nature. But when I searched, I found no work so meritorious as the discovery and development of the arts and inventions that tend to civilize the life of man . . . Above all, if any man could succeed not merely in bringing to light some one particular invention, however useful but in kindling in nature a luminary which would, at its first rising, shed some light on the present limits and borders of human discoveries, and which afterwards, as it rose still higher, would reveal and bring into clear view every nook and cranny of darkness, it seemed to me that such a discoverer would deserve to be called the true Extender of the Kingdom of Man over the universe, the Champion of human liberty, and the Exterminator of the necessities that now keep men in bondage. Moreover, I found in my own nature a special adaptation for the contemplation of truth. For I had a mind at once versatile enough for that most important object – I mean the recognition of similitudes – and at the same time sufficiently steady and concentrated for the observation of subtle shades of difference. I possessed a passion for research, a power of suspending judgment with patience, of meditating with pleasure, of assenting with caution, of correcting false impressions with readiness, and of arranging my thoughts with scrupulous pains. I had no hankering after novelty, no blind admiration for

antiquity. Imposture in every shape I utterly detested. For all these reasons I considered that my nature and disposition had, as it were, a kind of kinship and connection with truth. But my birth, my rearing and education, had all pointed, not toward philosophy, but towards politics: I had been, as it were, imbued in politics from childhood. And as is not unfrequently the case with young men, I was sometimes shaken in my mind by opinions. I also thought that my duty towards my country had special claims upon me, such as could not be urged by other duties of life. Lastly, I conceived the hope that, if I held some honorable office in the state, I might have secure helps and supports to aid my labors, with a view to the accomplishment of my destined task. With these motives I applied myself to politics.

Alexander Pope famously said of Bacon that he was “the wisest, the brightest, the meanest of mankind,” presumably using “mean” in the sense of being humble, and not mean-spirited. Bacon was indeed humble, but he was also conscious of his powers and thought he was inaugurating a new age of scientific discovery, in his own words “commenc[ing] a total reconstruction of sciences, arts, and all human knowledge, raised upon the proper foundation.” As his biographer Spedding said, he firmly believed “the divine blessing was upon his enterprise”; he had the confidence to write in his will that he left his name and memory “to foreign nations, and the next ages,” meaning perhaps that the secrets of his birth, and hence his name, were embarrassing to the British monarchy, who were unlikely to release them willingly. Now, thanks in large part to Bacon’s invention, binary code, they can finally be made public.

This is given out somewhat hastily, in the manner of Bacon’s Prooemium to the *Instauratio Magna*:

Because he knew not how long it might be before these things would occur to anyone else, judging especially from this, that he has found no man hitherto who has applied his mind to the like, he resolved to publish at once so much as he has been able to complete. The cause of which haste was not ambition for himself, but solicitude for the work; that in case of his death there might remain some outline and project of that which he had conceived, and some evidence likewise of his honest mind and inclination toward the benefit of the human race.