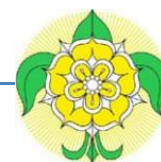


Pantheism



The Orphic, Platonic, Kabbalistic and Christian Pantheism of the philosopher Sir Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban, Lord Chancellor.

Author: Peter Dawkins

The term Pantheism—derived from the Greek πᾶν *pan* (meaning ‘all, of everything’) and θεός *theos* (meaning ‘god, divine’)—was first used in Joseph Raphson’s 1697 Latin book *De Spatio Reali seu Ente Infinito*, wherein he refers to the “pantheismus” of the 17th-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza and others. It subsequently became an English word in a translation of Raphson’s work in 1702. In his work, Raphson distinguishes between atheistic “panhylists” (from the Greek roots *pan*, “all”, and *hyle*, “matter”), who believe everything is matter, and Spinozan “pantheists” who believe in “a certain universal substance, material as well as intelligence, that fashions all things that exist out of its own essence.” He referred to the pantheism of the Ancient Egyptians, Persians, Syrians, Assyrians, Greek, Indians, Jewish Kabbalists and, in particular, Spinoza.

As a result, Pantheism became popularized in Western culture as a theology and philosophy based on the work of the 17th-century philosophers Baruch Spinoza, particularly his book *Ethics*, and Giordano Bruno, whilst acknowledging that Pantheistic concepts date back thousands of years and can be found in most religious traditions.

What has not been so recognised is that Pantheism was exactly Francis Bacon’s point of view 400 years ago, although he took care in both describing and promoting it. Nevertheless, he did make it clear, as especially and blatantly revealed in his “Hidden Truth brought forth by Time” emblem on his 1627 *New Atlantis* title page, where Time is Pan.



‘Hidden Truth brought forth by Time’ emblem, title page, *New Atlantis* (1627)

[B&W emblem coloured by Michele Beaufoy for FBRT]

Pantheism can be described as a belief or doctrine which identifies God with the universe, or regards the universe as a manifestation of God. As Wikipedia says: “Pantheism is the view that everything is part of an all-encompassing, immanent God. All forms of reality may then be considered either modes of that Being, or identical with it.” The World Pantheistic Movement explains: “[Pantheism] fuses religion and science, and concern for humans with

concern for Nature. It provides the most realistic concept of life after death, and the most solid basis for environmental ethics. It is a religion that requires no faith other than common sense, no revelation other than open eyes and mind open to evidence, no Guru other than your own self.”

Yet, whilst obviously believing in and promoting what was later called Pantheism, Bacon was also a Christian. How is this possible, since the Christian Church, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, has been so vehemently anti-anything that they consider pagan or pantheistic? Well, if one takes the fundamental teachings of both Christ and Moses, and indeed the fundamental teachings of the Church as distinct from the various added doctrines, there is no disparity between the two.

There is, for instance, what is known as Transcendence and Immanence, which is really referring to the Unmanifest and the Manifest. Or, as Bacon and the Ancients also said, Non-Being and Being. The fundamental Church teaching is that there is only what is called God, therefore there is God Unmanifest (Transcendent) and God Manifest (Immanent). Moreover, as Jesus Christ explained very clearly, God is Love. Therefore, there is Love Unmanifest and Love Manifest. Added to this, it is taught that the first manifestation of God/Love is Light. Put another way, Light is Darkness Visible; Darkness is Light Invisible.¹ Bacon, using the terminology of the Dionysian-Orphic Mysteries, refers to Love Manifest as Cupid (Greek: Eros, ‘Love’), known also as Protogonus (‘First-born’), Logos (‘Word’) and Phanes (‘Light’).

The Manifest is what we call the Universe—and, as the word itself says, there is only one Universe. (The word ‘universe’ is from Latin *universus*, meaning ‘entire’, ‘all’—literally, ‘turned into one’, the word being composed of *uni*, ‘one’, + *versus*, the past participle of *vertere*, ‘to turn’.) There is a modern tendency to speak of multiverses (i.e. multiple universes), but even such different states of being would still exist within the one overall Universe. This one and only Universe is the All, and ‘All’ is the meaning of the word ‘Pan’.² And in this Universe, the Church teaches, God (Love) is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. This is Pantheism.

According to the first chapter of Genesis in the Bible, what is manifested on the first ‘Day’ or stage of manifestation is Light, known as the First-born, the Sun/Son of God. Then, on the second and third Days, the ‘waters’ or substance of the Light divides itself into four realms, and within and out of these four realms all else is created on the third and following Days.

This first chapter of Genesis defines the whole creative process in terms of the Six Days of Creation—and, moreover, as a creative process that is going on continuously, since this all takes place “In the beginning”. The Hebrew word *בְּרֵאשִׁית* (*BeRASHIT*), which begins the first sentence of Genesis and is commonly translated as “In the beginning”, properly means “In the beginning of the beginning that is always beginning” or “In the beginning without end”. In other words, Creation is ongoing. Creation is the ongoing, continuing, eternal manifestation of the Unmanifest, which Unmanifest is God, the Divine Love. Put absolutely simply, Creation is the eternally ongoing manifestation of divine Love.

It follows, therefore, that all creatures, all forms, that exist within the Universe not only contain Divinity within them but are expressions of Divinity in various stages and degrees of coming into manifestation, from darkness to light, from nonexistence to existence, and, because of what is called the ‘Fall’, from imperfection to perfection.

The All, or Pan, is also known as Nature, for the Universe has a nature as well as form, which nature is alternatively known as its spirit—hence Pan is further described as the Spirit of Nature. Moreover, this Nature, or Pan, has consciousness. In other words, as Bacon pointed out, the Universe has a mind. In the terminology of the day that Bacon uses, mind is equated with soul—hence the Universe has a soul. In terms of the classical myth of Pan, this mind or soul would be Echo, Pan’s beloved. These two, Pan and Echo, constitute what Bacon calls “the truth of being and the truth of knowing”—the Double Truth; and this is one of the meanings, if not the essential meaning, of the AA hieroglyph (see [‘The Secret Signature’](#) and below).

They say then that Love was the most ancient of all the gods; the most ancient therefore of all things whatever, except Chaos, which was said to have been coeval with him; and Chaos is never distinguished by the ancients with divine honour or the name of a god. This Love is introduced without any parent at all; only that some say he was an egg of Night. And himself out of Chaos begot all things, the gods included...

The fable relates to the cradle and infancy of nature, and pierces deep. This Love I understand to be the appetite or instinct of primal matter; or to speak more plainly, the natural motion of the atom; which is indeed the original and unique force that constitutes and fashions all things out of matter. Now this is entirely without parent; that is, without cause. For the cause is as it were parent of the effect; and of this virtue there can be no cause in nature (God always excepted): there being nothing before it, therefore no efficient; nor anything more original in nature, therefore neither kind nor form. Whatever it be, therefore, it is a thing positive and inexplicable. And even if it were possible to know the method and process of it, yet to know it by way of cause is not possible; it being, next to God, the cause of causes—itsself without cause...

Francis Bacon, ‘Cupid, or the Atom,’ *Wisdom of the Ancients*.

The Ancients have exquisitely described Nature under the person of Pan, whose original they leave doubtful.... Pan (as his name imports) represents and lays open the All of Things or Nature. Concerning his original there are only two opinions that go for current; for either he came of *Mercury*, that is, the Word of God, which the Holy Scriptures without all controversy affirm, and such of the philosophers who had any smack of Divinity assented unto; or else from the confused seeds of things. For they that would have one simple beginning, refer it unto God; or if a materiate beginning, they would have it various in power. So that we may end the controversy with this distribution, that the world took beginning, either from *Mercury*, or from the seeds of all things.

Francis Bacon, ‘Pan, or Nature,’ *Wisdom of the Ancients*.

Time, which is the Author of authors, be not deprived of his due, which is, further and further to discover truth.

Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning* (1640).

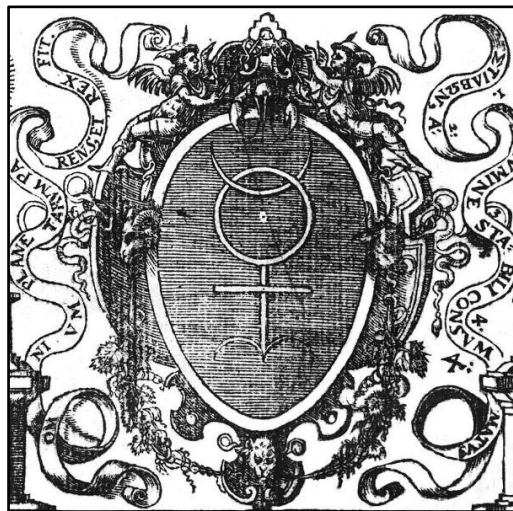
I had rather believe in all the Fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal Frame is without a Mind.

Francis Bacon, ‘Of Atheism,’ *Essays*.

The essential form of knowledge.... is nothing but a representation of truth: for the truth of being and the truth of knowing are one, differing no more than the direct beam and the beam reflected.

Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning* (1605).

In Bacon's terminology, the term "confused seeds of things" refers to Chaos, the original Formlessness or Nothingness—the No-thing—the "darkness that lay upon the deep", as Genesis says. Moreover, Bacon's use of the word "atom" refers to such "seeds", not the atom of modern physics and chemistry. "Confused seeds" is a description of formless matter and potential, wherein each seed is an invisible dot or centre, an unmanifest source, also described (in terms of God) as "an infinite sphere, the centre of which is everywhere and the circumference nowhere."³ When no longer "confused", the seed has become manifest as the atom, alternatively known as the monad. John Dee symbolised this atom or monad with his Divine Mercury (i.e. Word of God) symbol, the *Monas Hieroglyphica* ('Hieroglyphic Monad').



Title page, detail: *Monas Hieroglyphica* (1564)

The first appearance in print of the AA hieroglyph as a headpiece is in a very rare book belonging to Francis Bacon that was published in Paris in 1576/7. This was Bacon's first year in France, when he was in Paris as part of the English embassy to the royal court and made contact with the mystery school, founded in France by Françoise I, which was using the AA hieroglyph as a signature (as can be seen in Françoise's long gallery at Fontainebleau).

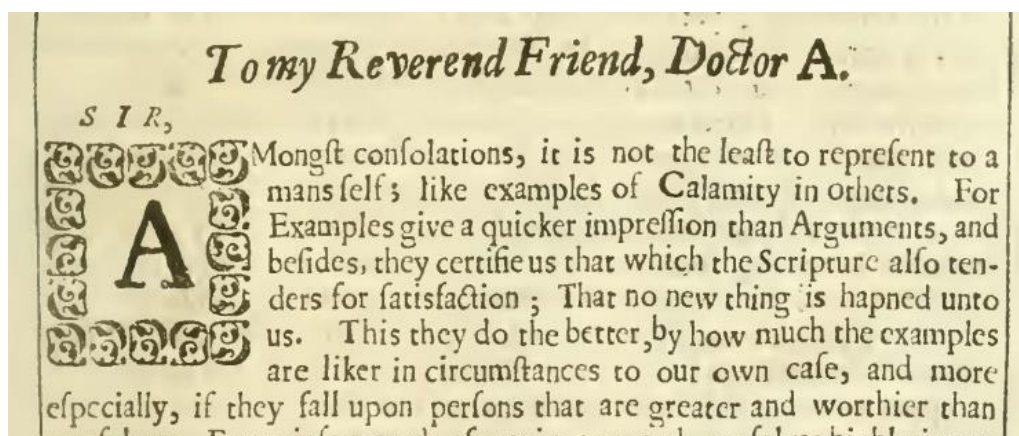
The book is a Hebrew Grammar called *Hebraicum Alphabetum Jo. Bovlaese*. It is interleaved with sheets of English-made paper in Bacon's handwriting, in which he has written the equivalents of the Hebrew in Greek, Chaldæic, Syriac and Arabic. Bound up with it is another Hebrew Grammar, similarly interleaved and written on by Bacon, called "*Sive compendium, quintacunque Ratione fieri potuit amplessimum, Totius linguæ,*" published in Paris in 1576/7. The book ends with the sentence, "Ex collegio Montis-Acuti 20 Decembris 1576," meaning "From the Acute-Mountain College 20 December 1576"—a seeming reference to Mount Parnassus, home of Apollo, Athena and the Muses, and their disciples. After this, also bound into the volume, are two additional pages in Hebrew, with the Latin translation over it, headed "Decem Prœcepta decalogi Exod." Above this is the AA headpiece.⁴



AA headpiece, *Hebraicum Alphabethum Jo. Bovlaese* (Paris, 1576/7)

It is noteworthy, however, that even though Francis Bacon was directly and intimately associated with the AA symbol, none of the works that Bacon published under his own name had an AA headpiece on them. When he died in 1626 it was a different matter, and several of his works were published after 1626 with the AA headpiece, such as *Bacon's Remaines*, printed by B. Alsop for Lawrence Chapman, 1648, and *The Mirrour of State*, printed for Lawrence Chapman, 1656. The last use of an AA headpiece is over the 'life of the author' in the second volume of an edition of Bacon's *Essays* edited by Dr. William Wilymott and published by Henry Parson in 1720.

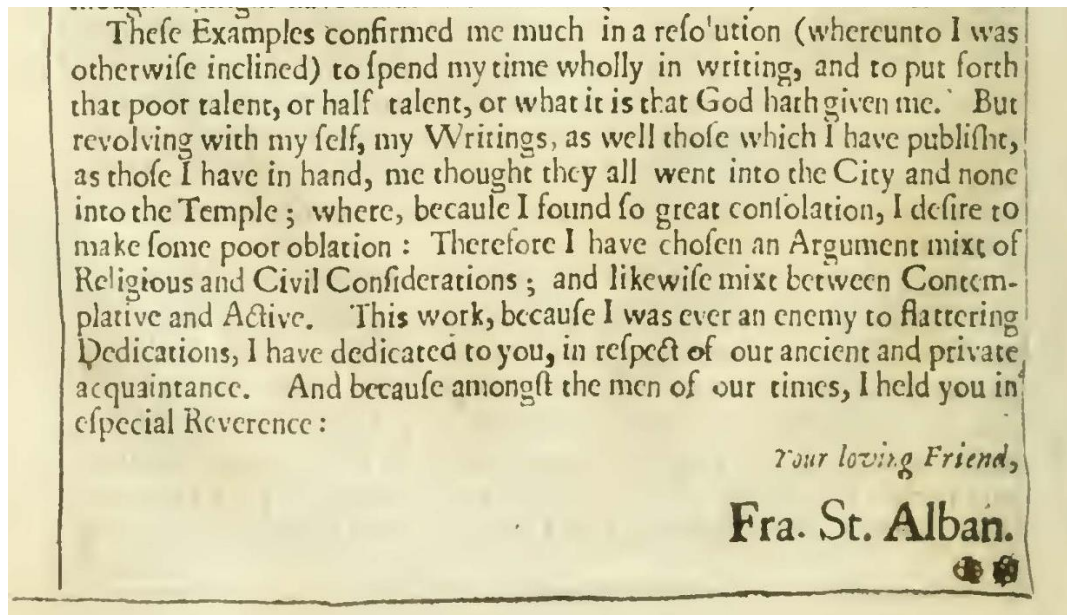
Of particular note is the letter, "To my Reverend Friend, Doctor A," by Francis Bacon that was included in a special first edition of *Resuscitatio*, a collection of some of Bacon's various writings published by William Rawley in 1657.⁵ This letter, which appears to have been written soon after Bacon's impeachment (3 May 1621) and signed "Fra. St. Alban" with two roses inscribed, includes the AA signature in a cryptic way.



'Letter to Doctor A', *Resuscitatio* (1657) – opening paragraph of letter on page 131.

In this letter Bacon says he will dedicate his particular "Argument" or writing, which mixes both religious and civil, and likewise contemplative and active, considerations, to his "Reverend Friend, Doctor A".

The letter 'A' is clearly a synonym, and the "Reverend Friend, Doctor", together with Bacon's ending sentences, would appear to indicate the Reverend Dr William Rawley, Bacon's private chaplain and friend, whom he made his literary executor and to whom he bequeathed many of his papers, to publish or not as Rawley saw fit.



‘Letter to Doctor A’, *Resuscitatio* (1657) – last paragraph and Bacon’s printed signature as Viscount St Alban (“Fra. St. Alban.”) at the end of the letter on page 132.

The particular “Argument” or writing is almost certainly Bacon’s *New Atlantis*, unless there is another writing that Rawley never published. But *New Atlantis* fits the description of Bacon’s “Argument”. It was published by Rawley, without a dedication, in 1627, immediately after Bacon’s death, and concerns a utopian society putting into practice Bacon’s Great Instauration or Six Days’ Work and thereby existing in a new Golden Age, just as Atlantis was said to have previously enjoyed a Golden Age before it fell into corruption and was destroyed by the Flood.

Moreover, Bacon’s description of his “Argument” brings in the opposites of Religious and Civil Considerations, which he elsewhere refers to as Divinity and Philosophy. He relates Divinity and Philosophy to the Mistress (i.e. Sophia, Wisdom) and Handmaiden (i.e. the philosopher, who loves Wisdom, serves her and thereby comes to know her). These two signify the Double Truth, symbolised by the AA hieroglyph.

Bacon also brings in the opposites of Contemplative and Active Considerations, which he elsewhere refers to as Thought and Action. Thought and Action refer to the mind that thinks and the body that puts the thoughts into action, which two are associated with heaven and earth. These relate to the idea of immortal and mortal, divine and human, and thus are also implied in the symbolism of the Double A (‘AA’).

The AA hieroglyph appears to be derived originally from an epithet of the Egyptian god Thoth (Tat), who represents Truth. This epithet, found in the temple of Esna was: “Djeheuty pa aa, pa aa, pa aa,” meaning “Thoth the great, the great, the great” (i.e. “Thoth the Triple Great” or “Thoth the Thrice Great”). The Greeks translated this into Hermes Trismegistus (‘Hermes the Thrice Great’).

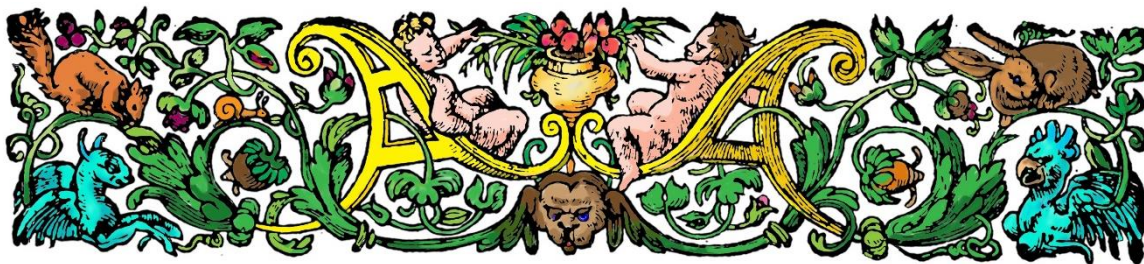
Thoth embodies within himself the idea of what the Egyptians also called Maat (‘Truth’), and thus the two, god and goddess, were paired as Thoth-Maat, representing the ‘Two Truths’ or ‘Double Truth’—the Original Truth or Wisdom, and the Revealed Truth or Knowledge of Wisdom.⁶ The former is the Light, the latter is that which is illuminated by and knows the

Light. One is the spirit; the other is the soul. They are also known as Lover and Beloved, or Alpha and Omega. As Christ, who is one with the Lord God, says in the biblical Book of Revelation: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."⁷ This is Truth. This is Time. This is Pan and Echo.

In Eastern teachings, Time is Kalki, the tenth and final Avatar of Vishnu who comes at the end of a cycle of time and human evolution. This is the same as the tenth and final appearance of Christ, usually referred to as "the Second Coming". He appears as the Alpha-Omega at the Omega moment of a time cycle, which leads directly into and thereby becomes the Alpha moment of a new time cycle. Such a moment is the moment of illumination, the moment of revelation.

To the ancient Greeks, Time was known as Kronos, as distinct from Chronos who is Eternity. To the Romans, Kronos was Saturnus, or Saturn. Saturn, the planetary symbol for *Daath* ('Knowledge') on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, represents all-knowledge, being both the "truth of being" and the "truth of knowing", otherwise known as illumination. This is the Truth that knows itself, epitomised by the Delphic maxim inscribed in golden letters in the pronaos (forecourt) of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi: "Know thyself."⁸

Saturn/Kronos/Pan/Thoth/Alpha-Omega/AA is the 'god' that inaugurates and oversees a Golden Age, and this is what Bacon's Great Instauration is designed to help us create.



AA Headpiece: Dedication, *English Poesie* (1589)
[B&W emblem coloured by Michele Beaufoy for FBRT]

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Rev. May 2020

Endnotes

¹ The Light of a Master Mason is Darkness visible.

² A term for "universe" among the ancient Greek philosophers from Pythagoras onwards (including Bacon) was τὸ πᾶν, *tò pân* ('the all'), defined as all matter and all space.

³ *Liber XXIV philosophorum*, a Latin booklet by an anonymous author. This work, attributed to the mythical figure Hermes Trismegistus, describes a meeting of 24 philosophers, who each give a definition of God.

⁴ See FBRT essay, *The Secret Signature*, by Peter Dawkins.

⁵ See FBRT essay, *Doctor A*, by Peter Dawkins.

⁶ In Ancient Egyptian symbolism, at the 'Last Judgement' the heart of the deceased would be weighed in the scales of balance against the feather of Maat in the Hall of Maat—the Hall of the Two Truths.

⁷ This is a statement attributed to both Jesus Christ and the Lord God: -

- "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Revelation 22:13.
- "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Revelation 1:8.
- When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." Revelation 1:17-18.
- Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me." Isaiah 44:6.
- "Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last." Isaiah 48:12.

⁸ According to the Greek writer Pausanias, "Know thyself" (Greek: γνῶθι σεαυτόν, transliterated: *gnōthi seauton*), one of the Delphic maxims, was inscribed in the pronaos (forecourt) of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. (*Description of Greece*, 10.24.) It was one of those precepts which Pliny affirms to have been consecrated at Delphos in golden letters. It was supposed to have been given originally by Apollo himself.

According to De Lubicz and Lamy, the Greek aphorism may have been adopted from Ancient Egypt, where, in the inner temple of the Temple of Amun at Luxor, one of the many proverbs inscribed there is: "Man, know thyself, and you are going to know the gods." (*Her-Bak: The Living Face of Ancient Egypt* and *Her-Bak: Egyptian Initiate*, 1956/1978.)