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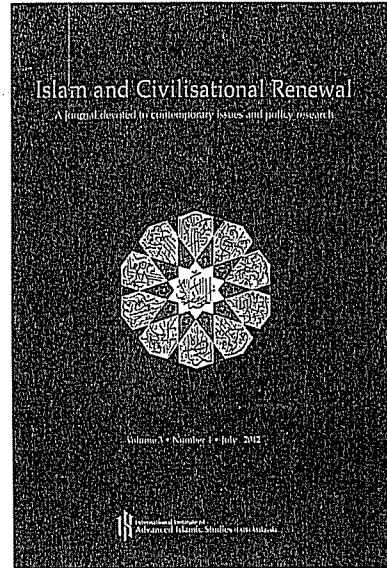
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On the Compatibility of Francis Bacon's Political and Ethical Vision with Islam

G023172

MALIK MUFTI

Abstract

Francis Bacon is a key figure in shaping not just the scientific but also the political features of modernity which are prevailing in the West today, and which are exerting powerful influences elsewhere—including in the Muslim world—as well. Because Bacon's political writings have received relatively little attention from Muslim thinkers, this article proceeds from one of the few such critiques to analyze some of the more salient features of his political thought as they relate to Islamic concerns. In the course of a review of Bacon's most relevant treatises, including his Advertisement Touching a Holy War, the article also considers various interpretations—focusing in particular on the Straussian school—of these writings and the apparently contradictory arguments they contain on issues of religion, war and empire. This review gives rise to two primary lines of questioning from an Islamic perspective, one moral and the other political, both suggesting the incompatibility of that perspective with Bacon's political and ethical standpoints.

«(O)»

While there has been some discussion by Muslim writers of Francis Bacon (1561–1626) as a progenitor of modern science, there are very few parallel studies of his political thought.¹ One exception is Mohammad Humayun Kabir's discussion of the *Essays*, which concludes that "Bacon's Machiavellian philosophy contradicts... the spirit of Islam."² Kabir offers four sets of

¹ On Bacon as a key progenitor of a modern Western scientific "view of Nature that is... alien to Islam," see Muzaffar Iqbal, "Islam and Modern Science: Formulating the Questions," *Islamic Studies*, 39: 4 (2000), 517–570, especially 533, 544–545. For the sharply contrasting argument that Muslim scientists such as al-Rāzī (d. 925), al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048), and especially Ibn al-Haytham (d. 1040) have stronger claims than Bacon's to founding the modern scientific method, see Jim Al-Khalili, *The House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave Us the Renaissance* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), 170.

² Mohammad Humayun Kabir, "Bacon's Ideas in His Essays: A Study from the Perspective of Islam," *IJUC Studies* (2004), 132; see, for details, 119–134.

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[SIR] FRANCIS BACON VE BİLİMSEL DEVRİM OLGUSU

Muhammet Özdemir*

(6023172) Bacon, Francis

22 Aralık 2015

GİRİŞ

bu çalışmada, XVII. yüzyılda yaşamış İngiliz bilim adamı ve düşünürü Francis Bacon'ın bilimsel devrim olayıyla ilişkisi üzerinde durulacaktır. Farklı bir yöntemle önce Francis Bacon'ın yaşamöyküsü ve bazı eserlerinden kısaca bahsedilecek, ikinci olarak onun etkilendiği fikri akımlar ve düşünörlere temas edilecek, sonra bilimsel devrim olgusuna yer verilerek söz konusu İngiliz yazarın düşünceleri ve temel yönleri anlaşılmasına çalışılacaktır. Böylelikle Bacon'ı yeterince anlamamızı temin edecek iki önemli tarihten hareket edeceğiz. Biri, onun yaşamöyküsü ve eserleridir; diğeri ise, onun bilimsel devrimle münasebetidir.

“Sir” unvanını almış modern bilim yazarlarından biri olarak Francis Bacon, modern düşüncenin kurumsallaşmasında ve bir yöntem edinmesinde ayrıcalıklı bir konumda bulunmasına rağmen genellikle bir “bilim adamı” veya “filozof” olarak görülmez; ne felsefe tarihlerinde ne de modern anlamda matematiksel bilim tarihlerinde çokça anılır.¹ Oysa modern bilimin ve kültürün gerçek yaratıcı bağlamı olarak modern Britanya, kendi gelişim tarihinde ona çok şey borç-

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1. Cemal Yıldırım, *Bilimin Öncülleri*, TÜBİTAK Yayınları, Ankara, 18. Basım, 2001, s. 78, 83.

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