

"THE TREATISE ON FISHING WITH AN ANGLE":  
A STUDY OF A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY DOCUMENT

By

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## PREFACE

This study examines The Treatise on Fishing with an Angle, a fifteenth-century utilitarian manual, as a historical example of technical writing. I wish to thank my advisor, Dr. Richard Batteiger, for his time and help. I have also appreciated the helpful comments of my committee members, Dr. Randi Eldevik, Dr. Robert Brown, and Dr. J. P. Bischoff in bringing this study to a conclusion.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Michael Moran argues that, "The history of technical . . . writing has not yet been written . . ." (25). While this assertion is no doubt true, it is also true that many chapters of technical writing's history have been written. From Joel Shulman's treatments of early technical writers in ancient Babylon and Egypt to Stephen Gresham's examination of George Washington Carver's writings on practical aspects of Southern agriculture, critics have shown that technical writing has a long and rich heritage. They have also demonstrated that utilitarian documents written by men of science of past ages are frequently as engaging as literary works of the same time. (Two useful bibliographic essays that deal with technical writing's history are Michael Moran's "The History of Technical and Scientific Writing" and R. John Brockmann's "Bibliography of Articles on the History of Technical Writing.") Samples of technical writing from the past illustrate that the practices of the craft are not recent innovations without historical base but rather that they have emerged and developed over a long

history. This study is another "chapter" in the history of technical writing. It investigates the fifteenth century Treatise on Fishing with an Angle (Treatise) from The Book of Saint Albans to determine how a fifteenth-century author approached the problem of writing accurate, technical prose about angling, a subject never before treated in a written work.

The Treatise's importance is recognized by most literary surveys covering its historical period. The Cambridge History of English Literature, Ian Gordon's The Movement of English Prose, and H. S. Bennett's Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century all refer to The Book of Saint Albans, and in the last two the Treatise is singled out as an example of effective fifteenth-century prose. Bennett says of a selection from the prologue that "The writer of this passage knows what he wants to say, and says it with some felicity of phrasing and a delight in outdoor sights and scenes rarely met with in medieval literature" (198). Gordon compliments the Treatise for language that is "clear, precise, and workmanlike," and for sentence-structure, that is "conversational and uncomplicated" (63).

The Treatise was also popular with its original audience. Its printing history alone suggests that it was no mere curiosity piece, but served a practical purpose as an instructional manual for more than 100 years. During the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was reprinted ten times by eight different publishers (STC 71). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, its popularity declined, perhaps due to the release of newer fishing texts such as Izaak Walton's The Compleat Angler. The Treatise experienced renewed interest in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, no doubt, as a curiosity piece for angling historians who wished to trace the origins of the sport. It was reprinted at least five times in the nineteenth century (McDonald 25) and at least twice in the twentieth century. The Treatise is also very similar to later fishing literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including Izaak Walton's The Compleat Angler, many of which are organized in a similar way and contain similar types of information.

Finally, although a massive amount of technical material was generated during the fifteenth century, little scholarly investigation has been conducted on medieval utilitarian prose. Matthews notes that, "apart from Fortescue, Pecock, Henryson, and Malory," literary historians do not recognize any notable achievements (14). In fact, only one medieval writer of utilitarian prose, Geoffrey Chaucer, has received much scholarly attention and that for his Treatise on the Astrolabe.

Critics voice high praise for the Astrolabe. For

example, William Freedman argues that Chaucer's Treatise on the Astrolabe is in many ways like modern technical writing and that Chaucer carefully analyzed his audience (14-15). Edmond Basquin also agrees that Chaucer's treatise is in some respects similar to modern technical writing. For example, Chaucer forecasts his organization in the introduction, and he organizes his treatise much like a modern mechanism description. First, he describes the instrument; then, he discusses how to use it. Basquin also praises Chaucer's liberal use of illustrations, which in some manuscripts number as many as sixty-two (22-23). Carol Lipson's "Descriptions and Instructions In Medieval Times" examines Chaucer's sources for his Astrolabe and the innovations he uses in presenting his information. Lipson praises Chaucer's personal tone, his ability to relate his discussion of the Astrolabe to the audience's interests, and his careful attention to assist his audience through the process (254-255).

Many of the features that these critics praise about the Treatise on the Astrolabe are also evident in the fishing treatise. This fact, combined with the general lack of scholarly attention given to fifteenth-century utilitarian prose, suggests the need for a study of this nature.

## Background to Fifteenth-Century Prose

In order to appreciate fully The Treatise on Fishing with an Angle as an example of fifteenth-century prose, we must understand that, at the time it was written, English was becoming the official language for business and government and that utilitarian works addressing a variety of subjects were becoming much more common. The story of the acceptance of English as the official language of England begins in the latter half of the fourteenth century. In 1362 a statute ordered that pleading in all courts be conducted in English. The Parliaments of 1362-64 were opened with speeches in English (Fisher 879-880). In addition, John Trevisa (1385) tells us that the nobility were no longer teaching their children French but were rather content with their knowing English only (qtd in Gordon 46).

Also, during this century changes in the English language were taking place rather quickly (Schlauch qtd in Blake 149). Examples of these changes include the dropping of inflections such as the final-e and the increased usage of new forms such as she, they, their, and them (Blake 148-149). Finally, during the early decades of the fifteenth century, the clerks of Chancery, through their apprentice system, established a system of spelling and orthography

which ultimately was recognized as a standard (Fisher 875-887).

The Treatise reflects many of these changes. It was written in English, and it makes use of a number of the recent changes such as the use of they, their, and them.

Ian Gordon argues in The Movement of English Prose that "it is possible to distinguish three major varieties of prose written" during this time. First, is the "prose of the spoken norm," which was like actual spoken English of the fifteenth century. Most of these works are of a utilitarian nature, and the demand for them was apparently great (59-63). Gordon also identifies a second group made up of the tremendous number of translations from Latin or French sources, which he refers to as "written prose." These translations were very popular with Caxton and were frequently issued in book form (58-59). Finally, Gordon identifies a third group which he calls the "conscious stylists." Into this category fall men like Fortesque, Caxton, and Pecock, who sought to create an acceptable style of writing, and "their varying solutions of the style appropriate for written English form the pattern of experimentation that characterises [the prose of] the latter part of the century" (59).

The Treatise on Fishing with an Angle falls into Gordon's category of prose that relies on the "spoken norm,"

a category which consists mainly of utilitarian and scientific prose. During both the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, utilitarian and scientific treatises of this type were quite popular, as can be seen by the large variety of subjects addressed and the large number of variant manuscripts of each work (Braswell 337). As Gordon states,

There is hardly an aspect of the life of the times on which a manuscript treatise does not survive. Surgery, medicine, the herbal, hunting, hawking, cooking, instructions for traveling pilgrims, manuals of behaviour, these are only a few of the 'text-books' provided, not for the professional (who could read Latin) but for the enquiring layman. (63)

Braswell also stresses the popularity of these practical utilitarian text books and divides them roughly into five groups: "instructions for conduct," including "chivalric manuals"; various types of recipes; guides for travel; basic instruction manuals for practical crafts; and manuals on sporting (342-346).

Background to The Treatise on Fishing  
with an Angle

The Treatise on Fishing with an Angle is a fishing manual. In the epilogue the author stresses that the main

purpose of angling is for the pleasure it brings, not for the fish the angler catches. "Also ye shall not vse this for sayd crafty dysporte for no couetysenes to thencreasyng & sparynge of your money oonly/ but pryncypally for your solace & to cause the helthe of your body. and specyally your soule" (McDonald 227). The Treatise discusses such matters as how to make fishing tackle, how to use the tackle, what types of baits are best for certain types of fish, how to care for live baits, and what patterns are useful in making artificial fishing flies. One notable section that Izaak Walton may have borrowed and converted into a narrative form in his The Compleat Angler is the prologue, which contrasts fishing with the other noble sports and finds it to be superior to them.

The Treatise was first printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1496 as part of the second edition of The Book of Saint Albans, which was initially printed ten years earlier. The Book of Saint Albans also contains four other treatises. The first discusses hawking. The second one is a hunting treatise that is written in verse. The third and the fourth deal with the language of heraldry and descriptions of various coat-of-arms. McDonald notes that the work proved to be the most popular de Worde ever issued, but because de Worde's records are unavailable, this is a point very difficult to confirm, and is largely unconfirmed by the

evidence in McDonald's work, The Origins of Angling (71). The actual Treatise was probably written long before 1496. Kuhn has dated a single manuscript copy to around 1450. The manuscript "is incomplete [it contains about 60% of the printed version and ends in the middle of the discussion of the trout], without illustration, and in minor ways varies in detail from the 1496 version . . ." (McDonald 72). Kuhn believes that both the printed version and the manuscript are derived from a manuscript written much earlier in the fifteenth century (McDonald 27). The reason for the early dating is based upon a reference in the Treatise to Edward, Duke of York, who wrote The Master of Game. The Master of Game was probably first circulated around 1406, and Edward died at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415 (McDonald 16). The word "late" is used in reference to the Duke and his book and this term may suggest that the Treatise may have been written soon after The Master of Game and the death of Edward in 1415 (Haslewood 62).

Almost nothing is known about the Treatise's author. The Book of Saint Albans is normally attributed to Dame Juliana Berners, the Prioress of the convent at Sopwell. Her existence, however, is somewhat questionable, and sources make this attribution with some reluctance. For example, The Cambridge History of English Literature notes, "The part on hunting, which is in verse, ends with the words

'Explicit Dam Julyans Barnes in her boke of huntyng,' and this is generally considered to be the somewhat mythical Juliana Berners . . ." (362). Regardless of whether Berners was the author of the first edition of The Book of Saint Albans, no logical reason exists for associating her with the fishing treatise that first appeared in the second edition. Wynkyn de Worde, the editor of the 1496 edition, never makes that claim. In fact, the only reason the fishing treatise was included with the other treatises was its general subject matter. Wynkyn de Worde claims as much when he says at the conclusion of the fishing treatise:

And for by cause that this present treatyse sholde not come to the hondys of eche ydle persone whyche wolde desire it yf it were enpryntyd allone by itself & put in a lytyll plaunflet therefore I haue complyd it in a greter volume of dyuerse bokys concernynge to gentyll & noble men. to the entent that the forsayd ydle persones whyche sholde haue but lytyll mesure in the sayd dysporte of fysshing sholde not by this meane vtterly dystroye it.

(McDonald 229)

Even Haslewood, the most determined defender of Berners' authorship of the other four treatises in The Book of Saint Albans, does not claim that Berners was the author of the fishing treatise. "Neither for Juliana Barnes, the

monkish schoolmaster [the printer of the 1486 edition] nor any one who assisted in compiling the original Book of St. Albans, can there be consistently advanced a claim of authorship in this 'little pamphlet'" (Haslewood 60).

### Methodology of This Dissertation

As previously stated, the central purpose of this study is to examine how the author of The Treatise on Fishing With an Angle approached the problem of writing technical prose on a subject never before treated in a written work in English. In addition, the study seeks to understand the Treatise's, similarities to subsequent fishing literature. To achieve this purpose, I will

1. Examine the Treatise's printing history and similarity to subsequent fishing literature,
2. Analyze the Treatise's characteristic features and style, to determine how it communicates its technical information,
3. Examine the Treatise's persuasive features to determine how it attempts to convince the reader to use and to trust the information included in it,
4. Analyze the Treatise's illustrations to determine their purpose and their effectiveness.

## Examination of Treatise's Printing History and Influence

Chapter Two uses the Short Title Catalogue and The British Library General Catalog of Printed Books to 1975 to determine the number of printers who published the Treatise and the number of separate issues made by each publisher from 1496-1596. It also examines the Treatise's similarity to and possible influence on later fishing literature from the time of its publication to the publication of The Compleat Angler by Izaak Walton in 1653. The examination shows that the Treatise was frequently published during this time and that it had a varying degree of influence on later works. Some works, such as A Booke on Fishing with Hooke and Line, appear to have been influenced by the Treatise's content and organization; others, such as The Art of Angling, show little evidence of the Treatise's influence.

## Analysis of the Treatise as an Example of Technical Writing

Chapter Three examines the Treatise to determine how it communicates its technical information. Suggestions taken from modern technical writing theorists provide the basis for the analysis. The examination revealed that the Treatise is in some ways similar to modern technical writing. Chapter Four analyzes the fishing treatise to

determine how it convinces its readers to use and to trust the technical information included in it. The analysis uses Aristotle's persuasive appeals, which would have been available to the Treatise's author, as a means of analyzing the persuasive elements of the Treatise's prose. The analysis determined that the Treatise's author attempts to address the emotional concerns of his audience, to establish himself as an authority on the subject of angling, and to organize his information in a logical way. Chapter Five evaluates the illustrations in the Treatise to determine their purpose, effectiveness, and integration with the written text. The study found that the illustrations have both a decorative and instructional purpose. They have also been integrated into the written text in much the same manner as modern illustrations.

#### Text of the Treatise

The Treatise on Fishing with an Angle has appeared in many different forms. This study mainly uses the Wynkyn de Worde edition of 1496 (the first edition of the Treatise) as it appears in facsimile in John McDonald's The Origins of Angling. McDonald's facsimile edition was used for ease in citing page references. Occasionally, to supplement the discussion of the Treatise, information is taken from the

manuscript version or later printed versions, such as Alde's or Veale's.

## CHAPTER II

### THE POPULARITY AND INFLUENCE OF

#### THE FISHING TREATISE

How a book was initially received by its audience, and how often and in what ways later writers used it as a source for their own printed works tell us much about the book's continuing reputation. Studying the Treatise's printing history and its similarities to later fishing texts tells us whether the Treatise was popular with the reading public which in turn may indicate whether the audience found the information in it helpful. Also, comparing the Treatise with later fishing works is a way of judging the value of the information in it, for if later writers included similar types of information that were organized in a similar way, this fact suggests that the Treatise's author did an effective job in selecting the types of information he chose to include and in organizing this information. Since no book reviews existed in 1496 covering the works of the time, and since early writers frequently were not careful in documenting their sources, it is necessary to determine the popularity of The Book of Saint Albans (St. Albans) and

particularly the fishing treatise with the public and later writers in ways other than consulting reviews or looking at bibliographies. To determine St. Alban's popularity, its printing history from 1496-1596 was reviewed. To determine the similarity of the fishing treatise to later fishing literature, the Treatise was compared with five subsequent works on fishing. These are the only prose works written in English about angling as a sport published from the date of the Treatise (1496) to The Compleat Angler (1653) (Bentley 67-74). These works are

1. The Art of Angling (1577)
2. A Booke on Fishing with Hooke and Line (1590)
3. The Pleasure of Princes (1614)
4. The Art of Angling (1651)
5. The Compleat Angler (1653).

Another work on angling, The Secrets of Angling, was written in 1613, but it is in verse. The Pleasure of Princes is largely a prose version of it (McDonald 21-23).

An examination of these texts indicates that, to varying degrees, they all are similar to the Treatise. In some cases the similarity is only slight (The Art of Angling); in other cases, large sections of the Treatise appear to have been integrated into the later work (A Booke on Fishing with Hooke and Line).

Before examining these works, however, I must establish

the fact that the Treatise marks the beginning of sport fishing literature in English. Kuhn notes that there is no earlier work on angling and that the Treatise "serves as the point of origin of modern angling" literature (McDonald 6). The Colloquy of the Occupations by Aelfric discusses, in a very general way, fishing as an occupation. It uses a narrative form where a Magistrate questions the fisherman, Piscator, about his occupation. It does not, however, discuss fishing as a sport (McDonald 8-9). Kuhn does believe that the Treatise was influenced by the tradition of sporting literature from other sports such as hawking and hunting (McDonald 4-5).

#### Publication History

A book's publication history is an indicator of how successfully it was received by its initial audience. The simple fact is that publishers do not continue to publish works that do not sell well, and readers do not buy books that they do not find to be useful. This publishing practice was also true in the fifteenth century. For example, Bennett notes that, early English printers were influenced by the demands of the reading public in determining the types of books they chose to publish (English Books and Readers 54). Clair also claims that, "Whereas Caxton was something of a scholar and preferred to

print books which interested him personally, Wynkyn de Worde was first of all a businessman . . ." and was largely content to provide the demand for books that were popular with the reading public (27). Therefore, frequent reprints or issuances in several editions are a good indicator that a book was considered useful or at least interesting by the reading public. If this proposition is indeed valid, then St. Albans was a useful text for its initial and subsequent audiences.

The first century of St. Albans' printing history is both distinguished and interesting. The Short Title Catalog and The British Library General Catalog of Printed Books to 1975 confirm that St. Albans was printed at least ten different times by eight different publishers in the years 1496-1596 (for a list of publishers and dates see Table I on the page 19).

The fishing treatise was first printed in the second edition of The Book of Saint Albans in 1496. Wynkyn de Worde, an assistant to Caxton and an extremely successful printer in his own right, printed the 1496 edition, and reprinted it on two other occasions: 1515 and 1532. Although de Worde printed almost 800 works in a career that spanned over forty years, St. Albans, according to McDonald, was the most popular (71). Since we do not have de Worde's records, this assertion is very difficult to determine.

TABLE I

PUBLICATION RECORD OF THE BOOK OF SAINT ALBANS  
1496-1596

Publisher	Location	Date
Wynkyn de Worde	Westminster	1496
		1515
		1532
		1540
Henry Tab	London	1540
John Walley	London	1550
William Copland	London	1561
Abraham Veale	London	1563
Edward Allde	London	1585
Humfrey Lownes	London	1595
Adam Islep	London	1596

Sources: Clive Bingley, The British Library General Catalog of Printed Books to 1975 Volume 37, (London: British Library Press, 1980) 357-358.

A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475-1640 (London: New Bibliographical Society, 1950) 71.

Other major publishers who issued editions of St. Albans include John Walley (1550) and Abraham Veale (1560). Two later editions of St. Albans, Edward Allde's (1586) and Humfrey Lownes' (1595), claim to be, and show evidence of being, revised versions. Lownes even renamed the book,

calling it The Gentleman's Academie. These two editions were published within nine years of each other and after other works on fishing had started to appear. This fact indicates that the Treatise was still popular with the reading public over ninety years after its first date of publication. Another interesting event in the printing history was the fine assessed against William Copland in 1561 for publishing St. Albans without proper authority (A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers V 1 p 77).

#### The Fishing Treatise and Later Fishing Works

The Treatise on Fishing with an Angle is similar to the works of fishing literature that follow it. In some respects these later works are organized like the Treatise. The Compleat Angler, for example, begins with a prologue that compares angling to other sports. Some works, such as A Booke on Fishing with Hooke and Line, begin like the Treatise's manual section. A Booke starts with a thesis statement outlining what will be covered and then discusses each item in much the same order as in the Treatise. The later works also include similar types of content. For instance, most of the works discuss various types of fish. Many also include dressing for artificial flies. Finally, many of the later works portray a similar attitude towards

angling and the angler. The Arte of Angling, The Pleasure of Princes, and the Compleat Angler agree with the Treatise in suggesting that angling promotes good morals.

Because none of these later writers actually refers to the Treatise and because the publication dates of these later works are spread over a period of about seventy-five years, showing direct influence is almost impossible. Also, similarities in content and organization between two works may be due to the nature of angling itself. The comparison is valuable, however, in validating these features of the Treatise. Thus, if later writers included similar types of content, organized this content in a similar way, and arrived at similar conclusions regarding sentiment towards the sport and the angler, these facts would seem to indicate that the Treatise's author did an effective job in selecting, organizing, and interpreting the information he includes in the manual.

In this analysis I compare the Treatise to later works of fishing literature by looking at their organization, the types of content they include, and their attitude toward the sport of angling and the character of the angler.

### The Arte of Angling

The Arte of Angling (The Arte) is an anonymous work published in 1577 by Henry Middleton. No record of its

publication exists in either the Short Title Catalog or The Stationers' Register (qtd in Kienbusch 6-7). The book was discovered in 1954 in the attic of an English country house (Kienbusch 6).

The organization of The Arte is not like the Treatise's. Instead of beginning by comparing angling to other sports, followed by instructions for its practice, and ending with a depiction of the ideal angler, as is the case in the Treatise, The Arte opens with the scene of a master angler instructing his student. Later, the two are gathered at a supper table enjoying a meal of fish as the master angler explains, in a rather disorderly way, various aspects of the sport.

In terms of content, The Arte treats many of the same subjects that the Treatise discusses. It gives detailed instructions about how to catch various types of fish, usually spending a paragraph or two on each fish. The Arte is not as comprehensive in scope nor as specific in detail as the Treatise. It does not discuss how to make the fishing tackle or dressing for artificial flies. A number of the pages are missing, however, and there is good reason to believe that in these missing pages the master angler may have been discussing fishing tackle. For instance, the ending of this missing section is included, and it contains information on an alternative type of fishing float not

found in the Treatise (The Arte of Angling 34).

In some ways the content of The Arte is very different from, and almost contradictory to, the Treatise's. For instance, The Arte argues that angling is an excellent sport, but it does not compare it to other sports. Also, The Arte seems to possess a more realistic attitude towards angling than the Treatise. For example, the Treatise proclaims, "But the angler maye haue no colde nor no dysease nor angre/ but yf he be causer hymself" (McDonald 189). On the other hand, The Arte recognizes that angling does have its unpleasant aspects:

Viator: Now, mistress, is it true that your husband hath caught the colic with fishing?  
 Cisley: Surely, I suppose so, with his long standing, long fasting, and coldness of his feet, yea, and sometimes sitting on the cold ground, whether he catch or not catch. Yea, and sometimes he cometh home with the colic, indeed, and is not well for two or three days after. . . . (The Arte of Angling 36)

Still another difference in the two books deals with the time of the fishing season. The Treatise does not mention a specific fishing season. The only thing that forbids fishing at any time of the year is the weather conditions. The Arte, however, specifically mentions a

season in which, from the moral perspective of the author, fishing is prohibited: ". . . he will bite all summer in a manner, saving in shelrode time, which some call spawning time, which time is forbidden to fish for any kind of fish" (The Arte of Angling 50).

Although the organization and the contents of the two works do not correspond, their depiction of the character of the angler is much the same. The Treatise depicts the ideal angler as being ethical (doesn't fish in poor man's waters or steal fish out of traps), not greedy (uses fishing for pleasure, not as a way of cheaply obtaining meat), and spiritually motivated (he can use the time alone to say his prayers and to avoid vice) (McDonald 227). The Arte likewise views the angler as being of virtuous character. In fact, it enumerates no less than twelve virtues of the angler: faith, hope, love, patience, humility, fortitude, knowledge, liberality, piety, contentment, charity, and memory (The Arte of Angling 32-33).

#### A Booke on Fishing with a Hooke and Line

A Booke on Fishing with a Hooke and Line and all Other Instruments Thereunto Belonging (A Booke) was written by Leonard Mascall and was first printed in 1590, nearly one hundred years after the first printing of the Treatise. Its content and organization bear close resemblance to the

Treatise, so close that McDonald calls Mascall's work not much more than a revised edition of the Treatise with new sections added which refer to fishing conservation (22). Carl Otto V. Kienbusch claims that parts of A Booke were "largely and clumsily pirated from the Treatise" (3).

A Booke is very much a technical manual. It possesses no prologue but begins with a very straightforward introduction much like the thesis sentence of the Treatise: "Here will I declare briefly unto you how to angle with the hooke & a lyne, in what times best, and in what places of the water to take fish" (Mascall 3).

Mascall makes use of headings to divide his sections of materials. Most of the sections have corresponding information in the Treatise. These sections from A Booke include

- "What times best to angle,"
- "what wether to angle in,"
- "Of twelve lets in taking fish,"
- "Of twelue kindes of made Flies to angle,"
- "how to culler your line to angle with," and
- "Lines fit for each water."

Mascall also includes sections for each type of fish mentioned in the Treatise, in the same order as they are mentioned in the Treatise.

The content of A Booke is very close to the content of

the Treatise; in fact, long sections, such as all of those mentioned above, appear to be copied from the older work. Note, for example, the section dealing with impediments to fishing. Each passage contains the same number of impediments mentioned in the same order. Mascall only makes changes in spelling or in phrasing to bring the prose up to the standards of his time. The first passage is from the Treatise; the second is from A Booke. The underlined phrases in A Booke appear to be taken directly from the Treatise.

Now shall ye wyte that there ben twelve manere of ypedymentes whyche cause a man to take noo fysshe. Wt out comyn that may casuelly happe. The fyrst is yf your harnays be not mete nor fetly made. The seconde is yf your baytes be not good nor fyne. The third is yf that ye angle not in bytynge time. The fourth is yf that the fysshe be frayed wt the syghte of a man. (McDonald 209)

Ye shall here understand there be twelve manner of impediments or lets which causeth a man to take no fish, without other cunning that may happe by casualtie. The furst is if your harnesse or lynes be not fitly made: the second is, if your baites be not good nor fine; the third is, when that ye

angle not in the byting time; the fourth is, that your fish be fearefull of the sight of man;

(Mascall 4)

Also, note in the following parallel passages from the Treatise and A Booke how similarly each describes the trout. The first passage is from the Treatise; the second is from A Booke:

The Troughte for by cause he is a right deyntous fyssh and also a right feruente byter we shall speke nexte of hym. He is in season fro Marche vnto Myghelmas. He is on clene grauely ground and in a streme. Ye may angle to hym all tymes wyth a grounde lyne lyenge or rennynge: sauynge in lepyng tyme. and thenne wyth a dubbe. And erly with a rennynge grounde lyne and forth in the daye wyth a flote lyne. (McDonald 211, 213)

The troute is in season from March unto Michaelmasse, he befth commonly a cleane grauely ground, and in a streame: ye may angle to him at all times with a ground lyne, lying or running, savning in leaping time, then with the dubbe flye, and earely in the morning with a running ground lyne, and further in the day with the flote lyne.  
(Mascall 5)

Many other passages in A Booke equally reflect the contents of the Treatise. In fact, fourteen of the Treatise's twenty-two pages have been closely integrated into A Booke in much the same manner as reflected in the above passages.

The illustrations used in A Booke are also very much like some of those included in the Treatise. Note, for example, the similarities in the illustrations of the types of fishing lines from A Booke and the Treatise (see Figures 1 and 2 on page 29).

Mascall's work is strictly confined to the technical features of angling and, therefore, does not address the subject of sentiment. With this exception, along with the added material Mascall provides on fishing conservation, his text relies heavily on the content of the Treatise.

#### The Pleasure of Princes

The third prose text on angling, The Pleasure of Princes (1614) (Pleasure), by Gervase Markham is somewhat influenced by the contents of the Treatise (Bentley 69).

The organization of Pleasure is similar to the Treatise. Like the Treatise, Markham's information on angling is included as part of a larger work dealing with a variety of sporting subjects. The Pleasure's opening section extols the virtues of angling, but not at the expense of other sports. It also makes use of thesis and

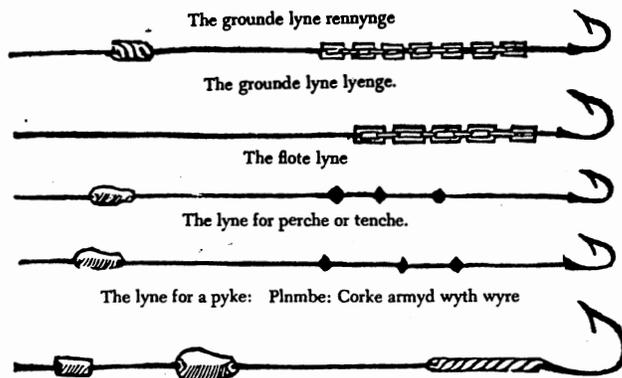


Figure 1. Types of Fishing Lines

The Book of Saint Albans (Westminster, 1496) rpt in John McDonald, The Origins of Angling (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963) 203.

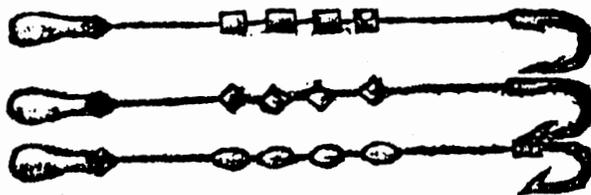


Figure 2. Types of Fishing Lines

Leonard Mascall, A Booke on Fishing with a Hook and Line, and all Other Instruments Thereunto Belonging (London: John Wolfe, 1590) 23.

forecasting statements to outline its organization. An example of Markham's forecasting statements is the following statement which introduces the information on making the fishing rod:

In as much as the first ground-work or substance of this Art of Angling consisteth in the implements belonging thereunto, and that except a man possesst of them which are most exact, nimble or necessary for the same, his labor is vaine, and to little or no purpose employed, and for as much as the Angle-rod is the greatest principallest, and sole director of all other Tools belonging thereunto, I thinke it not amisse to begin with the cheffe, and order thereof, according to the opinions of the best noted Anglers, which either have beene in times past or are at this day living. (Markham 4)

Markham also ties together his various sections of information with transitional statements as in this example:

Next to your corks is your hooks, and they be of divers shapes and fashions. . . . (11)

The arrangement of the actual contents of Pleasure is much like the Treatise's. Markham first deals with the fishing tackle, addressing many of the same items that the Treatise mentions; he then discusses aspects of fishing such

as ideal fishing weather; finally, he looks at various types of sporting fish and lists their baits.

The information in Pleasure is also similar to the Treatise's. Note, for instance, this passage from the Treatise, which gives directions for coloring the fishing lines.

Take smalle ale a quarte and put it in a lytyll panne: and put there to halfe a pound of alym. And put therto your heer: and lete it boylle softly half houre. Thenne take out your heere and lete it drye. Theene take a potell of water and put it in a panne. And put therin twohandfull of ooldys or of wyren. And press it wyth a tyle stone: and let it boylle softly half an houre. And whan it is yelow on the scume put therin your heer with halfe a pounce of coporose betyn in powdre and lete it boylle halfe a myle waye: and thenne sette it downe: and lete it kele fyve or syre houres. Then take out the heer and drye it. And it is thenne the fynest grene that is for the water. (McDonald 195)

Now, observe how similarly Markham describes this same process. (The underlined phrases are similar to information in the Treatise.)

Take a pottle of Allome water, and put thereunto a great handfull of Marigolds, and let them boile well till a yellow skum rife vpon the water, then take halfe a pound of greene Coperas, and as much Verdigreafe, beaten to fine powder, and put it with the haire into the water, and so let it boyle againe a pretty space, and then set it by to coole for halfe a day; then take out your hayre, and lay it where it may dry; and you shal see it of a delicate greene colour, which indeed is the best Watergreene that may be. (Markham 9)

Also, Markham's descriptions of his artificial flies are almost exactly like those found in the Treatise. The following selection is taken from Markham's description of the same twelve artificial flies that are also included in the Treatise. Note, however, that Markham's order is the opposite of the Treatise's. (The passage from the Treatise is included first.)

The stone flye, the body of blacke wull: yellowe under the wynges, and under the taylor and the wynges of the drake. In the begynnge of May a good flye, the body of roddy wull and lappid abowte with blacke sylke: the wynges of the drake and of the redde capons hakyll. (McDonald 225)

The red flye is made of red wooll, lapt about with blacke silke, and the wings of the maile of a Mallard, with some of the red feathers of a capon, the stone flye is made of blacke wooll made yellow vnder the winges, and vnder the taile with silke, and the wings, of Drakes downe: (Markham 26)

Finally, the Treatise and Pleasure are alike in the attitude they take toward the sport and the angler. The Treatise proclaims that honest sports and games are a good way to avoid sinful deeds which hamper the living of a long life, the premise of the argument in the Treatise's prologue. Pleasure also makes the same comment. After describing the life of a sinful man, Markham emphasizes the moral aspects of angling in the following statement:

But in this Art of Angling there is no such evill, no such sinfull violence, for the greatest thing it concernth, is for much labour a little fish, . . . and that which is worth millions to his [the angler's] contentment, another may buy for a groate in the [fish] market. (Markham 2)

### The Art of Angling

The fourth book on angling, Thomas Barker's The Art of Angling (Angling), published in 1651, differs in many ways from the Treatise. For example, the organization is not the

same. Also, Barker's work does not possess the standard features of the fishing manual that are found in the Treatise. For instance, it does not contain forecasting sentences which outline the content; neither are there any clear transitional sentences between major sections of the work.

In terms of content, Angling comments on such items as ideal fishing weather and how to care for live baits, but most frequently the information supplements rather than echoes the information found in the Treatise. For instance, Barker provides his reader with information about how to dress and prepare the various types of fish he discusses. He also tells his readers actually how to tie an artificial fishing fly (information that the Treatise fails to include). The flies Barker describes are not like those mentioned in the Treatise, and he does not go into such great detail in describing the various dressings of the flies. The only obvious similarity to the Treatise is the reference to using a goose with a bait tied around its leg to catch a pike and enjoying the subsequent tug-of-war that takes place. Barker paints a positive picture of angling, but he does not copy the Treatise's sentiment towards the sport.

### The Compleat Angler

The fifth and most popular book about fishing is Izaak Walton's The Compleat Angler. Walton's work is similar to the Treatise, not just in terms of organization and content, but also in his depiction of the character of the angler.

The Compleat Angler's organization is like the Treatise's. For example, in the Treatise the prologue begins with a comparison of four popular sports: hunting, hawking, fowling and fishing, the purpose of the comparison being to determine the best of the four. The Compleat Angler begins with a narrative debate between Venator, the hunter; Auceps, the falconer; and Piscator, the angler. Each one argues that his sport is best and that the element his sport involves, land, air, or water, presents the most exciting challenges.

The organization of the manual section of The Compleat Angler is also similar to the organization of the manual section of the Treatise. McDonald, in fact, claims that Walton merged "the basic outline of the Treatise of Fishing with the dialogue technique, the characters, and some of the content of The Arte of Angling (1577), and with elements of the pastoral," in creating The Compleat Angler (24). While it is true that Walton does present his information in a narrative form in which an experienced angler teaches a

novice, it is also true that the basic organization of the topics he chose to discuss is similar to the Treatise's. For example, over one third of the Treatise is made up of a discussion of the various types of sporting fish and the baits to use with each. The author proceeds through the list one by one, spending several paragraphs in his discussion on each fish. Walton also deals extensively with various types of fish, and his list is more complete. In each chapter he talks about one or two species of fish. The content in both texts is usually similar. For instance, the Treatise discusses the fish, the places where they are found, and the types of baits to use. Note these features of content in the Treatise's discussion of the tench.

A Tenche is a good fyssh: and heelith all manere of other fysshe that ben hurte yf they maye come to hym. He is the most parte of the yere in the mudde. And he styryth moost in Iune & Iuly: and in other seasons but lytyll. He is an euyll byter. his baytes ben thyse. For all the yere browne breede tostydy wyth hony in lyknesse of a butteryd loof: and the grete redde worme. And as for cheyf take the blacke blood in øe herte of a shepe & floure and hony. And tempre theym all togyder somdeale softer than paast: & anoynt therwyth the redde worme: bothe for this fysshe &

for other. And they will bite much the better  
thereat at all times. (McDonald 217)

Walton uses basically this same pattern and includes the same type of information. He expands his material by quoting other authorities or by noting whether a fish is plentiful in several of the main rivers in England. Note the similarities between Walton's discussion of the tench and the Treatise's discussion of the same fish: (The underlined phrases appear to be similar to information in the Treatise.)

The Tench, the Physician of Fishes, is observed to love Ponds better than Rivers, and to love pits better than either; yet Camden observes there is a river in Dorsetshire that abounds with Tenches, but doubtless they retire to the most deep and quiet places in it. . . . He will bite at a paste made of brown bread and honey, or at a marsh worm, or a Lob-worm; he inclines very much to any paste with which Tar is mixt, and he will bite also at a smaller worm with his head nipp'd off. . . .

(161-163)

While the possibility exists that the two books are similarly organized because of their common subject matter, references to certain specific items of content cannot be so explained. Walton's description of his twelve fishing flies

is very much like descriptions of those same flies in the Treatise. The critics who have studied Walton's sources believe that both the description of the artificial flies and the directions for coloring the fishing lines were taken from Mascall. They recognize, however, that Mascall's work is indebted to the Treatise (Cooper 139). Note the similarity of these descriptions of the artificial flies. The first is from the Treatise, the second from Mascall, and the third from Walton.

#### March

The donne flye the body of the donne wull and the wyngis of the pertryche. Another donne flye the body of blacke wull: the wynges of the blackest drake: and the jay under the wynges and under the taylor.

#### Apryll

The stone flye the body of blacke wull and yellow under the wynges. And under the tail the wynges of the drake. In the befynnyng of May a good flye the body of roddy wull and lapped abowte wyth blacke sylke: the wynges of the drake and of the redde capons hakyll.

#### May

The yellow flye the body of yellow wull the wynges of the redde cocke hakyll and of the drake litted

yelow. The black louver the body of blacke wull  
and lappyd abowte wyth the herle of the pecok  
tayle and the wynges of the redde capon wt a blewe  
heed. (McDonald 223-225)

Now, note Mascall's version of the same information.  
He organizes his information according to the separate flies  
instead of by months. He also gives the fourth fly the name  
of the ruddy fly.

#### First for the dunne Fly

1 The dun fly (in March) the body is made of  
dunne woolle, and the winges of the partridge  
feathers.

2 Also there is another dunne Fly made, the  
body of blacke wool, and the winges is made of the  
black drakes feathers, and of the feathers under  
the winges of his taile.

#### The stone Fly

3 The stone Fly (in Aprill) the body is made  
of black wooll, made yellow under the winges, and  
under tayl, and so made with the winges of the  
drake.

#### The ruddy Fly

4. The ruddy Fly, in the beginning of May, is  
a good fly to angle with aloft on the water, the  
body is made of redde wooll, lapt about with

blacke silke, and the feathers of the winges of the drake, with the feathers of the red capons taile, or hakell.

The yellow Fly

5 The yellow Fly (in May) is good, the body made of yellow wool, and the winges made of the redde cockes hackell or taile, and of the drake littid, or coulered yellow.

The blacke Fly

6 The blacke Fly or lower, (in May) the body is made of blacke wool, and lapt about with the hetle of the peacockes taile, the made are made of the winges of a browne capon, with his blew feathers in the head.

(Mascall 16-17)

Walton's description of these same flies is similar to the above passages. (The underlined phrases appear to be taken directly from the Treatise; Mascall's changes are indicated by ().)

The first is the dun-flie, in March, the body is made of dun wool, the winges of the partridges feathers. The second is another dun-flie, the body of Black [sic] wool and the wings made of the black Drakes feathers, (and of the feathers under his tail). The third is the stone-flie, in

April, the body is made of black wool made yellow under the wings and under the tail, and so made with wings of the Drake. The fourth is the (ruddy Flie,) [sic] in the beginning of May, the body made of red wool wrapt about with black silk, and the feathers are the wings of the Drake, with the feathers of a red capon also, which hang dangling on his sides next to the tail. The fifth is the yellow or greenish-flie (in May likewise) the body made of yellow wool, and the wings made of the red cocks hackle (or tail). The sixth is, the black flie, in May also, the body made of black wool and lapt about with the herl of a Peacocks tail; the wings are made of the wings of a (brown) Capon with his blew (feathers) in his head. (Walton 104)

Apparently Mascall is Walton's initial source for his descriptions of the artificial flies. Walton, like Mascall, organizes the flies by number instead of grouping them into months. He also includes the revisions that Mascall has made to the information as it appeared in the Treatise. Regardless of where Walton found these descriptions, their presence in The Compleat Angler indicates that this information, which first appeared in the Treatise, was considered valuable as much as 150 years after it first

appeared in print.

Walton's sentiment toward angling and the angler is also similar to the Treatise's. This sentiment is expressed in the preface when Piscator, the angler, in extolling the virtues of angling, develops part of his argument around one of the major points of the Treatise's prologue. Piscator argues that angling possesses the ideal balance between contemplation and physical activity (39-40). The argument in the Treatise is similar. Here the author is investigating the way a man can obtain a merry spirit, which in turn will result in his living a long life. Two requirements for a merry spirit are a merry thought (contemplation) and moderate activity. Like Piscator, the author of the Treatise sees angling as offering the best choice of all the sporting activities.

In his opening section, Walton creates a picture of the character of the angler that is very similar to the sentiment of the Treatise. Walton declares that anglers are quiet peaceful men, "that simplicity which was usually found in the primitive Christians, who were, as most anglers are, quiet men, and followers of peace; men that were so simply-wise, as not to sell their consciences to buy riches, and with them vexation and fear to die" (23). The Treatise also creates an impression of the angler as a humble and devout believer. Note, for example, these lines in the

conclusion. The Treatise views angling as a good opportunity to engage in prayer and to avoid sin.

Also ye must not vse this forsayd crafty dysporte for no couetysnes to thencreasyng & sparyng of your money oonly/ but pryncypally for your solace & to cause the helth of your body. and specyally of your soule. Foe whan ye purpoos to goo on your disportes in fysshing ye woll not desyre gretly many persones wyth you. whiche myghte lette you of your game. And thenne ye maye serue god deuowtly in sayenge affectuously youre custumable prayer. And this doynge ye shall eschewe & voyde many vices. as ydylnes whyche is pryncypall cause to enduce man to many other vyces. as it is ryght well knowen. (McDonald 227)

### Conclusion

In summary, it appears that the Treatise influenced later fishing literature in three ways. First, it established a standard organization for the fishing manual. Second, parts of its content were paraphrased and used in later texts, and third, it promoted an attitude towards the sport and the angler that later works copied.

Bentley has argued that "most of the later works show knowledge and use of (though seldom acknowledgement to) the

treatyse on fysshynge wyth an angle" (68-69). All five texts share at least one item of specific content with the Treatise. In terms of organization, one work, The Compleat Angler, is similar to the Treatise's pattern of a prologue extolling the virtues of the sport followed by a manual section outlining the technical aspects of it. Also, the organization of A Booke on Fishing with a Hooke and a Line is basically the same as the Treatise's manual section. In terms of content, A Booke on Fishing with a Hooke and a Line, The Pleasure of Princes, and The Compleat Angler all contain sections which appear to be very similar to information found in the Treatise. The most popular information in the Treatise appears to be its description of the twelve artificial flies and the directions for coloring the fishing lines, which all three works paraphrase. In terms of sentiment towards the sport and the angler, The Arte of Angling (1577), The Pleasure of Princes, and The Compleat Angler share the attitude of the Treatise in suggesting that angling somehow enhances the angler's moral fiber. The other two works simply do not address this subject.

The comparison of these works shows how authors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries used earlier works. Apparently, plagiarism was not considered a serious matter. Mascal takes large sections of the Treatise, revises them

to conform with the standards of his time and then claims the material as his own. Also, neither Markham or Walton cite either the Treatise or Mascall as their source for the descriptions of the artificial flies. Walton identifies the source as an "ingenuous brother of the angle" (104) but mentions no one specifically. We should remember, however, that originality was not prized during this period and that the use of earlier sources was both expected and demanded.

Also, the Treatise, the Arte of Angling, The Pleasure of Princes, and The Compleat Angler all argue that angling somehow causes the angler to be more moral and provides him with psychological or spiritual nourishment. The attitude towards angling continues into our own century and is evident in Ernest Hemingway's short story, "The Big Two-Hearted River." Here Hemingway sends his chief character, Nick, who bears recent psychological scars, on a fishing trip into the wilderness of Northern Michigan. During this trip Nick begins the process of healing. While it can not be absolutely established that the Treatise is responsible for place in the tradition.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TREATISE AND MODERN TECHNICAL WRITING

#### PRACTICES AND THEORY: A COMPARISON

The rhetorical features of The Treatise on Fishing with an Angle are in many ways similar to those suggested by modern technical writing theorists. These similarities suggest that the characteristic features of technical writing have developed and been refined over a long history. Other critics also agree that technical writing has a rich history and that many so-called modern practices originated in documents several thousand years old. Walter Miller, for instance, suggests that Frontinus, writing in the first century A. D., invented the genre of the "informational report." Miller also says that Frontinus, like many modern technical writers, wrote his report for several audiences: for some who only needed a brief overview and for others who required more details (202). The presence of modern practices in ancient and medieval documents indicates that the practices developed out of a sense of what constitutes effective communication. The purpose here is to determine what features of technical communication characterize the

Treatise.

Modern technical writing is often characterized by a number of distinguishing features. Observe, for example, this typical list of the characteristic features of technical writing as described by Redish, Battison, and Gold. These features include

1. "Set the context. At the beginning of a document, set the overall context by telling your readers what's in it, . . . and what you expect them to get from it."
2. "Set up signposts" which give directions about the organization of the information.
3. "Limit the amount of organizational information that you give at any one time."
4. "Write informative headings."
5. "Organize the material for more than one audience."
6. "Make the organization of the material graphically explicit."
7. "In a large document use tabs for easy access to chapters."
8. "Include both a table of contents and an index."  
(143-146)

The Treatise does not use all of the above features, but it does use several important ones. For example, the Treatise is careful to forecast what it intends to discuss.

It also makes use of headings and a table of contents to make the information more accessible to its reader. In addition, the Treatise uses a variety of techniques to make its prose coherent. Finally, the Treatise makes the language of the text accessible to the reader.

### The Treatise's Information Is Accessible To Its Readers

Modern authorities claim that readers understand new information more easily when writers present it in a context. For example, Thomas Huckin suggests that effective writers should forecast their organization so that the readers will know what to expect. He also argues that writers should emphasize their organization by announcing their topic at the start of each paragraph (101). The Treatise reveals its organization by

1. Using forecasting statements
2. Using topic sentences
3. Using headings and a table of contents.

#### Forecasting Statements

The Treatise contains sentences that forecast the subject before it is discussed. These forecasting statements occur at the manual, section, and paragraph levels. For example, once the author gets past the

prologue, he outlines the major sections of the manual in paragraph three:

Yf ye woll be crafty in anglynge: ye must fyrste lerne to make your harnays/ That is to wyte your rodde: your lynes of dyuers colours. After that ye must know how ye shall angle in what place of the water: how depe: and what time of day. For what manner of fysshe: in what wedyr How many impedymentes there ben in fysshing øat is callyd anglynge And in specyall wyth what baytys to euery dyuers fysshe in eche moneth of the yere. How ye shall make your baytes brede where ye shall fynde theym: and how ye shall kepe theym. And for the moost crafty thyng how ye make yours hokes of stele & of osmonde/ Some for the dubbe: and some for the flote: & the grounde. as ye shall here after al thyse fynde expressed openly vnto your knowledge. (McDonald 191)

This forecasting statement provides an overview of the contents of the Treatise. It is true that some subjects that occur later in the book, such as making floats, have been left out, and the statement concerning making hooks may be located in the wrong place; nevertheless, the forecasting statement is located in the appropriate place, at the beginning of the manual section, and contains enough

essential information to help the reader understand the purpose of the manual and its overall organization.

The Treatise also contains statements that forecast the organization of various sections. Some are rather short and simple, as is the one that begins the methods of angling section: "Now I haue lernyd you to make all your harnays. Here I woll tell you how ye shall angle" (McDonald 205). In other situations, the forecasting statement is more complex, covering an entire paragraph such as this one, which occurs between two major sections of the work. The paragraph functions as both a link and a justification for the new material about to be discussed.

And now I haue tolde you how to make your harnays:  
and how ye shall fysshe ther wyth in al poyntes  
Reason woll that ye knowe wyth what baytes ye  
shall angle to euery manere of fysshe in euery  
moneth of the yere/ whyche is all the effecte of  
the crafte. And wythout whyche baytes knowen well  
by you all your other crafte here toforn auayllyth  
you not to purpose. For ye can not brynge an hoke  
in to a fyssh mouth wythout a bayte. Whiche  
baytes for euery manere of fyssh and for euery  
moneth here folowyth in this wyse. (McDonald 211)

### Topic Sentences

The Treatise also forecasts its organization by beginning paragraphs with topic sentences. Of the fifty-one paragraphs in the Treatise, all have topic sentences, and in forty-nine instances the topic sentence is the first sentence in the paragraph. In the two exceptions, a logical reason exists for its coming later. In the first instance, in paragraph one, the author first states the proverb of Solomon, which he uses as an opening for his preface, before asking, "I aske this questyon/, whiche ben the meanes & the causes that enduce a man in to a mery spyryte." (McDonald 185) which functions as his topic sentence. In the second instance, in paragraph seventeen, the first sentence of the paragraph serves as a transition between two major sections and is immediately followed by the actual topic sentence of the paragraph, "Now I haue lernyd you to make all your harnays. Here I woll tell you how ye shall angle" (McDonald 205). The use of topic sentences helps the readers to understand the information by first placing the information within a context.

In most instances these topic sentences are very direct; observe this characteristic in the following:

"Here I woll declare vnto you in what place of the water ye shall angle" (McDonald 207).

"Now must ye make youre lynes in this wyse"

(McDonald 197).

"And how ye shall make your rodde craftly here I shall teche you" (McDonald 191).

"Now shall ye wyte that there ben twelue manere of ympedymentes whyche cause a man to take noo fysshe" (McDonald 209).

In many instances the topic sentence also serves as a transition between two sections as in the following examples:

"After that ye haue made thus your rodde: ye must lerne to coloure your lynes of here in this wyse" (McDonald 193).

"Whan your heer is thus colourid: ye must knowe for whiche waters and for whyche seasons they shall serue." (McDonald 197).

"Whan ye haue made thus your hokis: thenne must ye set theym on your lynes acordynge in gretnesse & strength in this wyse" (McDonald 201).

Thus, much like modern technical writing, the Treatise has a number of signposts which reveal its organization. Each paragraph has a topic, and that topic is stated in a sentence at the beginning of the paragraph. By forecasting the topic at the beginning of each paragraph or section, the Treatise aids its audience by providing them with a context

for understanding the new information it provides them.

### Headings and Tables of Content

Other ways writers can make their information accessible to readers are by using headings and a table of contents. In a study which has important implications for technical writing, Jan Spyridakis studied the effects of using headings, previews and logical connectives (transitional terms) in a written text. She found that signals helped readers "to retain, retrieve, and make inferences" about the information (412). Headings were of particular value in aiding long-term comprehension. She also stated that "with moderately difficult text, headings provide a reference point that is highly accessible over time" (412).

The 1496 printed edition of the Treatise does not use headings to indicate its organization, but this deficiency may be a quirk of the printer rather than a fault of the writer. In the earlier manuscript of the Treatise, headings mark the various sections. They are centered in the text and circled. Also, in later editions of the Treatise, such as the one printed by Edward Alde in 1586, some topic sentences appear as centered headings before the text that discusses that subject. This practice occurs in the section concerning coloring the lines, using the tackle, and

identifying the various types of fish along with their baits. The Treatise's use of headings in these cases, however, is not consistent with modern practices. Felker points out that in large documents, such as manuals, headings and subheadings can function as a type of outline indicating the overall organization of the text (18). In the Treatise the headings only describe a section of content and do not signal the overall organization of the document.

The 1496 printed edition does contain a separate table of contents for each of its treatises. The one for the fishing treatise has twenty-six entries. Examples of such entries include

"Howe ye shall make your rodde craftly,"

"To coloure your lynes,"

"For whiche waters and for whyche seasons,"

"How ye shall angle,"

"The Samon---The troughte," and Baytes made to laste all the yere." (Berners c)

#### The Treatise Is Coherent

Making the text coherent is an important way an author can help his audience understand the information he presents. The Treatise makes its prose coherent by using a variant form of the given-new strategy of sentence

development as well as by using a variety of other cohesive techniques.

### Given-New Strategy

Both Joseph Williams and Jack Selzer advocate the given-new strategy of sentence development as a method of increasing the readers' ability to understand information. The given-new strategy is a format in which a writer introduces new ideas by placing them in the context of old or known ideas. Practically speaking, this rhetorical practice involves stating at the beginning of a sentence ideas to which the reader has already been exposed. New ideas should be placed at the end of a sentence (Selzer 82, Williams 32-34).

The Treatise uses a variant form of the given-new strategy of sentence development to obtain textual coherence. This is very noticeable as it moves from one section to another. The common practice is to tie the old information (what has already been discussed) with the new information (what is about to be discussed), thus forming a link between the two sections. Observe this practice in the following examples: "Whan ye haue as many of the lynkys as ye suppose wol suffyse for the length of a lyne: thenne must ye knytte theym togyder wyth a water knotte or elles a duchys knotte" (McDonald 199). "Now ye knowe wyth how grete

hokys ye shall angle to euery fysshe: now I woll tell you wyth how many heeres ye shall to euery manere of fissue" (McDonald 201).

The Treatise also uses the given-new strategy for moving from sentence to sentence. The following paragraph is an example of this. Note that the given or old information is repeated either in the form of the original noun, "samon," or as a pronoun referring to it. (I have added the underlining.)

For by cause that the Samon is the moost stately fyssh that ony man maye angle to in fresshe water. Therefore I purpose to begynn at hym. The samon is a gentyll fysshe: but he is comborous for to take. For comynly he is but in depe places of grete ryuers. And for the more part he holdyth the myddys of it: that a man maye not come at hym. And he is in season from Marche vnto Myghelmas. In whyche season ye shall to hym wyth thyse baytes whan ye maye gete theym. (McDonald 211)

The first sentence establishes the topic: "The samon is the moost stately fyssh, . . . Therefore I purpose to begyn at hym." The third sentence takes the given topic (salmon) and adds to it the idea that he is difficult to catch. The fourth and fifth sentences then explain why the salmon is difficult to catch. The sixth sentence discusses when he is

in season, and the seventh sentence introduces the kinds of baits to use when fishing for him. The author uses the repetition of the original topic noun, "samon," and pronouns referring to it to develop the given-new structure. In each sentence after the topic sentence, the subject of each verb (with two exceptions) is either "samon" or a pronoun referring to it. This given-new strategy is predominate throughout the section of the Treatise where the various types of fish are discussed, and its presence there helps the reader to understand the new information the author provides by giving it within the context of a particular type of fish.

#### Traditional Cohesive Techniques

Another way of evaluating a text's coherence is from the perspective that Halliday and Hasan develop in Cohesion in English. Believing that the rhetorical means a writer uses to tie his information together can shape the meaning and emphasis of that writing, Halliday and Hasan have developed a taxonomy of cohesive ties that for our purposes include reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. Reference coherence refers to "the relation[ship] between an element of the text and something else by reference to which it is interpreted in the given instance" (308). The ties that are created by personal and demonstrative pronouns and

their antecedents are examples of reference coherence (309). For instance, note the connective link created in these sentences by the noun and its pronouns. "I think my wife is ill. She certainly acts as though she is." In substitution the connective relationship has no interest in "specifying or identifying a particular referent . . ." (314).

Indefinite terms such as "some" or "one" are therefore used in substitution. An example of substitution is "The tire is flat. I hope I don't have to buy a new one." Ellipsis coherence is most often used in responses where a deletion of a word or phrase causes the reader to rely on what has been previously said to provide interpretation (317). An example of ellipsis is "'Do you need help?' 'Yes, I do [need help].'" Conjunctive coherence "is based on the assumption that there are in the linguistic system forms of systematic relationships between sentences" (320). By using transitional words, we can indicate these relationships that exist in or between sentences. Halliday and Hasan mention five specific types of conjunctive coherence: additive, adversative, causal, temporal, and continuative. Additive indicates the "and," "or," and "nor" relationships (244-245). Adversative expresses a "contrary to expectation" type of relationship (250). Causal expresses relationships that indicate "result," "reason," or "purpose" (256). Temporal indicates relationships of time and sequence (261).

Continuative coherence includes transitional devices that have a "backward-linking function" (268).

The Treatise uses a number of the techniques that Halliday and Hasan discuss. The use of the personal pronoun "he" in the previously quoted passage about the salmon is an example of reference coherence. Substitution is exemplified in the following passage:

Soo thenne his losse is not greuou. and other  
greyffes maye he not haue/ sauynge but yf ony  
fisshe breke away after that he is take on the  
hoke/ or elles that he catche nought: whyche ben  
not greuou. For yf he faylle of one he maye not  
faylle of a nother/ . . . (McDonald 189)

Here "one" and "another" are substituting for the noun "fish." The Treatise also makes use of ellipsis. The words "ye shall angle" in the first sentence are implied in later sentences thus forming a connective link.

Now ye knowe wyth how grete hokys ye shall angle  
to euery fysshe: now I woll tell you wyth how many  
heeres ye shall to every manere of fissue. For  
the menow [ye shall angle] wyth a lyne of one  
heere. (McDonald 201)

All five types of conjunctive coherence are illustrated in the following passages from the Treatise.

Additive.

Now I haue lernyd you to make all your harnays.  
 Here I woll tell you how ye shall angle. Ye shall  
 angle: vnderstonde that there is .vj. manere of  
 anglyng. That one is at the grounde for the  
 troughte and other fische. A nother is at øe  
 grounde at an arche/ or at a strange where it  
 ebbyth and flowyth: for bleke: roche. and darse.  
 The thyrde is wyth a flote for all manere of  
 fysshe. (McDonald 205)

Adversative.

For all other manere of fysshynge is also laborous  
 & greuous. often makynge folkes ful wete & colde/  
 whyche many tymes hath be seen cause of grete  
 Infirmytees. But the angler maye haue no colde  
 nor no dysease nor angre/ but yf he be causer  
 hymself. (McDonald 189)

Causal.

And therefore to al you that ben vertuous: gentyll:  
 and free borne I wryte & make this symple treatyse  
 folowyng. (McDonald 191)

Temporal.

Ye shall put the quarell in a redde charkcole fyre

tyll that it be of the same colour that the fyre is. Thenne take hym out and lete hym kele: and ye shal fynde him well alayd for to fyle. Thenne reyse the berde with your knyfe/ and make the poynt sharpe. Thenne alaye hym agayn: for elles he woll breke in the bendyng. Thenne bende hym lyke to the bende fyguryd herafter in example.  
(McDonald 199)

Continuative.

Yf ye woll be crafty in anglynge: ye must furst lerne to make your harnays/ That is to wyte your rodde: your lynes of dyuers colours. (McDonald 191)

The great variety of forms the author uses in achieving coherence indicates that he was very concerned about tying his information together and demonstrated skill in doing so.

The Treatise's Language Is Accessible

To Its Readers

A writer can make the language of a text accessible to readers in a number of ways. For example, Selzer argues that words are easier to understand if readers know their meaning and make a practice of using them (79). Huckin also suggests that the text is more readable if it consistently

uses the same term for a concept or object (101). In addition, Mills and Walters advocate that writers should use words that readers will understand and define those that they may not understand (20). The Treatise makes its language accessible by

1. Using common, concrete terminology
2. Using consistent names for objects
3. Defining its terms.

#### Common, Concrete Terminology

The Treatise does contain common, concrete terminology. McDonald argues that

The English of the Treatise on Fishing is the language of ordinary people. It is simple native prose with few long words: most are of one syllable, and most of the remainder are of two syllables, not a language for discussing Aristotle but good enough for love and war and hunting and fishing. (McDonald 19)

In addition, an analysis of three passages of approximately 100 words, each taken from different sections of the Treatise, indicates that the diction is both simple and concrete (passages are included in Appendix A). Of the 145 different words used in the passages only ten had three or more syllables. Also, of the forty-eight different nouns

used in the passages (see Appendix B for list) twenty-seven or 56% of them were concrete, referring to such common items as: "water," "fish," "bread," and "rivers." Many of the other nouns, though abstract, represent very common ideas such as: "year," "month," "season," "hour," "day," "time," and "color." The Oxford English Dictionary did cite the Treatise as the oldest known source for two words, "anglynge" and "dubbe" (when used in the context of a dub line). This is not surprising, however, since both of these are angling terms, and after all the Treatise is the first known source about angling in English.

#### Consistent Names for Objects

The Treatise is also consistent in using the names it gives to objects. In the section that discusses fishing baits, this practice is very noticeable. It is important to remember that the Treatise was written before the time that insects were classified into common groups and given standard Latin names. In 1496 the name for the same insect might vary depending upon the part of the country in which it was found. Because of this inconsistency, the Treatise provides descriptive titles that permit the audience, which may come from many regions, to understand the meaning. Examples of these descriptive names include "the bobbe vnder the cowe torde" (McDonald 213 ), "a bayte that bredyth on a

fernn leyf" (McDonald 213), and "A worme that bredith betwene the rynde & the tree of an oke" (McDonald 215). When the Treatise later mentions these baits as useful for other fish, it uses exactly the same descriptive terminology.

### Definition

The Treatise does not make extensive use of definition. Perhaps this is because the author feels his audience is familiar with his terminology and does not require definitions. Also, as previously stated, the Treatise mainly uses simple, common words which may not need to be defined. The Treatise does not contain a specialized vocabulary connected with the pursuit of the sport. In this it departs from the tradition of sporting manuals, which were largely concerned in instructing their readers in appropriate terminology. On several occasions, however, definitions would be helpful. One example is in the section that discusses the various types of fish. Readers need additional information in distinguishing the various types of fish. The author does not include this information, apparently because he believes his audience already possesses this knowledge. The Treatise does, however, contain parenthetical definitions, as in this example from the instructions for plaiting the fishing lines: "And at the

other ende knytte all thre togyder: and put øe same in that other ende of your Instrument that hath but one clyft" (McDonald 197). "That hath but one clyft" defines which side is the other end of the instrument.

The Treatise does use an extended definition on one occasion. An extended definition normally begins with a sentence definition, which adheres to a standard formula that originates with Aristotle: Species + Genus + Differentia (Topics 144-147). For example, a hammer (species) is a hand tool (genus) used for driving nails into lumber (differentia). An extended definition then expands the sentence definition by discussing the term's history and background, by describing its physical appearance, by discussing its basic operating principle, by analyzing its parts, or a combination of any or all of these techniques. The instructions on plumbing the fishing lines begin with a general introduction telling the reader where to put the plumbs, which make the fishing line sink into the water, and stating the three methods of plumbing. In defining the separate ways, the author normally provides information about the exact number and sizes of plumbs to use:

Your lynys must be plomed with leyed, and øe next plume to the hoke schall be ther-from a large fote & more, and euery plumbe of quantite of øe gretnes of the lyne. øer be iij maner of plumbyng.

ffyrst, for a grond lyne rennyng and for the floyt  
 set vppon the grounde lyne lying, a x plumys  
 rennyng all to-gedur. On øe gronde lyne lying, ix  
 or x smale plumbes. ffor øe floote, plumbe hym so  
 hevy øat øe lest plope of any fysche may pluke hym  
 doune yn-to øe watur. And make hym rounde &  
 smothe øat øei fast not on stone or weedys, whyche  
 wolde let yow gretly in your disporte of  
 angelynge. (Manuscript version used because of a  
 corruption in the printed text.) (McDonald 155,  
 157)

#### Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the characteristic features of The Treatise on Fishing with An Angle, it appears that the Treatise displays a number of features of effective technical writing. For example, the author accommodates his information to his audience through logical organization and the presence of forecasting statements. The author also may have originally used headings to separate the Treatise's information into related parts and to make it accessible to readers. The printer, while failing to make use of headings, does include a table of contents to help readers find specific information. In addition, the Treatise uses a number of techniques to make the information in it coherent,

including the use of a form of the given-new strategy of sentence development, which is still extremely popular among modern technical writers. Finally, the author has made his language accessible to the reader by using simple and concrete terms, by being consistent in using the title he gives to an object or idea, and by providing some definitions.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TREATISE'S INSTRUCTIONS:

#### AN EVALUATION

Determining the effectiveness of the Treatise's instructions is not an easy task. For example, because of a lack of information, it is impossible to determine how effectively the Treatise's instructions communicated the author's ideas to his initial audience. We do know that the editor of the Treatise said that he was impressed by the instructions, but his comments border on exaggeration. He says in a closing comment:

And for by cause that this present treatyse sholde not come to the hondys of eche ydle persone whyche wolde desire it yf it were enpryntyd allone by itself & put in a lytyll plaunflet therefore I haue complyd it in a greter volume of dyuerse bokys concernynge to gentyll & noble men. to the entent that the forsayd ydle persones whyche sholde haue but lytyll mesure in the sayd dysporte of fysshing sholde not by this meane vtterly dystroye it.

(McDonald 229)

Also, based on the analysis in chapter four, we can say that the Treatise was a popular document and that subsequent fishing literature was organized in a similar way and contained similar types of content. These facts may suggest that the Treatise's initial audience found the information in it useful.

Another way to determine the effectiveness of the Treatise's instructions is by using Aristotle's persuasive appeals as a standard. The purpose here is to evaluate the instructions by determining

1. How the Treatise encourages the reader to use its information
2. How the Treatise convinces the reader to trust its information
3. How the Treatise organizes and imparts its information.

Using Aristotle's persuasive appeals to evaluate the Treatise's instructions is consistent with the practices of the fifteenth century. First, Aristotle's Rhetoric predates the Treatise. Also, a Latin version of the Rhetoric was available around 1270 and was used as "alternative readings" at Oxford in the 1430's (Murphy 93-98). The Treatise's author demonstrates that he can translate Latin, and he could have read this translation. Even if the author did not read Aristotle's Rhetoric, he may have been aware of the

persuasive appeals, for they are part of the foundation of rhetorical instruction in Western civilization.

Also, modern authorities have recognized that Aristotle's appeals have a place in determining the effectiveness of instructions. Elizabeth Harris in "A Theoretical Perspective on 'How To' Discourse" identifies instructions as a "special kind of persuasion" and argues that they make use of the three classical appeals: pathos, ethos, and logos (154).

Harris's position is strengthened by Sanders, who also feels that technical writing has a persuasive side. He notes that the job of the technical writer is "to take the objective truth of technical data and translate it into language that persuades readers of the data's truth in the context in which the data would be used" (64). Although Sanders discusses persuasion from the perspective of Rogerian rhetoric, he recognizes that technical writing does have its emotional, logical, and ethical elements. He argues that technical writers who desire to persuade their audience want "readers to understand appeals to pathos (assessments of the readers' use of the data derived from audience analysis) and appeals to logos (the quality of the data itself) in the established context of the writer's ethos, the writer's competent, scientifically objective character" (69).

Harley Sachs also recognizes that instructions and manuals have persuasive aspects. He argues that the manual writer's task is more than providing simple, orderly instructions. "The manual becomes a psychological battlefield between the writer and various audiences, and the communications goals are many: to get the work performed . . . while maintaining customer satisfaction and a good company image" (15).

The Treatise contains instances of all three persuasive appeals. First, it uses pathos to persuade the readers that the instructions are within their ability and worthwhile, thus relieving their emotional concerns. Second, it uses ethos to gain and to keep the readers' confidence by the scope and quality of the information it presents. Third, the Treatise uses logos in organizing its information.

#### Emotional Appeal

As anyone who has approached a new and difficult task can attest, an emotional element is present in performing the operation. Many times we decide to perform a task only to change our minds after we have read the dreaded operator's manual, which seems to indicate that the task is far more difficult than we had originally anticipated. Thus, part of the writer's task is to assure the reader that the task is worthwhile and not overly difficult. Richard

Whately, a nineteenth-century rhetorician, in analyzing the emotional aspects of persuasion, notes that authors who want to help their audiences overcome their fears must first show two things, "(1) that the proposed Object should appear desirable; and (2) that the Means suggested should be proved to be conducive to the attainment of that object" (qtd in Corbett 87).

The Treatise addresses the emotional concerns of its readers by telling them that the book's instructions are easy to follow and, most importantly, worth the trouble. Late in the prologue, the Treatise assures the readers that the cost of fishing is small, but the possible pleasures are great:

Dowteles thenne folowyth it that it must neded be the dysporte of fysshynge wyth an angle. For all other manere of fysshynge is also laborous & greuouse. often makynge folkes ful wete & colde/ whyche many tymes hath be seen cause of grete Infirmytees. But the angler maye haue no colde nor no dysease nor angre/ but yf he be causer hymself. For he maye not lese at the moost but a lyne or an hoke: of whyche he maye haue store plentee of his owne makynge/ as this symple treatyse shall teche hym. Soo thenne his losse is not greuouse. and other greiffes maye he not haue/

sauynge but yf ony fische breke away after that he is take on the hoke/ or elles that he catche nought: whyche ben not greuous. For yf he faylle of one he maye not faylle of a nother/ yf he dooth as this treatyse techyth: but yf there be nought in the water. And yet atte the leest he hath his holsom walke and mery at his ease. a swete ayre of the swete sauoure of the meede floures; that makyth hym hungry. (McDonald 189)

Also, later in the epilogue when discussing the ethics of fishing, the Treatise again suggests that the instructions will produce effective results: "And also yf ye doo in lyke manere as this treatise shewyth you; ye shal haue no nede to take of other mennys; whiles ye shal haue ynough of your owne takyng ye lyste to labour therfore" (McDonald 227). Likewise, within the manual itself, the author relieves possible stress by including only information that is reasonably easy to understand. Observe, for instance, the remark in discussing the baits for the bream: "Moo baytes there ben but they ben not easy & therfore I lete theym passe ouer" (McDonald 217).

In addition to these appeals, the author argues that angling benefits one's spiritual life. This appeal was particularly appropriate for a medieval audience that was largely concerned with religious matters. He first tells

them that angling is a good way to avoid idleness and vice and to live a long life. Later in the epilogue he stresses:

Foe whan ye purpoos to goo on your disportes in  
 fysshing ye woll not desyre gretly many persones  
 wyth you. whiche myghte lette you of your game.  
 And thenne ye maye serue god deuowtly in sayenge  
 affectuously youre custumable prayer. And this  
 doynge ye shall eschewe & voyde many vices. as  
 ydylnes whyche is pryncypall cause to enduce man  
 to many other vyces. as it is ryght well knowen.  
 (McDonald 227)

Thus, we see that the Treatise has used emotional arguments in trying to relieve its readers' emotional misgivings about their ability to use the instructions and to succeed at angling.

#### Ethical Appeal

In discussing the ethical appeal as it is used in instructions, Harris argues that, other than a text being written by an expert, the most important ethical argument is the content of the information itself. For if the content is incomplete or inaccurate, the audience will lose faith in the writer's ability to explain the procedure. The author of the Treatise develops his ethical appeal by showing that he is an expert on the sport and that he is concerned with

ethical behavior in the practice of the sport.

The value of the ethical appeal was the subject of a study conducted with writing students who were using computers as a part of their writing class. Eve Stoddard distributed a software manual to three separate groups. She provided each group with a different explanation of the source of the manual. She found that students' use of and reaction toward the manual differed based upon their understanding of the manual's source. She argues that there is a "correlation between high initial ethos (expertise and good will) and a reader's success in following technical directions" (237). In her opinion ethos plays a central role as a "persuasive component" in manuals and instructions. She asserts that successful manual writers must project an image of both competence and good will toward the audience if successful communication is to take place (234-235).

In the Treatise the author makes an effort to gain his readers' confidence by giving the impression that he is very familiar with the methods he discusses. The author indicates his familiarity with the subject by the scope of his knowledge. He knows not only how to make the tackle but also how, when, and where to use it. In addition to these items, he is familiar with the common game fish in England. He is careful not to leave out any part of the process that

he is explaining. Note, for example, all the topics covered just in making the tackle:

1. Making the rod,
2. Obtaining and coloring the lines,
3. Knowing when to use a particular color,
4. Plaiting the lines,
5. Tying the separate lines together,
6. Making the hooks,
7. Attaching the hooks to the lines,
8. Determining the correct size of line to use,
9. Weighting the lines, and
10. Making the floats.

Thus, the author creates by his broad scope of knowledge about angling the impression that he is an authority on the subject and that the information is therefore reliable.

The author is also careful not to damage this confidence by claiming to know more than he actually does. Note, for example, his cautious remark when discussing the baits used when fishing for carp:

And as touchynge his baytes I haue but lytyll  
 knowlege of it And me were loth to wryte more than  
 I knowe & haue prouyd But well I wote that the  
 redde worme & the menow ben good baytes for hym at  
 all tymes as I haue herde saye of persones

credyble & also founde wryten in bokes of  
credence. (McDonald 215)

By making use of other sources, the author adds to his credibility, for the audience is led to believe that the information in the Treatise is based not only on the writer's own knowledge gained from experience but also from the experience and recorded observations of others.

The author of the Treatise further enhances the value of his ethical appeal by showing that he is concerned with ethical conduct. Aristotle says that the ethics of the speaker are "the most effective means of persuasion he [the speaker] possesses" (Rhetoric 595). In the epilogue of the Treatise, the author discusses the ethics of fishing. The rules he advocates are

1. Do not fish in private waters without the owner's permission.
2. Do not take any fish that have been caught in other men's traps or trout lines.
3. Do not damage the owner's property.
4. Do not take too many fish. (Angling is a hobby, not a means of obtaining a daily supply of food.)

(McDonald 227)

The author's concern with ethical behavior while angling causes his audience to believe that he is good man, and therefore, his information must be reliable.

## Logical Appeal

To examine the logical argument of the Treatise, first the general organization of the manual is evaluated. Then, several sets of instructions are examined to determine how they present their instructional information.

### Evaluation of the Treatise's Organization

Schoff and Robinson argue in their work Writing and Designing Operators Manuals that one important aspect of organizing manuals is to use a format that moves from general to specific. For example, they suggest that writers should first provide a summary and then give the specifics. This general-to-specific format should be followed not only for the basic overall organization of the manual but also for separate sets of instructions (44). Schoff and Robinson further observe that the separate processes in a manual have an inherent chronology and that the separate "steps for doing something grow naturally out of the way the product or process works" (45).

The Treatise organizes its information in this way. It begins the manual section with an overview of what is included in it. Observe the four major sections of the manual: making the tackle, learning how to angle, knowing the various kinds of fish, and making artificial flies and

bread baits.

Yf ye woll be crafty in anglynge: ye must fyrste lerne to make your harnays/ That is to wyte your rodde: your lynes of dyuers colours. After that ye must know how ye shall angle in what place of the water: how depe: and what time of day. For what manner of fysshe: in what wedyr How many impedymentes there ben in fysshynge that is callyd anglynge And in specyall wyth what baytys to euery dyuers fysshe in eche moneth of the yere. How ye shall make your baytes brede where ye shall fynde theym: and how ye shall kepe theym. And for the moost crafty thyng how ye make yours hokes of stele & of osmonde/ Some for the dubbe: and some for the flote: & the grounde. as ye shall here after al thyse fynde expressed openly vnto your knowledge. (McDonald 191)

The author, however, does not include separate overviews for the four major sections. He also does not include overviews for his separate set of procedures. He does introduce each procedure, but then he normally begins by discussing the first step in the process. Note this characteristic in the example from the instructions for coloring the fishing lines.

"After that ye haue made thus your rodde: ye must lerne to coloure your lyndes of here in this wyse. Fyrste ye must take . . ." (McDonald 193).

The organization of the separate sets of procedures does consistently grow out of the way the process works. The logic behind the organization of the four major sections is obvious. First, the Treatise tells the reader how to make the fishing tackle; then it tells him how to use the tackle. After the reader has his tackle and is familiarized with it, the Treatise tells him about the various types of fish the reader can, with the help of his tackle, catch. Finally, the Treatise discusses bait breads and artificial flies, which are used only under special circumstances.

The separate procedures within the different sections are usually logically arranged. For example, in the section dealing with making the tackle, the organization of the sets of procedures grows out of the actual process. First, the rod is constructed. Then the horse hair, which is used for the fishing lines, is dyed. After that, the horse hair is plaited into a fishing line. Then the separate lengths of line are tied together to make a longer line which the angler can use for fishing, etc.

The logic behind the organization of section two, using the tackle, is also evident. First, the Treatise tells its readers the various methods of angling; then, it gives them

supplemental information on places to fish and fishing weather. Finally, it provides the readers with troubleshooting instructions which tell them what to do or correct if they fail to catch fish.

The organization of section three, knowing the various kinds of fish, is not so readily apparent. The discussion begins with the salmon because, in the words of the Treatise, the salmon is the most noble. The section ends with the description of the eel and pike. They are mentioned last because they are evil fish: they devour other types of fish and thus ruin fishing waters. This method of organization may seem strange to the modern reader, but perhaps the medieval writer is attempting to establish a hierarchy of fish like Chaucer established for birds in his Parliament of Fowls (Robinson 309-318). Perhaps a more effective way of organizing this section for the modern reader would be to list the various types of fish alphabetically or to group various types of fish based upon some common feature.

In section four the Treatise first discusses the bread baits and then takes up the artificial fishing flies. The flies are organized chronologically according to months of the year.

### Examination of Individual Procedures

Before evaluating the individual procedures, it is first necessary to consult the works of technical writing theorists whose recommendations can provide a solid basis for our analysis. These theorists differ in their approach in evaluating effective instructions. Sherry Southard suggests that the three critical criteria for evaluating instructions include "organization, formatting, and visuals" (89). Good organization involves using a general-to-specific pattern and employing headings and lists to make the organization obvious (89). Formatting includes "all aspects of the physical appearance of a document, such as typography . . . and the layout and design of both the words and illustrations" (89). Visuals refers to the use of illustrations to supplement the written text (89).

Cunningham and Mitchell's "Teaching the Writing of Instructions" discusses the desirable characteristics of effective instructions and outlines five sections of information that instructions should possess. Instructions should first include a "process section" which provides "an overview explaining what, when, and occasionally why" of the instructions (141). A second section deals with the tools needed to complete the process. A third section discusses the materials needed to complete the process. The authors

note that readers should not be permitted "the luxury of decision"; therefore, measurements should be spelled out exactly. A fourth section contains general warnings about the equipment or process. The final section is made up of the instructions themselves. The normal procedure is to number each step and to include only one imperative verb in each step. Sometimes, however, if the action of two verbs is closely related, as in the example: "Push breaking lever to right and open gun," (139) this rule may be set aside. The only elements permitted to interrupt the actual steps in the process are "warnings, cautions, and notes" (141).

Redish and Schell also add that good instructions need to be written as procedures or in terms of the actions readers must take to complete the task. They argue that the all too common descriptive instruction does not actually tell readers what to do and requires them "to figure out the instructions for themselves" (65).

John Carter suggests other elements which need to be included in effective instructions. He feels that, "a carefully developed presentation that interposes examples and written and visual illustrations of one kind or another . . . can go far toward bringing the meaning of things within the grasp of the average person" (151). In addition, he says that effective instructions need to encourage readers "to interact meaningfully with the text through

activities designed to induce processing . . ." of the information (152).

Finally, Anderson and Armbruster add that when writing for younger readers the order of the actual steps in a set of instructions should match the natural order a user would follow to complete the procedure (170). Hartley suggests that the most suitable sequence is to match the steps with "the temporal order in which they occur" (50).

The set of instructions dealing with making the hooks is evaluated here because it is the most complete and best conforms to modern practices. Other sets of instructions, however, supplement the evaluation. The need for warnings and cautions has been omitted because these features of instruction have largely grown out of legal mandates of the present century. The evaluation is based on the following questions which are largely derived from the above suggestions:

1. Is there an introduction which provides an overview of the instructions?
2. Are the tools and equipment that the reader needs to complete the task mentioned in the introduction?
3. Is only one major step mentioned in each independent clause?
4. Does the author use the active voice?

5. Are measurements and complicated procedures spelled out exactly?
6. Are the instructions organized chronologically?
7. Have all the steps that are needed to complete the task been included?
8. Are the instructions adequately illustrated?

The first set of instructions to be analyzed discusses the process of making the fishing hooks:

Ye shall vnderstonde that the moost subtyll & hardyste crafte in makynge of your harnays is to make your hokis. For whoos makynge ye must haue fete fyles. thynn and sharpe & smalle beten: A semy clamm of yren: a bender: a payr of longe & and smalle tongys: and harde knyfe somdeale thycke: an anuelde: & a lytyll hamour. And for smalle fysshe ye shall make your hokes of the smalest quarell nedlys that ye can fynde of stele/ & in this wyse. Ye shall put the quarell in a redde charkcole fyre tyll that it be of the same colour that the fyre is. Thenne take hym out and lete hym kele: and ye shal fynde him well alayd for to fyle. Thenne reyse the berde with your knyfe/ and make the poynt sharpe. Thenne alaye hym agayn: for elles he woll breke in the bendyng. Thenne bende hym lyke to the bende fyguryd

herafter in example. And gretter hokes ye shall mabe [sic] in the same wyse of gretter nedles: as broderers nedlis: or taylers: or shomakers nedlis spere poyntes/ & of shomakers nalles in especyall the beste for grete fysshe. and that they bende atte the poynt whan they ben assayed/ for elles they ben not good Whan the hoke is bendyd bete the hynder ende abrode: & fyle it smothe for fretynge of thy lyne. Thenne put it in the fyre agayn: and yeue it an easy redde hete. Thenne sodaynly quenche it in water: and it woll be harde & stronge. And for to haue knowledge of your Instrumentes: lo theym here in fygure portrayd.

(McDonald 199, 201)

These instructions meet many of the previously mentioned criteria. For instance, they begin by telling the reader the purpose of the instructions. They also provide a list of the tools needed to perform the task. The exact materials are not listed, for that information would depend on how many and what sizes of hooks the reader intended to make. The instructions later include information concerning the material used in making hooks. This information, however, is not grouped together, and the second part, which deals with the larger needles, actually interrupts the steps of the process. The instructions also divide the steps into

sentences, with each sentence representing only one step in the process, but the narrative format of the instructions makes them less effective. Elizabeth Berry argues that instructions written in a narrative manner frequently encourage writers "to include a lot of unnecessary description and padding," thus making the task more difficult for the readers (22). Finally, the instructions directly address the reader and make exclusive use of the active voice. The Treatise also includes two drawings to illustrate the instructions.

Some deficiencies, however, are present in the instructions. First, they do not tell the reader where or how to raise the barb. They also do not give any textual information about where the bend should be made, but rely solely upon a very imprecise drawing which gives the reader only a vague idea of what he should do. Also, the drawing of the hooks is several pages removed from the written text which deals with making them. In addition, the names and the number of tools listed in the text are not the same as those listed in the drawing. Finally, many of these tools, which the instructions deem necessary, are not referred to later in the text, so the reader is left wondering how he should use them.

These instructions, perhaps, best illustrate a problem for the modern reader which runs throughout large portions

of the manual. The author fails to communicate because he assumes that the audience knows more than it really does. Elizabeth Orna states that one reason authors fail to communicate in writing instructions is because they are so familiar with the subject that they cannot view it from the perspective of users who are not familiar with the subject (22). Clement adds that the current practice in writing instructions is to assume that the audience has "no prior experience with the product" or task (151). The Treatise does not appear to observe this practice. In fact, it appears to be assuming that the audience has experience in working with tools and in making or repairing items similar to those it discusses. This assumption may explain why the Treatise fails to include in the actual step-by-step process information on how to use the tools it mentions at the beginning of the instructions for making hooks. Also, the descriptions of the artificial flies without any instructions for making them seem to suggest that the author expects his audience to already possess this information. Otherwise, this oversight is a serious fault.

Other sets of instructions in the Treatise appear to be so confusing that neither a fifteenth- nor twentieth-century reader would find them easy to use. Perhaps the most confusing instructions deal with how to make the angler's rod. (I have added the numbers.)

1. And how ye shall make your rodde craftly here  
I shall teche you. 2. Ye shall kytte betwene  
Myghelmas & Candylmas a fayr staffe of a fadom and  
an halfe longe: arme grete of hasyll: wyllowe: or  
aspe. 3. And bethe hym in an hote ouyn: & sette  
hym euyn Thenne lete hym cole & drye a moneth.  
4. Take thenne & frette hym faste wyth a  
cockeshotecorde: and bynde hym to a fourme or an  
euyn square grete tree. 5. Take thenne a  
plummers wire that is euyn and streyte & sharpe at  
the one ende. 6. And hete the sharpe ende in a  
charcole fyre tyll it be whyte: and brenne the  
staffe therwyth thorough: euer streyte in the pythe  
at bothe endes tyll they mete. 7. And after that  
brenne hym in the nether ende wyth a byrde broche?  
& wyth other broches eche gretter than other. &  
euer the grettest laste: so that ye make your hole  
aye tapre wexe. 8. Thenne let hym lye styll and  
kele two dayes. 9. Vnfrette hym thenne and lete  
hym drye in a hous roof in the smoke tyll he be  
through drye 10. In the same season take a fayr  
yerde of grene hasyll & beth hym euen & streyghte.  
and lete it drye wyth the staffe. 11. And whan  
they ben drye make the yerde mete vnto the hole in  
the staffe: vnto halfe the length of the staffe.

12. And to perfourme that other halfe of the crophe. Take a a fayr shote of black thornn: crabbe tree: medeler. or of Ienypre kytte in the same season: and well bethyd & streyghte. And frette theym togyder fetely: soo that the crophe maye iustly entre all in to the sayd hole.

13. Thenne shaue your staffe & make hym tapre wexe. 14. Thenne vyrell the staffe at bothes endes with longe hopis of yren or laton in the clenest wise with a pyke in the nether ende fastnyd with a rennyng vyce: to take in & oute your crophe. 15. Thenne set your crophe an handfull within the ouer ende of your staff is suche wise that it be as bigge there as in ony place abone. 16. Thenne arme your crophe at thouer ende downe to øe frette wyth a lyne of .vj. heeres. And dubbe the lyne and frette it fast in øe toppe wyth a bowe to fasten on your lyne.

(McDonald 191, 193)

These instructions violate almost all of the previously mentioned guidelines. First, they do not have an opening section that provides an adequate overview. Second, there is no list of equipment needed to complete the task. Some tools are mentioned within the steps such as the cockshoot cord, plumber's wire, and spits, but many tools are needed

which are never mentioned. For example, what tool is needed to shave the staff, and what tools are needed to ferrule the staff with hoops of iron? A third criticism of the instructions is their lack of a materials section near the beginning. The materials are vaguely spelled out, but mention of them is scattered throughout the steps. On the other hand, the instructions do have some positive features; for example, each sentence usually contains only one step, and each step uses an imperative verb.

The instructions, however, possess other problems that are even more serious. First, they are not organized in a totally chronological manner. For example, the cutting and drying of the staff, the rod, and the fair shoot are supposed to take place at the same time. A reader would expect to find this information collected together, but it is scattered about in steps 1, 10, and 11. Also, the instructions appear to be incomplete and give the reader the "luxury of decision," which Cunningham and Mitchell warn against (141). For instance, the instructions are reasonably clear through 11, but, beginning with 12, serious problems develop for the reader. To what does the "them" refer, and how is the reader supposed to bind "them" together? Steps 14 and 16 are equally confusing. How is the reader supposed to ferrule the staff at both ends? What type of running device is needed? How is it made? How is

it fastened to the staff? These are just a few of the questions the instructions fail to answer. Finally, the instructions are not adequately illustrated. True, a drawing of the finished rod is placed after the instructions, but this illustration alone is not adequate in illustrating the complex procedure involved in making the rod. Because of these inadequacies, this set of instructions is largely ineffective.

A third sample, however, indicates that the author can communicate directions reasonably well, as in this set which deals with coloring the hair for the fishing line:

For to make russet heer. take stronge lye a pynt  
and halfe a pounce of sote and a lytyll iuce of  
walnot leuys & a quarte of alym: and put theym  
alle togyder in a panne and boylle theym well.  
And whan it is colde put in youre heer tyll it be  
as derke as ye woll haue it. For to make a browne  
colour. Take a pounce of sote and a quarte of  
ale: and seth it wyth as many walnot leuys as ye  
maye. And whan they wexe blacke sette it from the  
fire. And put therin your heer and lete it lye  
styll tyll it be as browne as ye woll haue it.

(McDonald 195)

These instructions, which are much less complex than those previously analyzed, are similar to modern

instructions. For example, they provide in the introduction a list of the materials and equipment needed to complete the process, and in most cases, these are given in exact amounts. Although exact times are not provided for the various functions, the instructions leave the impression that this is not really a critical factor. In fact, the only oversight the instructions contain is the failure of the first set to tell the reader to take the pan off the fire and let the contents cool. Given the context, this information is, perhaps, understood without actually mentioning it, and it is, therefore, not a major oversight.

#### Conclusion

An examination of the Treatise's instructions shows that the author used all three of the classical persuasive appeals, emotional, ethical, and logical, in presenting the material. He relieves the audience's fears of confronting the task of making the tackle and using it by assuring them that the instructions are easy to follow and worth the effort. He also convinces them by his broad scope of knowledge about angling that he is an expert and that his information is reliable. Finally, the organization of the Treatise naturally grows out of the way the process works.

The examination also reveals that the Treatise's instructions are similar in some respects to the

requirements of modern instructions as outlined by Mitchell and Cunningham. For example, the instructions include

1. The use of introductions which tell the purpose of the instructions and the material and equipment needed to perform the task
2. The use of the active voice
3. The practice of including only one step in each sentence
4. The presence of illustrations which supplement the written text.

In addition, the examination reveals that a fundamental difference exists between the Treatise's instructions and those found in modern manuals. The Treatise presumes to have a homogeneous audience that is skilled in the art of making practical everyday items. Evidence of this presumption is the lack of detail the author consistently fails to provide. His normal pattern in giving information is to provide the general idea and then to rely on his audience's background knowledge to fill in the particulars. This fact separates the Treatise from modern technical writing, which is written for audiences with extremely diversified backgrounds. Also, some of the instructions fail to provide a list of equipment needed to complete the task and to sequence steps correctly.

## CHAPTER V

### AN EVALUATION OF

#### THE TREATISE'S ILLUSTRATIONS

Like modern technical manuals, The Treatise on Fishing with an Angle contains a number of illustrations. The illustrations function in several ways; some are merely decorative, designed only to keep the reader's attention; others have the vital function of enhancing the information and clarity of the written text.

The visual presentation in the Treatise has both its strengths and weaknesses. It makes use of line drawings, which theorists suggest are the most effective illustrations for technical manuals (Killingsworth and Gilbertson 139). The Treatise also makes reference in the written text to each of the drawings. In addition, some of the illustrations are helpful in supplementing the inadequate text that accompanies them. The illustrations are, however, in some respects inadequate. For example, in some instances the information in the illustration is inconsistent with the written text. Also, a need exists for callouts (words naming the various items in the illustration) to identify

the various parts of some illustrations. Finally, some of the illustrations do not show enough detail to allow the reader to understand the writer's comments.

The fact that illustrations are even included in the work is a credit to its printer, Wynkyn de Worde. Clair points out that before the dawn of the printing industry wood engraving was an uncommon profession in England (51). In fact, the first English book to include illustrations, the Mirroure of the World, was published in 1481, only fifteen years before the Treatise. Also, many early printers did not use illustrations. For example, two other printers who were contemporaries of de Worde, Johannes Lettou and William de Machlina, did not include illustrations, ornaments, or initials in their works (Clair 52). The absence of illustrations in many early English books is no doubt because book illustration in England was very poor and very expensive. Clair claims that many illustrations were very poor, with figures being presented in mere outline form (the drawing of the solitary angler on the first page of the Treatise is a perfect example of this) (54). Thus, in examining the Treatise's illustrations we need to keep in mind that they were produced in the infancy of England's printing history and that England's ability to produce refined illustrations lagged behind some of the other Western nations (Clair 51-52).

## Illustrations in Technical Writing

This chapter reviews the visual presentation in the Treatise. The purpose here is to determine the form of the Treatise's illustrations, how they are used, and how they have been integrated into the text. To establish guidelines by which we can evaluate the Treatise's illustrations, we may consult the works of authorities in the field of technical graphics to ascertain their suggestions concerning the use of illustrations in technical documents. Of particular concern are their comments concerning

1. The ways illustrations function in a presentation
2. The characteristics of effective illustrations
3. The methods of integrating an illustration into a text
4. The methods for determining the best type of illustration for a particular situation.

### Function of Illustrations

Authorities such as Lefferts suggest that illustrations are vital elements in all technical manuals. Sometimes they are used to "clarify" the points that are being made in a presentation. At other times, they function to "simplify" complex information by putting it in a graphic form. Also, illustrations are used to "summarize" large amounts of

information by placing the material in a neat, easy to understand chart or table. In addition, they are frequently used to create "interest" in the material by giving the readers a break in the text (Lefferts 18-34). Turnbull and Baird also point out that illustrations can emphasize the written message and make the information in it easier to understand (5).

#### Characteristics of Effective Illustrations

Illustrations in technical texts should possess certain key features if they are to fulfill their designated purpose. Lefferts advocates three basic principles in evaluating illustrations: "efficiency," "effectiveness," and "impact" (51). He defines efficiency as the ability of the illustration to convey the information in a relatively short amount of time. Illustrations that are confusing and require lengthy study to interpret are inadequate because they fail to perform one of the major functions for which they are designed: the ability to speed up the process of interpretation. Effectiveness refers to the ability of the illustration to enhance the reader's "understanding of the information." Impact describes the emotional effect the illustration has on the reader (5). Tufte believes that illustrations should only emphasize the data being presented by the illustration, not other items (91).

Theorists also offer a number of practical suggestions for designing illustrations. Schoff and Robinson suggest that writers should "make the important things stand out," and the illustrations they use should be large and free of unnecessary detail. This last suggestion involves not attempting to put too much information into an illustration and in using plenty of white space "around and within the visual" (86-87). Booher advocates that from a practical viewpoint procedural tasks are best communicated using a combination of pictures and related text, and pictures with text that repeats in written form the message communicated by the pictures (qtd in Hartley 84). Robert Smillie notes that one common format of a Job Performance Aid (instructions) is to totally merge text and graphics by arranging them in parallel columns with text being placed on the left and appropriate graphics being arranged on the right (222).

#### Integration of Illustrations

Illustrations also need to be properly labeled and integrated into the text. Tufte argues that to avoid "perceptual difficulties" "clear, detailed, and thorough labeling" should be part of the illustration itself (56). Schoff and Robinson believe that writers should make mention of the illustration in the written text and place it "as

soon as possible after the first reference to it" (89).

James Hartley argues that there are three acceptable methods to focus attention on illustrations: mentioning them in the written text, labeling the various parts of the drawing, and using captions to call attention to the illustration (84).

Mills and Walter suggest three practices to observe when integrating the graphic with the text.

1. If an illustration is important in interpreting the written message, refer to it in the text.
2. Make reference to items within the illustration that need to be emphasized.
3. Provide written instructions to help readers understand difficult illustrations. (309)

#### Selection of Appropriate Illustrations

In determining which type of illustration to use in a given situation, one should first consider the purpose of the illustration. For example, a drawing is best in showing what a new product looks like, but a bar chart is more effective in showing the new product's month by month sale's record. Additionally, illustrations should be suited to the reader's ability to understand and interpret the information that the illustration attempts to convey. Killingsworth and Gilbertson have proposed that, from both a psychological and practical viewpoint, line drawings are the most suitable

type of graphic for a manual (139). Schoff and Robinson claim that the choice of a particular illustration depends on what the writer desires to present (86). They agree that line drawings are very suitable for manuals, for "You can show exactly what you want to show without having to deal with a clutter of extraneous parts" (76). Michael Twyman adds other criteria in determining how to select the most effective illustration to use in a presentation. He suggests that such factors as "the information content, the users, and the circumstance of use" are valuable guides (306).

It is not fair to expect the Treatise's illustrations to correspond with all of these twentieth-century recommendations. We can, however, evaluate them by asking the following questions that are based on many of the recommendations:

1. Is the illustration integrated into the text?
2. Is the illustration located near the written information it illustrates?
3. Is the message of the illustration and the written text consistent?
4. Does the illustration contain callouts which name the parts of the object being illustrated?
5. Does the illustration show enough detail to make its message clearly understood?

6. Is the illustration drawn to approximate scale?
7. Does the Treatise include enough illustrations in support of the text?

Illustrations in The Treatise on  
Fishing with an Angle

This section contains a description and evaluation of the Treatise's illustrations.

Description of Illustrations

The Treatise contains seven different graphics if we include the woodcut on the first page. An eighth illustration concerned with the duchess and water knots is referred to in the text, but the actual drawing is missing. Perhaps its absence is due to the poor quality of book illustration in fifteenth-century England (Clair 52). Also, the illustration of the hooks may be out of place, for it is included twelve pages after it is first referred to in the text. Each illustration is a wood-cut, which was the only means available for graphic reproduction in the fifteenth century. Two of the illustrations, the list of tools for making the hooks and the various types of fishing lines, have callouts (words naming the various items in the illustration) within the line drawings which identify the tool or type of line. Also, in each instance, except the

opening woodcut, the text makes reference to the figure, usually by saying something like "And for the more redynesse loo here a fygure in example" (McDonald 193) or "And for to haue knowlege of your Instrumentes: lo theym here in fygure portrayd" (McDonald 201).

The illustrations in the Treatise have both a decorative and instructional function. Figures 3 (The Solitary Angler), 4 (Fishing Floats), and 5 (Fishing Hooks) (see pages 104-105 for illustrations) of the Treatise have a decorative function. The solitary fisherman successfully pursuing his sport (note fish in tub) adds to the appeal the writer attempts to create in his prologue.

Figures 4 (Fishing Floats) and 5 (Fishing Hooks) are also decorative. The drawing of the floats certainly adds nothing to the more-than-satisfactory textual explanation: "And loke that the flote for one heer be nomore than a pese. For two heeres; as a beene. for twelue heeres: as a walnot. And soo every lyne after the proporcion" (McDonald 205).

The illustration of the fishing hooks has little instructional value because the hooks are not drawn to scale and the drawings give only a vague impression. The illustration of the fishing hooks is included after the descriptions of the artificial fishing flies and is introduced with the statement, "Thyse fygures are put here in ensample of your hokes" (McDonald 225).



Figure 3. The Solitary Angler

The Book of Saint Albans (Westminster, 1496) rpt in John McDonald, The Origins of Angling (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963) 185.



Figure 4. Fishing  
Floats

The Book of Saint Albans (Westminster, 1496) rpt in  
John McDonald, The Origins of Angling (Garden City, NY:  
Doubleday, 1963) 205.

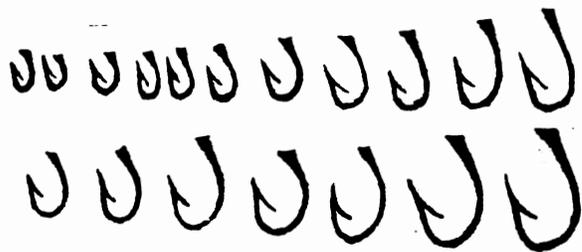


Figure 5. Fishing Hooks

The Book of Saint Albans (Westminster, 1496) rpt in  
John McDonald, The Origins of Angling (Garden City, NY:  
Doubleday, 1963) 225.

Figures 6 (The Angler's Rod), 7 (The Instrument for Plaiting the Fishing Lines), 8 (Tools for Making Hooks), and 9 (Types of Ground Line) from the Treatise possess a definite instructional value (see pages 107-108 for these illustrations). Figures 6 of the Angler's Rod and 7 of the Instrument for Plaiting Fishing Lines depict fairly complex instruments that have multiple parts. The illustration of the angler's rod follows the instructions for making it and is introduced by the statement, "And for the more redynesses loo here a fygure therof in example" (McDonald 193).

Figure 7 (the Instrument for Plaiting the Lines) is very important in helping readers to understand the written instructions and is referred to several times in the textual discussion. In fact, the instructions begin by referring to the illustration. "Now must ye make youre lynes in this wyse. Fyrste loke that ye haue an Instrument lyke vnto this fygure portrayed folowyng" (McDonald 197). Also, statements such as "and put øe same ende in that other ende of your Instrument that hath but one clyft" or "Thenne twyne euery warpe one waye & ylyke moche: and fasten theym in thre clyftes ylyke streyghte" (McDonald 197) would be totally meaningless without an accompanying drawing. This drawing illustrates that one end of the instrument has one cleft where all three strands are fastened together. The three strands then separate and are each fastened in a different

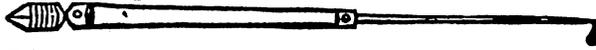


Figure 6. The Angler's Rod

The Book of Saint Albans (Westminster, 1496) rpt in John McDonald, The Origins of Angling (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963) 193.

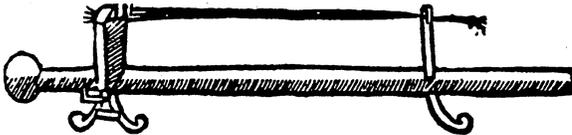


Figure 7. Instrument for  
Plaiting the Lines

The Book of Saint Albans (Westminster, 1496) rpt in John McDonald, The Origins of Angling (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963) 199.

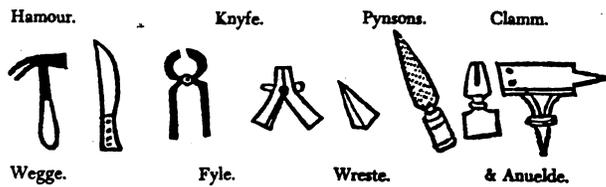


Figure 8. Tools for Making Hooks

The Book of Saint Albans (Westminster, 1496) rpt in John McDonald, The Origins of Angling (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963) 201.

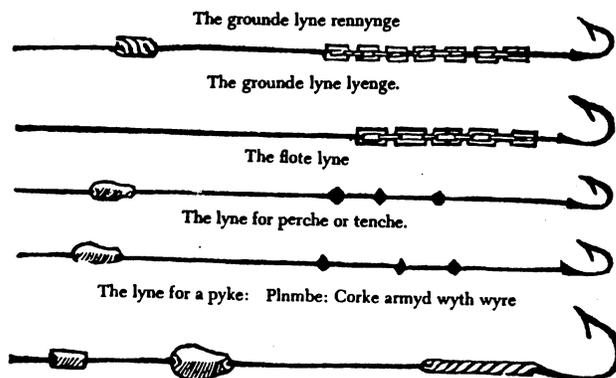


Figure 9. Types of Ground Lines

The Book of Saint Albans (Westminster, 1496) rpt in John McDonald, The Origins of Angling (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963) 203.

cleft at the other end of the instrument.

Figure 8 (Tools for Making Hooks) provides a drawing of the types of tools needed for making the hooks. The illustration follows the instructions that describe how to make the hooks and is introduced by the sentence, "And for to haue knowlege of your Instrumentes: lo theym here in fygure portrayed" (McDonald 201). This illustration is valuable because at this time in history, many of the tools did not yet possess standard names; this appears to be evident from the fact that the author of the written text called them by one name, and in several instances the woodcutter, who created the visual illustration, called them by another name. For instance, in Figure 8 (Tools for Making Hooks) the author uses the terms "tongs" and "bender." The woodcutter calls these same items a "wrest" and "pinchers." The pictures in the illustration help to show readers what is actually meant.

Figure 9 (Types of Ground Lines) is very helpful and partially compensates for the very inadequate text that accompanies it. The drawing clearly shows the number of different lines and how they are different.

Your lynys must be plomed with leyed, and øe next plume to the hoke schall be ther-from a large fote & more, and euery plumbe of quantite of øe gretnes of the lyne. øer be iij maner of plumbyng.

ffyrst, for a grond lyne rennyng and for the floyt set vppon the grounde lyne lying, a x plumys rennyng all to-gedur. On øe gronde lyne lying, ix or x smale plumbes. ffor øe floote, plumbe hym so hevy øat øe lest plope of any fysche may pluke hym doune yn-to øe watur. And make hym rounde & smothe øat øei fast not on stone or weedys, whyche wolde let yow gretly in your disporte of angelynge. (Manuscript version used because of a corruption in the printed text.) (McDonald 155, 157)

### Evaluation of Illustrations

An evaluation of the illustrations in the Treatise reveals both strengths and weaknesses in the work's visual presentation. On a positive note, the Treatise integrates each illustration into the written text, and each illustration except one, the hooks, is located near the written text that refers to it. On a negative note, there are five major deficiencies which the writer and/or printer of the fifteenth century could have eliminated. First, the editor needs to make the illustration and the text consistent. For example, the list of tools in Figure 8 does not correspond either in number or in name with the list mentioned in the text. Eight are listed in the figure,

seven in the text. Also, a "wrest" in the illustration is called a "bender" in the text, and "pinchers" in the illustration are called "tongs" in the text. In addition, the callouts are not always located either above or below the instrument they name. Note, for example, that the word "Knyfe" appears some distance from the actual picture. Using different names for the same tool and placing those names in the wrong places confuse the reader and probably indicate that the Treatise's illustrations were not carefully edited by its printer.

Second, callouts need to be used to identify the various parts in Figures 6 (The Angler's Rod) and 7 (Instrument for Plaiting the Lines). The illustrations are not incomprehensible without the callouts, but their presence would help accommodate the textual information to the audience, thus making both the visuals and text more effective.

Third, the illustrations need to show greater detail. The instructions included with Figure 7 (Instrument for Plaiting the Lines) are frequently difficult to follow because the details they mention are almost impossible to see with only a side view of the instrument. If a top view of the instrument was also included, it would be much easier to see the lines joining together in one cleft at one end but separating into three clefts at the other end. Note,

for instance, how the multiple views of the steel trap in Figure 10 (see page 113) from a sixteenth-century text help to give a more complete picture of the parts of the trap and how it operates.

Additionally, the illustrations need to be drawn to scale. If the hooks in Figure 5 had been drawn to scale, it would be much easier to understand where the bend should be made, a piece of information that the written instructions fail to include. The detail, however, may have been the best that was available. In fact, the detail appears to be just as good as some later editions of the Treatise. For example, compare Abraham Veale's version of the Solitary Angler, (Figure 11) (see page 114) which was printed in 1563, 67 years after de Worde's edition, with the same illustration from de Worde's edition (Figure 3 on page 104). The details are exactly the same; the only difference is that the sides have been reversed. For example, in the de Worde version the angler is holding the rod in his left hand, and both the town and the stream are to his right. In the Veale version the angler is holding the rod in his right hand, and the town and stream are to his left.

A final criticism of the Treatise's illustrations is that it does not really have enough illustrations to help the reader understand the often complicated instructions. For example, the instructions that discuss how to make the

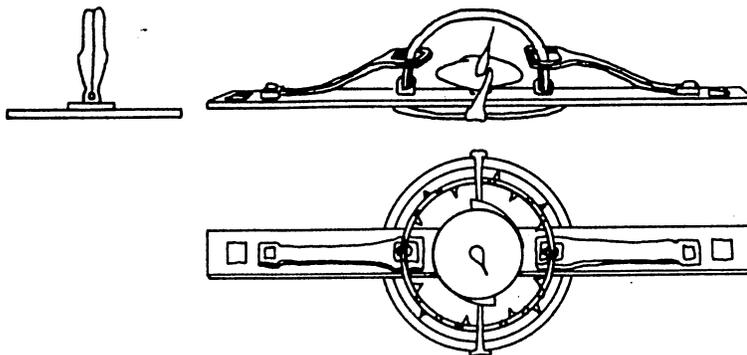


Figure 10. Multiple Views of Animal Traps

A Booke on Fishing with a Hook and Line . . . (London, 1590) rpt. in Anne Eisenberg, Writing Well for the Technical Professions (New York: Harper and Row, 1989) 231.



Figure 11. The Solitary Angler

The Treatise on Fishing with an Angle (London: Veale, 1563) 1.

angling rod is rather complicated, and the text alone is inadequate in explaining the process. In the following excerpt the reader is left with questions such as

1. What manner is the cleanest?
2. What type of running device should be used, and how is it fastened to the staff?
3. How should the cord be used to strengthen the upper section?

Visuals illustrating the following steps would be helpful in compensating for the weak textual discussion.

Thenne vyrell the staffe at bothe endes wyth longe hopis of yren or laton in the clenest wise wyth a pyke in the nether ende fastnyd wyth a rennynge vyce: to take in & oute youre croppe. Thenne set your croppe an handfull within the ouer ende of your staffe in suche wise that it be as bigge there as in ony other place abone. Thenne arme your croppe at thouer ende downe to øe frette wyth a lyne of .vj. heeres. And dubbe the lyne and frette it fast in øe toppe wyth a bowe to fasten on your lyne. (McDonald 193)

### Conclusion

The visual presentation in the Treatise is different from modern visual presentations. For example, all of the

figures in the Treatise were printed from woodcuts. These woodcuts, which could produce reasonably clear drawings, had some limitations. They were not able to show the type of detail that many illustrations would require in order to be meaningful. Also, the impression is left throughout much of the written text that the author is assuming that his readers have some background knowledge in working with tools and performing operations like those described in the text. For example, in the instructions that deal with making the hooks, the author mentions several tools that will be needed to complete the process. Later, when actually outlining the steps in the process, the author never mentions using the tools in completing the steps. The author fails to mention these items apparently because he believes his reader already knows how these tools will be used in the process. Thus, in presenting visual information, the author or printer is basically concerned with providing a drawing of the finished product, not in illustrating the steps or in summarizing information.

Although the Treatise's visual presentation seems inadequate in some respects, it does have some positive features. For example, the illustrations are line drawings, the type Killingsworth and Gilbertson claim is best suited for a manual of this nature. In addition, the illustrations help the reader to gain a greater understanding of what the

text is attempting to explain. Finally, the illustrations have been successfully integrated into the text according to Mills and Walter's recommendations.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

In this study I have examined an example of utilitarian literature from fifteenth-century England. Now, I want to summarize these findings, explain their significance, and suggest where research should proceed from here.

#### Summary of Research Findings

Chapter One discusses the various types of utilitarian prose written and printed in the fifteenth century. The immense variety of these texts tells us that The Treatise on Fishing with an Angle was only one in a multitude of texts designed to share practical information with an audience in need of that information.

Chapter Two, which examines the Treatise's printing history and its similarity to later works about angling, reveals that for over eighty years the Treatise was the only known source in English about angling. The study also shows that the Treatise was quite popular with the reading public, for it was printed ten times by eight different printers. Three of these printings occurred within eleven years (1585-

1596) after the Treatise had been in print for nearly ninety years and after other works on fishing had started to appear. The comparison of the Treatise with later fishing works is significant, for it indicates that they had much in common. Some works such as The Compleat Angler are organized in a similar way. Many of these later works also include similar types of content and share a similar attitude towards the sport and the positive effect it has on the angler. These similarities suggest that the Treatise's author did a good job of selecting and organizing his information and in developing a positive picture of his favorite sport.

Chapter Three examines the Treatise as a sample of technical writing. It shows that the Treatise is similar, in a number of respects, to the features of technical writing that modern theorists recommend. This fact largely discredits the idea that theory precedes practice. It does help to show that theories are "only summaries based upon the incidence of prior successful practices with only speculative explanations for that success" (Allen 117). As a sample of technical writing, the Treatise is careful to forecast its organization. Sometimes this forecasting takes the form of a paragraph that outlines the various subjects to be discussed. At other times the forecasting takes the form of a topic sentence located near the beginning of each

paragraph announcing the subject of the paragraph. The Treatise also makes its information accessible to its readers. The only surviving manuscript of the Treatise uses headings to indicate the major sections. The 1496 (1st) printed edition does not use headings but does use a table of contents with twenty-six entries to help the reader find specific pieces of information. Making the text coherent was another concern, and the Treatise achieves coherence in a variety of ways. It makes use of the given-new strategy of sentence development in connecting related ideas. It also uses many transitional devices that Halliday and Hason discuss in their Cohesion in English. The Treatise makes its language accessible to its readers. For example, it uses mainly common and concrete terminology. In addition, it is consistent in applying the names it gives to various objects. Finally, it does, on occasion, define important terms. These facts indicate that in some respects the Treatise shares some of the characteristics of modern technical writing.

Chapter Four analyzes the Treatise to determine how it uses Aristotle's persuasive appeals in convincing its audience to use and to trust the information in it. The analysis shows that the Treatise relieves its readers' emotional fears about their ability to follow successfully the instructions and to catch fish. The Treatise assures

them that the instructions are not overly difficult and that the possible pleasures are great even if they do not catch any fish. For at least they shall have a "holsom walk" and shall enjoy the "swete sauoure of the meede floures . . . ." (189). The Treatise's author also tries to gain his readers' confidence by the broad scope of his knowledge about angling. For example, he gives instructions for making almost every conceivable part of the fishing tackle. In addition, he includes extensive information about how to use it and the various types of fish and their baits. The Treatise adds to its authority by claiming that it is using other works of credence as sources for some of the information it provides.

The Treatise attempts to persuade its readers to use its information by using a logical organization which grows out of the way the process of angling works. First, the Treatise tells them how to make the tackle; then, the Treatise instructs the audience in using it. Finally, the Treatise tells them about the various types of fish and baits, which are the last things an angler would need to know before pursuing the sport.

The analysis also reveals that the Treatise's instructions share some common characteristics with modern technical instructions. For example, the Treatise's instructions begin with an introduction which states the

instructions' purpose and provides a list of materials needed for performing the instructions. Finally, the analysis reveals that some of the Treatise's instructions appear to assume that its readers possessed prior knowledge that would help them in understanding and completing the instructions. An example of this type of instruction is the description of the artificial fishing flies which gives no instructional information about actually tying the flies. This characteristic makes some of the instructions almost incomprehensible to modern readers who do not possess this prior knowledge.

Chapter Five looks at the various illustrations and the way they function in the Treatise. The examination determines that the illustrations function in both a decorative and functional way. Some illustrations add virtually nothing to the written comments. These illustrations are decorative and are used mainly to attract and to keep the reader's attention. Other illustrations are functional in that they help to clarify and enhance the meaning of the written text. The examination also reveals some deficiencies in the illustrations. The deficiencies are as follows:

1. The information presented by the illustration and the written text is not always consistent.

2. The illustrations need callouts to identify their various parts.
3. The illustrations frequently do not show enough detail to make them useful.
4. The illustrations need to be drawn to scale.
5. The Treatise does not really have enough illustrations.

The examination acknowledges, however, that the Treatise was printed in the infancy of England's printing history and that illustrations in England were notoriously bad because of the lack of a woodcarving industry in England. The examination also noted that the quality of the illustrations in de Worde's edition (1496) was as good as that in editions printed as many as sixty years later. The examination also praises the Treatise for integrating its illustrations into the written text in much the same manner as modern technical writing.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

Fifteenth-century utilitarian prose offers a broad spectrum of research opportunities for interested scholars. As noted in Chapter One, there was a great variety in the types of works that were written. Other studies similar to this one would be quite useful in showing how utilitarian information was communicated during the medieval period.

Moran has suggested that the topic of alchemy is particularly inviting (27). Also, studies which would examine the impact that fifteenth-century utilitarian literature had upon fifteenth-century society would be particularly valuable. A final research possibility could build upon the findings of Chapter Two of this present work. A scholar interested in tracing the development of written English from the fifteenth century to the mid-sixteenth century could certainly use the Treatise, Mascall, Markham, and Walton as resource material in his or her study. These works are very similar, and the latter three paraphrase sections of the Treatise. Examining how these paraphrases differ might provide some valuable insights into the development of the language.

Further studies examining technical writing's history can contribute to our overall understanding of utilitarian prose. They can show us how rhetorical practices have developed and changed over the centuries; they can examine how past writers have solved a variety of communication problems; and they can analyze how utilitarian prose has changed the thinking and/or practices of a society or discipline.

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APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

### SAMPLE PASSAGES

Take smalle ale a quarte and put it in a lytyll panne: and put there to halfe a pound of alym. And put therto your heer: and lete it boylle softly half houre. Thenne take out your heere and lete it drye. Theene take a potell of water and put it in a panne. And put therin twohandfull of ooldys or of wyren. And press it wyth a tyle stone: and let it boylle softly half an houre. And whan it is yelow on the scume put therin your heer with halfe a pounce of coporose betyn in powdre and lete it boylle halfe a myle waye: and thenne sette it downe: and lete it kele fyve or syre houres. Then take out the heer and drye it. And it is thenne the fynest grene that is for the water. (McDonald 195)

For by cause that the Samon is the moost stately fyssh that ony man maye angle to in fresshe water. Therefore I purpose to begynn at hym. The samon is a gentyll fysshe: but he is comborous for to take. For comynly he is but in depe places of grete ryuers. And for the more part he holdyth the myddys of it: that a man maye not come at hym. And he is in season from Marche vnto Myghelmas. In whyche

season ye shall to hym wyth thyse baytes whan ye maye gete theym. (McDonald 211)

Yf ye woll be crafty in anglynge: ye must fyrste lerne to make your harnays/ That is to wyte your rodde: your lynes of dyuers colours. After that ye must know how ye shall angle in what place of the water: how depe: and what time of day. For what manner of fysshe: in what wedyr How many impedymetes there ben in fysshynge /at is callyd anglynge And in specyall wyth what baytys to euery dyuers fysshe in eche moneth of the yere. How ye shall make your baytes brede where ye shall fynde theym: and how ye shall kepe theym. And for the moost crafty thyng how ye make yours hokes of stele & of osmonde/ Some for the dubbe: and some for the flote: & the grounde. as ye shall here after al thyse fynde expressed openly vnto your knowledge. (McDonald 191)

APPENDIX B

LIST OF NOUNS

ale	heer	potell
alym	hokes	pound
angle	houre	powdre
anglynge	impedymentes	quarte
baytys	knowledge	ryuers
brede	lynes	rodde
colours	man	Samon
coporose	manner	scume
day	Marche	season
dubbe	Myghelmas	stele
fysshe	myle	stone
fysshying	moneth	time
flote	ooldys	water
grene	osmonde	wedyr
grounde	panne	wyren
harnays	place	yere

2

VITA

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