

Bacon's No-Frills prose: A critical look into his decisive insinuation

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Abstract

The current study finds out the generic philosophy and insinuating standpoints of the most idiosyncratic and legendary essayist of the Elizabethan period Francis Bacon, an English philosopher, social reformer, scientist, lawyer, author, statesman, jurist and father of several scientific schemes. His outstanding prose style possesses insinuations, straightforwardness, sanguinity, tactics, precision, sensibility and clarification. So, his persuasion upon the booklovers is still admired in the modern era. Francis Bacon is multitalented to depict the universal needs of people not only of his contemporary age but also of all ages. His no-frills essays have a great decisive impact on modern people. In the modern moral barrenness, his essays can show us the exact path to survive an unfussy and successful life. This 'no-frills' feature makes him unique in the distinction of day-to-day topics in his presentation which is the foremost endeavor to find out in this study.

Keywords: No-frills, Aphorism, Insinuation, Acumen, '-ism'

1. Introduction

All good teachers practice what they teach, and so Bacon left not just an idea for posterity but also a practical example, a working model for the rest of us to study, learn from and, if necessary, develop further. He provided us with examples of each of the individual parts or stages of the Great Instauration, which he symbolized as individual volumes, seven in all. These volumes may be seen illustrated in the frontispiece engraving to the 1640 edition of Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, as well as on the title page illustration to the same publication. Bacon is the author of the entire world and his compositions reflect human minds which look for the perfection in real life and the life after death. For this, he often uses his own themes and motifs as his individual styles. Bacon was the torchbearer of using didactics in the essays. His aesthetic and moral values are completely praiseworthy that have enough influence upon the modern people. His emphasis on the human nature makes him an author of all ages. Bacon is very exact to his views and thoughts. His essays are the hand-book of practical wisdom full of morality and practicality as well as enriched with maxims. Bacon's prose was permeated with practical wisdom. (Chowdhury, 2013) [2]

Bacon's essays are dealt with the universal thoughts and ideas which are mostly needed in almost all spheres of life. Here, the modern utilitarianism lies in his themes and worldly wise philosophy of his mind. He presented all these themes with the use of a great number of versatile utility which is a bit upper than the general level of normal writing style. Bacon has given moral lesson with aphorism and impersonality. He has also given the proper direction to the readers of all ages of different natural aspects. Bacon possesses a complex and contradictory natures. He is a politician, cold, calculating, selfish as well as a literary and scientific man with an impressive devotion to truth for its own great sake. He also possesses a great mixture of intellectual strength and moral perfection. (Hurley, 1998) He also deals with the realism of man's life. He has successfully exposed the problem, socio-economic condition and solution

for those problems of all ages through the versatile utilitarianism of his essays. His methodologies are also often considered as Baconian method.

2. Objectives

The study contributes a lot to comprehend the practicality and usefulness of Bacon's no-frills essays for the essay lovers and researchers. However, the primary objective is to bring out the decisive insinuation of Bacon's prose style and the significance of the words inside.

3. Review and Methods

Bacon's no-frills essays are highly insinuating. No-frills describes a service that is basic and has no additional or unnecessary details. (Cambridge Dictionary, 3rd Edition) The researcher collects and studies different literary articles, critical compositions, and websites to find related study materials, in order to be acknowledged in the related topics through 'observational studies'. The researcher also goes through several critical journals from different libraries to have specialized information on the essayist and compose the work in a more credible way.

4. Discussion

The most important feature of the essayist is that his essays are of human interest. The universal appeal is the turning factor of his essays' being so much famous and utilitarian. 'Man' is the subject of his essays. This human interest is the reason why his essays are universally popular, because human beings are interested most of all in Bacon. The essays of Francis Bacon are broadly divided into three categories according to the human interest. These are: man in relation to the world and society, man in relation to himself (the author), and man in relation to his Creator.

4.1 Splendor in Aphorism

According to Khan (2012) [5], the splendor of Francis Bacon lies in aphorism. The essays need to read slowly because of the

compact and condensed thought for the readers. There are a number of lines, which are read like proverbs. He has kept several meanings for the common people in a single line which have vast utilitarianism in our practical life. This aphoristic style again depends on the device of antithesis which is a balance where some opposing or contrasting ideas are put in a grammatically parallel syntax. In the essay of studies, Bacon says, "Studies serve for ornament and for ability". Further he says, "Read not to contradict, nor to believe, but to weigh and consider".

In a word, it has to be admitted that Bacon's essays are full of epigrammatic terseness. Bacon is famous for his compact style of aphorism. (Russell, 2010) [7] Some other examples are:

"Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them: for they teach not their own use; that is wisdom without them; and won by observation." (Of Studies)
"Lookers on many times see more than the gamesters." (Of Friendship)

Let a man in the choice of his mean, rather choose the fittest mean than the greatest mean, and rather them that deal in certain things, than those that are general." (Of Suitors)

He scrupulously presents the advantages and the disadvantages of a particular issue. In the essay of Marriage and Single Life, Bacon says that an unmarried man is a good friend, good master and good servant, but he is unreliable as a good citizen. He says in the essay: "Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects."

4.2 Philosophical Viewpoints

Bacon's Pyramid of Philosophy is a true pyramid—that is to say, it has a triangular base, with three sides joined together at the apex in a single point. In terms of Platonic solids it symbolizes the element fire. Each side represents one of the three main aspects of truth to be researched, practiced and known—Divine, Human and Natural—which correspond to the Hermetic description of the three 'Heads'—God, Man and Cosmos. So there are these three: firstly, God, Father and the Supreme Good; secondly, the cosmos; thirdly, man. (*The Corpus Hermeticum*, p. 10, p. 14.)

In Philosophy, the contemplations of man do either penetrate unto God, or are related to Nature, or are reflected and reverted upon himself. Out of which several inquiries there do arise three knowledge, *Divine Philosophy*, *Natural Philosophy*, and *Human Philosophy* or *Humanity*. For all things are marked and stamped with this triple character of the power of God, the difference of Nature and the use of Man. (Bacon, 1605)

God does not ignore man, he knows him fully, as God also wishes to be known. This is the salvation for man: knowledge of God. (*The Corpus Hermeticum*, Bk 10, 15.) The apex of the pyramid represents the summary (or supreme) law of life—the law of Love, which is divine Charity or Goodness.

5. Insinuitive Findings

5.1 Human's Manners and Refinement

Bacon deals with different manners like honesty, dishonesty, chastity, greed, integrity and jealousy between a husband and his wife. As he exposes: "It is one of the best bonds both of chastity and obedience in the wife, if she think her husband wise; which she will never do if she find him jealous" (of Marriage and Single Life).

Though unmarried men are good to be friends and masters but they are not law abiding people. Bacon assumes that marriage

can train a man to be discipline: "Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity" (of Marriage and Single Life).

According to Chowdhury *et al.* (2013) [2], Bacon has always discussed negative topics in elaborative manner. *Of Simulation and Dissimulation* is the proof in this regard. It is because that he wants to make the people vigilant. He says that the weak man follows the practice of dissimulation. They lack the power to tell the truth as the situation demands but strong minds and hearts can have such power. Bacon says in the first line,

"Dissimulation is but a faint kind of policy, or wisdom; for it asketh a strong wit, and a strong heart, to know when to tell truth, and to do it." Bacon has given three degrees of hiding and veiling of a man's self. In his words, "The first, closeness, reservation, and secrecy; when a man leaveth himself without observation, or without hold to be taken, what he is. The second, dissimulation, in the negative; when a man lets fall signs and arguments, that he is not, that he is. And the third, simulation, in the affirmative; when a man industriously and expressly feigns and pretends to be, that he is not."

5.2 Acumen

Bacon is much frank in exposing his view towards truth in the essay Of Truth. Truth, according to Bacon, lacks the charm of variety which, falsehood has. Truth gives more pleasure only when a lie is added to it. He believes that, falsehood is a source of temporary enjoyment as it gives the people a strange kind of pleasure. So the essayist says: "...a mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure". To Bacon, a liar is towards god but cowards towards men. A liar is not brave enough to tell the truth before people but he shows courage to tell a lie disobeying god as the Bacon comments: "For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man." Such sentences show that how Bacon brings practical wisdom for the people. This is indeed an insinuation. It means that a man does not fear God when he tells a lie. Bacon suggests that the books should be read according to their importance. There are some books which are read only for pleasure, a number of books are to be memorized but a few books are to be read deeply with hard work and concentration. The author says: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."

5.3 Bacon's '-ism'

5.3.1 Realism

Khan (2012) [5] considers Bacon as very practical in treating love. He considers it just one of many passions of human mind. He does not pay extra favor to it emotionally; rather he sees love as a "child of folly" in his essay Of Love. As he comments: "Nuptial love maketh mankind; friendly love perfected it, but wanton love corrupteth and embaseth it." He shows in of Revenge a certain high morality by saying that "Revenge is a kind of wild justice". In of Parents and Children, he shows both the utility and the futility of having children. As he says: "Children sweeten labour, but they make misfortune more bitter." In this essay he tells the readers the practical benefit of wives. In his own words: "Wives are young men's mistress; companions for middle age, and old men's nurses."

5.3.2 Spiritualism

Bacon deals with learning philosophy in the essay of Atheism. He says that little learning is a dangerous thing. Improper knowledge about God may misguide us; as he says: "It is true,

that a little philosophy inclined man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy brunet men's minds about to religion.”

5.3.3 Pantheism

Bacon says that atheists are a few in number but they seem to be many. He who denies a God becomes the kin member of the beasts. On the contrary, the people who admit the existence of God become human being indeed. If a man becomes an atheist, he is considered as an ignoble creature. But the people who believe to be made of God's spirit see the Almighty God everywhere. In Bacon's Language: "They that deny a God, destroy man's nobility; for certainly man is of kin to the beasts, by his body; and, if he be not of kin to God, by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature" (Of Atheism).

5.4 Subversive Attitude to Marriage

Bacon believes that a married man cannot have an adventurous life for the responsibilities of his wife and children. He must give the assurance of their security in a responsive manner. Thus a married man is always busy for the betterment of his family. He cannot even take any risk to change his fate for future. So Bacon states in his essay of Marriage and Single Life: "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to Fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief." Bacon would like to argue that a priest should not be a married man. An unmarried priest helps his poor and needy parishioners up to his level best. But a married priest cannot do these because of giving first priority to satisfy his family. Bacon gets the difference between a married and single priest in this line: "A single life doth well with churchmen for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool." There is another point comes from the maintenance of a wife and children. It is a matter of liability for a miserly husband to bear: "There are some others that account wife and children but as bills of charges." Moreover in Bacon's view, the wives and the children are the hindrance in the way of the success. As he says in of Marriage and Single Life: "He that hath wife and children hath given hostage of fortune". (Chowdhury *et al.*, 2013) [2]

5.5 Suggestion for health

In the essay *Of Regimen of Health*, Bacon suggests two ways for being well. He gives two different remedies for the body and the mind. "To be free-minded and cheerfully disposed, at hours of meat, and of sleep, and of exercise, is one of the best precepts of long lasting." And for the mind he suggests to avoid some negative attitudes. "As for the passions, and studies of the mind; avoid envy, anxious fears; anger fretting inwards; subtle and knotty inquisitions; joys and exhilarations in excess; sadness not communicated" (Sinha, 2006) [8].

5.6 Repudiation of Vengeance

Bacon here dislikes the act of taking vengeance. Wise men forgive their enemies because the habit of taking reprisal makes one evil or a devil. Pardoners are morally superior. According to Bacon: "Certainly in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is prince's part to pardon" (Of Revenge). Again revenge is acceptable due to failure of accomplishing law. But in this way the avenger must be careful to take vengeance, otherwise, he will be defective for violating existing laws and the enemy may get advantage over him. Bacon says in this regard: "The most

tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there are no law to remedy" (CSS Forum Editors, 2015) [6].

6. Conclusion

Bacon wrote for the edification of Renaissance Youth. He wrote a series of counsels for these young men. But those counsels are yet brighter advice for the modern youth. Of Studies is one of those. The beginning of the essay is colored by didacticism. According to Bacon spending too much time in study is lethargic. Ability and judgment help the perfection of nature that is more perfected by experience. Bacon suggests being smart by studying in several ways. He says in this regard: "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man." He again says, "To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar." Reading should be in a perfect way. Every book doesn't deserve the same attention for reading. Bacon depicts the different types of reading different books. He says: "Some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention." Bacon is above all authors, at least above all modern essayists, the man of human nature, the writer that holds up to the crowd in the mirror of manners and of life. Bacon's writings also show the way to improve and develop in all aspects of life. Especially, he deals with the lifestyle of the youth which keeps a deep impact on the modern youth at present. Some of the essays are concerned with the external behavior of human being. Some are discussed internally. Some essays are concerned with eternal human passions like love, ambition, revenge, envy, anger. Friendship, studies, marriage, seditions, death, boldness and faction are in focus in the essays which have universal appeal to the multitude.

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