

Bacon's Prose Style

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Comment on Bacon's use of allusions and imagery with illustrations from his essays.

Or, Give an account of Bacon's prose style.

Or, Write a note on Bacon's prose style.

Or Comment on Bacon's use of imagery in his essays.

Or, Write a note on Bacon's prose style with reference to his essays you have read.

Or, Discuss the aphoristic style of Francis Bacon.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) made an untold contribution to the development of English prose. He is most remarkable as a prose writer for two reasons: the subject matter and style. The key features of his prose style are illustrated here in a very conspicuous way with reference to his essays.

Selection of the Title: This is really a superb feature of Bacon's prose style. No other essayist in the history of English literature is comparable with Francis Bacon with respect to selecting the title. He has shown uniqueness in his essays'. The title of his essays starts in the same manner and tradition. For example- ***"Of Studies, Of Marriage and Single Life, Of Truth, Of Revenge,"*** etc. Therefore, the title is obviously a landmark style of Bacon's prose.

Rich Vocabulary: Bacon maintains command over versatile languages. His use of language is very rich. He has a good command of Latin and Greek languages. He has taken different phrases and words from Latin and Greek languages to make his essay affluent. Bacon says in Of Studies, ***"Abeunt studia in mores"***. It is a Latin phrase that means that studies are a part of one's character and habits or studies form the character of a man. Hence, the readers should have some knowledge of Latin and Greek to understand Francis Bacon.

Witty Thought: Bacon is unparalleled because his thoughts are witty. Almost all the sentences of his essays can be developed even as an essay or at least as a paragraph because of his outstanding witty thoughts.

Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses.

From this single sentence of the essay "Of Marriage and Single Life", three essays can be produced. So, it is neat and clear that Bacon's essays are popular due to his witty prose style.

Misquotation: Bacon has used quotations in his essays from the Bible, history, schoolmen of the Middle Ages, Latin or Greek literature, and sometimes from his memory. As a result, it is very tough one to identify whether he uses quotations or misquotations. In his famous essay "Of Studies," one such misquotation that is found has been taken from the Latin language.

Abeunt studia in mores

However, it has to be accepted that his misquotations are not counted because of the practical values and uses of his essays.

Paradoxical Statements: One of the most remarkable features of Bacon's prose style is paradoxical statements. His statements on a topic are mostly dependent on compare and contrast or positive and negative sides. In the essay "Of Truth", Bacon very skillfully used the literary device 'Paradox'. Truth, according to Bacon, lacks the charm of variety that falsehood has. Truth brings more joy when falsehood is added to it. He believes that lying is a source of temporary enjoyment because it gives people strange joy. So, the essayist says paradoxically:

...a mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure

We can cite another paradoxical statement from the essay "Of Studies," in which Bacon illustrated in detail the benefits of studies.

To spend too much time in studies is sloth

The above quotation may make it seem that Bacon is against studies. Actually, he has suggested that readers should properly manage their time in the short time range of human life.

Aphorism and Epigrammatic Terseness: Aphorism means shortness of speech, and epigrammatic terseness stands for the use of few words. The following sentence of the essay "Of Love" is a perfect example of his aphorism:

That it is impossible to love, and to be wise.

This is a very short speech having few words, but the idea is so vast. So, aphorism and epigrammatic terseness have made Bacon an inimitable essayist. We get another aphoristic speech in the essay "Of Revenge," where he shows a certain high morality by saying:

Revenge is a kind of wild justice

A man takes revenge on the person by whom he is oppressed. So, if he takes revenge, it will be justice. But at the time when a man takes revenge, he takes it more aggressively than when he is oppressed. This is why Bacon calls revenge a kind of wild justice. So, he suggests that we should be aloof from taking revenge.

From the light of the above discussion, it can be asserted that Bacon is unique in his prose style. His subject matter is really helpless to get exposed without his prose style.