

Welcome

A lesson on the following topic will be imparted to the students

An analysis of Bacon's essay



An analysis of “ Of Studies ”

The word ‘essay’ was first used by the French writer Montaigne from whom Bacon adopted it. Bacon’s essays are a type apart from those of the other essayists like Lamb, Macaulay and Addison. He himself called them “ pithy jottings, rather apt than curious “. The description exactly fits his writings, especially earlier essays like *Of Studies*.

In *Of Studies*, the sentences are nearly all short, crisp and sententious. There are few connectives. Each sentence stands by itself, expressing briefly and precisely his weighty thought. The epigrammatic terseness and the sharp antithesis and balance are seen as found in all his writings. But in, “Of Truth”, Bacon imparts warmth and colour to his style. Illustrations abound, metaphors and similes crop up. In *Of Studies*, each sentence is a concentrated expression of his idea, and some of them are stamped with the currency of proverb.

Bacon speaks at length of the value of study. According to him, three purposes are served by studies.

- 1. *They give delight.***
- 2. *They are an ornament to man.***
- 3. *They add to the ability of man.***

Bacon argues that studies "serve for Delight, for Ornament, and for Ability." For delight, Bacon means one's personal, private education; for "Ornament," he means in conversation between and among others, which Bacon labels as "Discourse." Studies for "Ability" lead one to judgment in business and related pursuits. From Bacon's perspective, men with worldly experience can carry out plans and understand particular circumstances, but men who study are better able to understand important political matters and know how to deal with problem according to their severity ("Marshalling of Affairs ").

Bacon's analysis of studies is not an unreserved encouragement . He rather detects the pitfalls of studies He warns that (1) too much studying leads to laziness; (2) if one uses one's knowledge too often in conversation with others, then one is parading and (3) to be guided solely by one's studies one becomes a scholar rather than a practical man. Bacon's argument about the value of studies is that moderation is the key to using studies appropriately. Studies are wonderful only if influenced by experience because a person's natural abilities are enhanced by studies. What is absorbed from books should be weighed well before introducing them to life. Because studies without experience lead to confusion in dealing with the outside world.

According to Bacon, dishonest men condemn education; stupid men admire education; but wise men use education as their real world experience dictates. He warns the educated man not to use his education to argue unnecessarily with people; not to assume that education always leads to the correct behavior or understanding; not to use education merely to focus on conversation with others.

Bacon speaks of different types of books in his essay entitled *Of Studies*.

1. ***Some books are to be tasted*** [just enough to go through the book]
2. ***Others to be swallowed*** [read without great attention]
3. ***Few to be chewed and digested*** [each word must be meditated]

Bacon argues, some books should be read but their advice ignored, some other books deserve nothing more than casual attention, and a few books are to be "Chewed and Digested," that is, understood perfectly and used to guide behavior. In addition, Bacon advises that some books can be read by others, who take notes, and the notes can substitute for reading an entire book--but these books should not be those that cover important subjects. Bacon returns to addressing the effects of reading, conversation, and writing: reading creates a well-rounded man; conversation makes a man think quickly; and writing, by which Bacon usually means essay writing, makes a man capable of thinking with logic and reason. Further, Bacon argues, if a man doesn't write very much, he has to have a good memory to compensate for what he doesn't write; if he doesn't exercise the art of conversation, he needs to have a quick wit; and if he doesn't read very much, he has to be able to pretend that he knows more than he does.

Bacon concludes his essay *Of Studies* by suggesting remedies for deficiencies in some of the mental faculties. He believes that there is scarcely any frailty in human mind which cannot be dispelled by the study of a subject fit for such a mind. Just as physical exercises can cure the diseases of the body, the imperfections of the mind can be set right by study.

Bowling is considered good for curing the stones in the kidney ; shooting is good exercise for lungs and breast; gentle walking is good for the stomach and riding is prescribed for any illness associated with the head. Similarly, if a man's mind lacks concentration he should study mathematics in which if his mind wanders from the subject, he will have to start again from the beginning. If one is unable to discover the fine distinctions, he should study the works of the medieval philosophers who were skilled in subtle debates, and in the case of men who cannot argue well, Bacon recommends the study of the lawyer's cases.

Thus every defect of the mind can be cured by the study of the proper subject.



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