

Of Travel by Francis Bacon

Bacon begins the essay by arguing that the young soul learns a lot when he travels around unknown places. He learns a lot from the environment even before he has started going to school. By traveling, the process of learning is enhanced and the child acquires awareness very early.

However, one must seek some knowledge, particularly learning the language of the place where he intended to travel. If he doesn't have sufficient knowledge, he must not visit that place. Bacon further adds that it is often desirable for the young ones to travel around the world in the company of a knowledgeable person or tutor, for instance, under the supervision of a person who knows the foreign language and has been there before. The tutor, by virtue his knowledge and experience, must be able to guide the young traveler about where to go and what is worth seeing. On the other hand, without a knowledgeable tutor, the young traveler might fail to perceive the worth and significant things while traveling to new places.

Bacon furthermore says that it is a strange thing that while traveling across the sea, the man observes nothing much but the blue water and the never-ending sky, however, when traveling on the land, there is so much to observe that the traveler finds it hard to note down each and every detail. He should maintain a diary to note down the interesting things and events. Here Bacon suggests the travel about what things they should mention in their diaries while traveling. These include: the courts of prince, especially the reception they give to the ambassadors; the royal courts of justice, the scene of hearing plea from accused; the churches and monasteries and their way of living; the walls and fortification; the country's ancient buildings and ruins; libraries; colleges, the ways lectures are delivered; the recreational areas; whatsoever that appeals to one's sight and memorable.

As for social events are concerned, like marriages, funeral, feasts, public execution, and celebration of victories, they should not be neglected and ignored, however, there is no need to mention them in a travel diary.

Bacon continues the essay by guiding the travelers about some "do's" and "don'ts" so that they take maximum benefit out of it. First of all, the young travel must have some basic knowledge before starting traveling. Second, the young traveler should have a knowledgeable tutor who has profound knowledge about the place. Third, the tutor must carry some catalog or book along with him that can help them in the foreign country. Fourth, the traveler must have a diary in which he can note down all the worth mentioning things. Fifth, the traveler should not stay long in one place than necessary. If in case he stays longer, he must change the place in the town in order to get maximum exposure. Sixth, the traveler should not choose to halt with the people of his own country, rather he must choose to stay with people from a different country. Last but not the least, the traveler must obtain and carry along with him the letters of introduction from the nobility of his own place for the one he is visiting to. This is result in ease in traveling.

As far as the people whose acquaintance should be sought while traveling include secretaries and ambassadors. These people can offer help in visiting particular places, in gathering information, and availing resources that one might need. To Bacon, the traveller should always avoid engaging in any type of quarrel with local. Moreover, he should also be careful about the company of mistresses and quarrelsome people. These people might grind him in their fights.

Bacon, like most of his essays, ends this essay with advice. He says that when the traveler returns to his own country, he shouldn't forget the country he traveled to especially the people who helped him during his travel. He must establish a contact with them through letters. Furthermore, he must not show off his knowledge and awareness he acquired during traveling. But, he should act well-mannered and disciplined to reflect the new wisdom he acquired during traveling. He should not exaggerate the stories and scenes that he encounters during traveling, rather he should be more concise and factual. Lastly, after traveling the other country, a person should not forget the customs and traditions of his own native land while acquiring the customs and traditions of the country he visited. He should rather adopt some good things from the foreign country.

Analysis

Of Travel, by Francis Bacon is a persuasive essay in which he uses various persuasive techniques along with figurative language at different instances to support his viewpoint. Bacon opens the essay by mentioning two types of audience: the young travelers and the old traveler, however, he primarily put emphases on the former.

The tone of the author (Bacon) in the essay is of a proficient expert who has profound knowledge and experience of traveling. He knows what he is talking about. It seems that he has the first-hand experience of traveling as he doesn't refer to any experienced authority but advice through his own experience. He displays the extent of his understanding and guidance repeatedly by means of the use of the lists. It shows that he has a lot of knowledge and inclusive in his board. Furthermore, he criticizes the conventional practice of noting down each and every detail in a diary and also advice the traveler to have confidence in own mind.

Bacon, by using persuasive techniques, bids useful advice to an inexperienced traveler that shows that he has the best interest of the young travelers. He concentrates on the subject matter, none the less, his advice appears to come from 1st hand experience but he doesn't make his experiences as subject matter. Bacon efficiently presents his advice. Moving logically from one point to another, he maintains his orderly and methodical writing.

At the end of the essay, Bacon once more appears to have foreseen a question by showing a practical concern regarding the manners of the traveler who have returned to his native town. He seems to show his best intentions for the traveler's interests and status in a sensible way.

There is no strong use of figurative language in the essay as the subject matter is practical. The focus of the author is more on “how-to” than on the use of language. However, use of metaphor at various instances is seen in the essay. For example, [he] goeth to school, go hooded, little room, an “entrance”, adamant, and “Pricking in some flowers”.

In “Of Travel”, Bacon delves into the various travels we experience in life. According to him the biggest advantage of travel is the education one receives on his travels and journeys through space and time.

We often limit our understanding of education and knowledge creation to mere reading and writing but the art of travel adds another dimension to it. Before one starts his travel he/she must prepare hard for it.

This includes learning about the place of your travel, its language and culture. The age that Bacon lived in had different travel times and so the author emphasizes the need for preparation before traveling.

Normally, having a company of an experienced person is recommended for the young travelers. The lived experience of such accompaniment will only enhance one’s own experience and help tackle various challenges during the same.

Bacon encourages the traveller to take advantage of others’ experience and knowledge rather than go into new situations and places blindly. This also pertains to using local guides and travel counsellors if need be.

- **Preparation is the Key**

He entreats doing research about the popular cuisine, available facilities like accommodation, communication etc regarding the place. He goes on to recommend people to maintain a travel diary chronicling their lessons and experiences.

This creates a veritable memory of the place and allows the person to revisit the place even afterword through the written word. He advises people to enjoy the history of the place, stored in its structures like churches, mosques, monuments, public courts and palaces and even ruins.

You might be able to see fencing demonstrations or horse shows, though nowadays you’re likely not to run into many “**capital executions.**” You can take One may also witness the local arts, plays, and other activities that are endemic to the place.

Next, Bacon suggests the use of a guidebook traverse the local routes and never to overstay at any one city or same part of any city. The key is to seek out the diverse places and their sections.

- **The Importance of Total Immersion in the Place**

One important warning Bacon gives is to not get caught up in the company of your fellow countrymen or travellers but rather try to engage with the residents and natives of the place.

Try and learn about their place and inquire about the places to see, what to eat and things to do. This will enhance your travel and may reveal some real gems that may be undiscovered otherwise.

It is important to isolate oneself from the things that one is habitual too and the comforts that one finds with the known and familiar. It is important to savour the difference and uniqueness of each new place one visits.

He highlights the importance of to familiarize oneself with the officials like ambassadors etc while travelling even though that might not be as relevant in the modern age of internet and accessibility to information, unlike **Bacon’s age**.

But it is still advisable to be on good behaviour on your travels nonetheless. Some precautions that the traveller must make include: to stay away from quarrels and rapacious people. One must also be aware of the various dangers present in the place including diseases and natural disasters.

The next and probably one of the most important things according to Bacon is to preserve connections with those places and its people even after you return back home. When one returns home, it is important to not lose contact with those places countries.

Once you return and resume your previous ways and activities, it is good to take on board some new mannerisms, customs and habits of the place you visited.

To learn from one’s own experience is crucial to self-growth. It enriches our lives and adds more value and meaning to our daily routines that we are accustomed to the backing at our home.

Of Travel: Key Thoughts

A man of many talents, Francis Bacon was the first major essayist in the English language. The essay Of Travel is a part of his impressive essays on several topics.

The validity of Bacon's advice in 'Of Travel', like maintaining a travel journal, seeking the guidance of the experienced people, exploring the culture of the place etc is still intact.

Even after five centuries and the world of development in terms of travel and communication, the basics remain the same. Bacon is able to encapsulate them beautifully in his words.

Through his essay, Bacon was able to highlight and even celebrate the richness and value that travel adds to a person's knowledge, temperament, personality and life at large.

The main theme of "Of Travel" by Francis Bacon is that knowledge of the place to which one is traveling is a basic prerequisite before setting out. Otherwise, the traveler, especially the young traveler, will not derive much benefit from his journey.

Bacon encourages the traveller to take advantage of others' experience and knowledge rather than go into new situations and places blindly. This also pertains to using local guides and travel counsellors if need be.

When a young child travels around in alien places, he learns a lot from the sight and sound around him. In the process, his awareness grows and his learning process is accelerated. So, travel for a young child has good educational value. So, the countryside becomes a school for him, although in an informal way.

Acknowledgement: Notes have been compiled from various open sources