



A UNIQUE WORK EXCITED THE LEADING MINDS OF THE EUROPEAN LATE RENAISSANCE

Shadmanov K. B.

Bukhara State Medical Institute

E-mail: shadmanov.qurbon@bsmi.uz

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Abstract

As is known, the perception and assimilation of the cultural and creative heritage of other peoples is part of a broader intercultural dialogue, both intellectual, ideological, and moral and aesthetic aspects of the process of interethnic mutual knowledge. Acquaintance with the unique didactic and pedagogical heritage of the great representatives of England of the XVII century, with its content and philosophy, should perhaps begin with the artistic creation of Francis Bacon and his rare work "The Essays or counsels, civil and moral", which has become one of the favorite and valuable for readers all over the world. In the article, the author reflects on one of the unique figures of the English late Renaissance, Francis Bacon, an outstanding philosopher, statesman and thinker, an author who made an invaluable contribution to the development of the essay genre in the literature and philosophy of the European Renaissance. His "The Essays, or Counsels, Civil and Moral" is considered one of the valuable and rare works of English literature. This article is devoted to the study of the unique thoughts expressed by the great thinker in this literary source. The author attempted to share the philosophical and moral ideas of the English thinker, aimed at the worthy education of the younger generation.

Keywords: Renaissance, essay, rhetoric, classical text, philosophical style, cultural thought.



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Аннотация

Как известно, восприятие и усвоение культурно-творческого наследия других народов является частью более широкого межкультурного диалога, как интеллектуального, идеологического, так и нравственно-эстетического аспекта процесса межэтнического взаимопознания. Знакомство с уникальным дидактическим и педагогическим наследием великих представителей Англии XVII века, с его содержанием и философией, пожалуй, следует начать с художественным творением Френсиса Бэкона и его редкого произведения «Опыты», ставшего одним из любимых и ценным для читателей во всем мире. В статье автор размышляет об одном из уникальных фигур английского века позднего Возрождения Френсисе Бэконе - выдающемся философе, государственном деятеле и мыслителе – авторе, внесшему неоценимый вклад в развитие жанра эссе в литературе и философии европейского Возрождения. Его книга «Опыты, или наставления нравственные и политические» считается одним из ценных и редких произведений английской литературы. Данная статья посвящена изучению уникальных мыслей, высказанных великим мыслителем в этом литературном источнике. Автором была предпринята попытка поделиться философско-нравственными идеями английского мыслителя, направленными на достойное воспитание молодого поколения.

Ключевые слова: Ренессанс, эссе, риторика, классический текст, философский стиль, культурная мысль.

Introduction

The development of modern philosophical thought cannot be imagined without taking into account the achievements of the English philosophical school. From this point of view, the end of the XVI - beginning of the XVII centuries revealed the high-flying aspects of historical and philosophical thought. It is in this regard that history has presented us with the richest materials on the work of Francis Bacon, one of the fundamental intellectuals and unique thinkers-encyclopedists of the late Renaissance. This great English thinker and statesman presented the world with truly revolutionary philosophical and experimental thoughts that



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dramatically expanded man's understanding of the micro and macro cosmos and the role of man in it. Among Bacon's numerous philosophical works, there is one under the then fashionable title "The Essays or counsels, civil and moral" written in the new literary style - essay. This book, like a compendium, absorbed philosophical, didactic-pedagogical, and ethical-moral questions born from the vast experience of the encyclopedic thinker and the statesman, and man wise in life experience, i.e. Francis Bacon. The presence of a large amount of factual material about this book gives grounds for reflection on the topics related to this work of the philosopher, writer, politician and statesman, representative of the English late Renaissance, Francis Bacon. The unique figure of Francis Bacon, associated with the beginning of the new European philosophy, his thoughts are distinguished by the great culture of the late Renaissance and are aimed at the future. Therefore, in a certain sense, Bacon can be called the last thinker of the Renaissance and the discoverer of the philosophy of the New Age, and it is no exaggeration to say.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) is a unique personality, multifaceted by nature: he combines the features of a great thinker, philosopher and master of the epistolary genre, as well as a lawyer and statesman. Bacon's life and work, in his own words, are a sad winged word, that is, a secret life, deep in its wisdom, full of dangers. Moreover, this is not yet a complete explanation of Bacon's unique phenomenon in form and content, but would not have been appreciated by posterity, without taking into account his long and significant social career ladder; this life could have been different. But he remained in history, as he was in the English reality of the XVII century, and is preserved in dozens of his epistolary works, as well as in his personal papers, works, parliamentary speeches, and stories about his rise and fall to high positions. But one thing is certain: of the whole group of artists, architects, writers, and philosophers who were lucky enough to start a creative life together in England at the end of the Renaissance (in the 1590s), we know the most about Francis Bacon. Nevertheless, he is still waiting for his inquisitive scientific researcher, although many have managed to tell a lot about his life and creative path.



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Methods and Methodology

The article is based on the analysis of the author's own thoughts [2; 3; 6; 7; 9] and the latest publications of foreign and domestic authors on issues related to the work of Francis Bacon and his "Essays" [1; 4; 5; 8; 9; 10-12]. The article uses historical-comparative, comparative, historical-cultural and hermeneutic methods of studying the material, which have been confirmed by scientific articles and dissertations on this topic in recent years.

Discussion and Results

Francis Bacon left a rich and colorful philosophical legacy; in contrast to the deductive method, he pioneered the new inductive method, but his genius was best revealed in his treatise with the profound title "Essays, or Counsels Moral and Political" (hereinafter referred to as "Essays"). taught him. The foundation of Bacon's encyclopedic knowledge was also facilitated by the fact that he had already mastered the knowledge based on the classical texts of Ancient Greece and Rome during his student years. This gave Bacon the opportunity to introduce the brightness and unique color of humanism into the undoubtedly gloomy content of medieval European literature and scholasticism of moral and philosophical thought. If we talk about Fr. Bacon's "Essays", then no matter what topic the author chose for analysis and deep philosophical and moral reflection - whether it was an essay called "On Friendship" or another equally abstract work, for example, an "Essay on Truth" - these essays represent a unique synthesis of rhetoric and philosophy and, perhaps, Bacon's philosophical style represents a complete and numerous literary and philosophical example of an extraordinary writer and thinker. In this, the thinker achieved more success than his contemporaries or even the great French thinker of the XVI century, Michel de Montaigne, the discoverer and the pioneer of the essay genre, which was new for his time. Fr. Bacon tried to radically change the way of thinking of the people of his time. He believed that rhetoric, as the power of eloquence and persuasion, was capable of transforming human thought into the pure light of reason, and in this Bacon undoubtedly achieved his goal. Francis Bacon's "Essays", which gave deep philosophical reflections on world science against the background of the already



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existing masterpieces of world literature, is distinguished by the unfading beauty of the thinking of European culture of the late Renaissance.

It is no exaggeration to say that, like any masterpiece known to the world, this book, by the will of fate, also acquired a long historical life. It is not for nothing that the entire cultural thought of Europe, from Bacon's contemporaries to the progressive thinkers of the later period, read the "Essays" with pleasure and deep enthusiasm and accepted this book as a masterpiece of world culture, because this work shook the abstract feelings of every person, his being, and showed that these feelings are worthy not only of a great genius, but also of an ordinary person, and thus once again confirmed the leitmotif of the Renaissance, namely, that man in all his manifestations is the center of attention under the moon, that he is the ruler of earthly destinies.

It is no exaggeration to say that the "Essays" belongs to the category of books that have long been called "century works" alongside with the masterpieces of renown thinkers and philosophers like Jan Amos Komensky (1592-1670), Wolfgang Raticchius (1571-1635), Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), Johann Herbart (1776-1841), Adolf Diesterweg (1790-1866) and others. Because when coming into contact with the works on issues of general education, upbringing and training of the younger generation, including family education, of these outstanding educators of the past, the thought involuntarily comes to mind that the study of the philosophical, moral-ethical and pedagogical heritage of these thinkers not only reveals bright, original pages in the history of the formation and development of the science of education, its ped. and moral theory, but also enriches each of us with interesting, life-giving ideas that illuminate our path to the treasury of life experience of human nature, so important and valuable for every parent-mentor. And as P. F. Kapterev (1849-1922), the prominent Russian scientist and teacher of the second half of the XIX - early XX centuries, said "the main characteristic feature of human nature is self-activity, in the free disclosure of all forces according to one's own internal laws, and not under the pressure of external causes" [4, p. 294], while particularly emphasizing that the value of man himself "lies not in his knowledge, but in his desire; the primacy of desire in man does not at all mean that there is an independent ability to desire: desire is rooted in the circle of acquired ideas, i.e. not in the particulars of the individual's



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knowledge, but in the combination and joint actions of the ideas he has acquired” [4, p. 305].

From the very this point of view, the unique in its greatness and versatility philosophical and pedagogical heritage of Francis Bacon, vividly expressed in his work entitled "Essays", is of undoubted interest. In this book, the reader can find vivid illustrations of examples of family education, pedagogical psychology of the father-mentor. Although we are separated by several centuries from the era when this book was published, nevertheless, the practical and scientific interest in this vivid work of the epistolary genre has only increased over the years. Of course, time makes its own adjustments as philosophical and pedagogical thought and science develop and his legacy is assessed. Due to its highly structured movement and flight of thought, free writing and unbiased style of presentation, this book is strong not only in its ideas, but also in the didactic-pedagogical thought that resonates in each essay in this work. Having read this work in one sitting, the reader comes to the reasonable conclusion that Francis Bacon was a subtle conversationalist, possessed of intelligence, charm, and courtesy, and his "Essays" gradually led to reflections on the fate and aspirations of the world, awoke a healthy life and a taste for life, which, ultimately, led us to the idea of the formation of a person as a person. The author's stream of thought is generous, full of life experience, and at the same time insidious, reliable and powerful, a purifying and enlightening force, inevitably expanding the scope of worldview thinking. This book contains unspent wisdom (evidence of this is his numerous phrases and catchphrases) and the mental health of a wise man with experience in political and social life.

The "Essays" is a wonderful, emotional book, in which the author's personal "Ego" is not imposed on the reader at all. The world that appears on its pages, from the very beginning, at first glance, attracts attention with the diversity of its mental palette and almost primitive chaos. The thinker writes about a wide variety of things: about truth, about death, about monotheism, about revenge, about poverty and hypocrisy, about parents and children, about the art of governance, about doubt, about youth and old age, about prophecies, about gardens, about feasts, about friendship, etc. Whatever Bacon wrote about in his "Essays" - about the art of conversation, etiquette and strict adherence to it, business acumen,



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wealth and expense, career, love, friendship and deception, fame, glory and fame - he, as a thinker, always took into account these aspects of the issue and considered the possibilities of evaluating them, making recommendations and recommendations based on the appropriate criteria in the spirit of his time. Because he sets himself very specific tasks - he encourages us to turn to real, even everyday examples, in order to try to understand the tests, means and factors of the human will that correspond to this or that moral assessment. And we are deeply convinced that such an assessment has found its kind and understanding reader, and the author himself has gone beyond the borders of foggy Albion and taken an equal and worthy place alongside with the "Essays" of the great French philosopher and politician of the XVI century, Michel de Montaigne.

Today, this wonderful book, which focuses on human character and love, on the pages of the "Essays", attracts the hearts of readers to Bacon as a thinker and his creation [2, p. 69]. However, it should be noted that, according to the overwhelming majority of critics of his work [2, p. 14-18; 5], Francis Bacon's light, elegant style of writing (and this is a historical fact) at one time gave many reasons to imitate him, but the pen of this thinker is unique and inimitable in its own way, and the knowledge of the wisdom of the ancients, philosophers and thinkers of antiquity, perfectly mastered in his time, serves as a convincing basis for the originality and uniqueness of Bacon's manuscript. His "Essays" is one of the most remarkable and rare monuments of English cultural thought of the late XVI and early XVII centuries. This work is a special type of work that has nothing in common with a specific philosophical treatise or an essay on a specific socio-political topic.

What is so attractive about this book? What can each of us learn from the "Essays"? Why is this work still relevant today for each of us, especially for young people? Everyone will undoubtedly find answers to these questions by studying this wonderful work called "Essays, or Counsels, Civil and Moral." And yet, without fear of repetition, we once again confirm that Francis Bacon himself, as the pioneer of English essay writing, did not consider his teachings to be the ultimate truth. He directly and openly put this work face to face with the future. The thinker, giving the reader the opportunity to find the conclusion for himself, says: "But I do not claim that nothing can be added to this, on the contrary, if we



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consider the mind not only in its own capacity, but also in its connection with things, it must be recognized that the art of discovery can progress along with the progress of the discoveries themselves" [9, p. 457].

Francis Bacon, considered a pioneer in the development of "natural" philosophy, was also one of those who laid the foundation for the concept of "natural" morality in England, building morality based primarily on the rationally acquired vital aspirations and influences of the human person, without the help of religious ideas [2; 5]. Bacon, in a certain way, did in England what Michel de Montaigne had done a little earlier in France. But, unlike the great French thinker, Bacon set himself a task of a different order, namely, to turn to real-life examples of human existence, to try to understand the ways and means of expression, the incentives of that human will, which are subject to one or another moral assessment. Therefore, along with the thesis "the common good is above all else",

Bacon defends and develops another famous thesis: "man is the architect of his own happiness": we should only be able to intelligently determine the meaning and value of all things depending on how much they contribute to the achievement of our ultimate goals - mental health and strength, wealth, social position and prestige. It is difficult not to agree that this idea meets the requirements of modernity and the present day. The curious reader does not have to make much effort to see that in Bacon's essays, sometimes the whole spectrum of manifestations of human existence - secrecy and cunning, love and envy, courage and cunning, kindness and suspicion, selfishness and vanity, arrogance - is characterized by a very subtle analysis and a lively, surprisingly observed description. This is the essence of Bacon as a thinker. Bacon, in his pure English style - cool and energetic - discusses all these features of human nature, shows their varieties and varieties, gives examples, evaluates and makes his own judgments based on his rich life experience as a statesman and a person.

So, no matter what moral-philosophical or business topics Bacon touches upon - on the art of conversation or on the observance of etiquette and decency, on the ability to conduct business or on wealth and expenses, on achieving high positions, on love, friendship and cunning, on ambition, fame and glory - he bases his assessments, judgments and recommendations on the criteria corresponding to them, keeping this side of the issue under constant control. And life itself



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offered him these criteria. As a result, the thinker comes to the following conclusion: "I do not at all want all these features to be perceived in morality as a whole image of people (as in poetic and historical works and in everyday conversations), "but rather these should be simpler elements and individual character traits, the mixture and combination of which create certain images ... it is necessary to determine to what extent such elements and features exist, what they represent and what mutual combinations they allow" [9, p. 394].

And here, proceeding from the logic of the presentation, the question of comparing (albeit in a general sense) the works of two prominent thinkers of the European Renaissance and their works of the same name "The Essays" - Francis Bacon and Michel de Montaigne - becomes self-evident. These are two prominent representatives of the English and French Renaissance, and the commonality of the names and topics considered in their works indicates their connection with the genre, subject, even the title and the commonality of a number of essays. These two works were of great importance for the entire European culture. Having included his own reflections from Michel de Montaigne (since his work was published earlier - in 1580), Francis Bacon, at the same time, places a completely different emphasis in his essays. Montaigne, addressing his reader, reminds him that the purpose of writing his essays is not for the general public, but for the special pleasure of his relatives and close friends, that is, after Montaigne has left this world, they may find some traces of the thinker's character and thoughts, and as a result, supplement and revive the author's thought. Montaigne focuses on man as a natural, living being, directly feeling and thinking, on a broad critical study of all the conditions of his existence, on his "Ego", because the content of his book is precisely this. But Bacon's focus is, above all, on the behavior of the individual and his assessment in terms of achieving specific results, that is, the author's appeal to a wide circle of readers is maximally emphasized and concentrated.

At the same time, it is worth noting that in his reflections there is no inner reflection, tenderness, skepticism, humor, bright and independent perception of the existence of the world at the level of that bright and independent perception that we encounter in the "The Essays" of the great Frenchman, where the author is primarily focused on identifying his "Ego", while Bacon is driven only by cold



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objectivity and a concentrated analysis of what should ensure a person's position and success in society. Bacon's attention, as a true Englishman, is entirely focused on how to achieve and maintain a high position and how to behave so as not to fall too far from this position. The thinker's reasoning is sober and practical, as befits a true Englishman. Nevertheless, his creations in this area, in their own way, testify to Bacon as a thinker and a man, as well as to the time and society in which he lived. And yet, the work "The Essays" is not only an indicator and a significant document of that era. The work of Francis Bacon belongs to those great works of the history of thought, acquaintance with which continues to enrich us today, because in the frank and moving presentation of such a talented and intelligent writer and thinker as Bacon, people as a whole are enriched and somehow manage the human ideological past.

In his dedication of the 1625 edition of the "Essays" to his patron, the Duke of Buckingham, Bacon says: "I hope that this book will live as long as the Latin edition (because it is in an international language) lasts, for they are among the best fruits that my pen has been able to bear by the grace of God" [6, p. 5]. Although history itself destined a slightly different fate for the Latin language, nevertheless, the thinker ultimately proved right: the readers of the "Essays" acquired a secular scope, and the book itself crossed all the boundaries of world civilization, becoming a treasure for centuries. Constantly summarizing his rich life experience, comparing the results of this analysis with the existence of people around him and current events, wisdom from classical books and his own philosophy, he comes to conclusions of a universal nature, which turned his work "The Essays" into a book about Man - about the man of Bacon's generation, about the man of the new society; such a newly revealed analysis of the essence of human nature and its existence gives the work "Essays" a special value and originality, because here Bacon seeks to capture the subtle, imperceptible manifestations of the human soul, conditioned primarily by the requirements of his time. The result of the philosopher's reflections is a masterly and original work of English literature, and in general, of the entire world cultural thought, which summarizes the progressive aspirations of his time, along with the essays of Montaigne.



Conclusion

We may state that Francis Bacon is a figure of extraordinary importance in the history of world culture and philosophical thought. His fame was already known during the Renaissance and Enlightenment, and he himself is still considered one of the most widely read authors of books of the late Renaissance. The philosophical and literary genius of the encyclopedist and thinker Francis Bacon is best revealed and shines like all the facets of a diamond in his "The Essays". Although Bacon's encyclopedic teaching was based primarily on the classical texts of ancient Greece and Rome, on the treasury of wisdom of the thinkers of those times, his unique genius was that he was able to bring brightness and variety to the outdated European scholasticism of medieval books.

Surprisingly, regardless of the subject matter of the "Essays," these essays embody a synthesis of rhetoric and philosophy, and are the most complete and complete examples of Bacon's unique literary and philosophical style. Instead of creating a simple and popular generalization of philosophical thought or a complete exposition of the understanding of the essence of correct behavior, Bacon, as it seems to us, tried to radically change the stereotypical way of thinking of his contemporaries - and very successfully; in a literal sense, not only the way of thinking of his time. The thinker believed that rhetoric, as the power of eloquence and persuasion in the understanding of ancient thinkers Aristotle, Plato or Tacitus, can call the human mind not to utopia, but to the pure light of reason, illuminating it like a star pointing the way to a bright future.

Bacon's "The Essays", which fascinated the people of the late Renaissance, as an encyclopedic work, covering the most important problems of its time, served the read more than four centuries as an inexhaustible source of serious reflection and lively pleasure. Such a fate will undoubtedly await this book for centuries to come.

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