

The laws of thought essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Identity](#)



Very often people ask themselves why we think, how we think, what is the proper way and concepts of right thinking. These and many other important questions about human ability of thinking discussed philosophers from the moment of appearance of philosophy in VII century B. C. It is fascinating for all the creatures how humans can think, moreover how human mind can reach and find such unbelievable and logical ideas. Nevertheless, to have ability to analyze properly everything that is happening around us people must use laws of thinking. In other words, to eliminate all the ambiguous ideas that appear in our minds we need to apply the main laws of thought. First of all, I will try to explain what law is when it concerns to thinking. The main essential feature of the law is that it reflects the objective situation, the objective relations between things, objects and phenomena. The other important feature of the law of thought is the need for such connection, which is inevitably in the development of a phenomenon.

For instance, if something new appears, it is always connected with something old, it is on its “shoulders” and it does not reject the old absolutely, but in order for farther development accept what is needed. This connection is necessary and universal, moreover it is constant, internal and it is inevitably repeated if there are conditions for the operation of such relation. Talking about this, the ability to generalize bases on the observation that with the same conditions may happen similar events. So, required significant connections between things will be kept. The law, according to Hegel, is “sustainability, which is always reserved”. A phenomenon itself is variable and unstable. On the contrary, a law is quiet and stable reflection of the existing world. Hegel wrote, “The kingdom of laws includes the simple

constant and varied content of everything that exist in this world." Kingdom of laws is a quiet reflection of the existing world that appears.

Taking everything to consideration, the law of thought is a relation between entities which is objective, necessary, general, internal, essential and repetitive. Also, it is understandable that the laws of thought are applicable, but the questions that many philosophers discussed are where, when and how they are applicable.

So, the main laws of thought of all times are: the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, and the law of the excluded middle, (Danaher).

The discussion about Laws of thought has its roots from the Pre-Socratic period. The first philosopher who formulated the law of non-contradiction was Parmenides who said that, " Never will this prevail, that what is not is" (Danaher). He said that the essence of things involved the idea of non-contradiction. In other words, he needed fixed and unchangeable objects in order to receive certain knowledge. Also, Plato agreed with Parmenides' statement. In opposite, Heraclitus put contradiction as one of the key and universal elements of the essence of all thing and phenomena in this world. Talking about this, Heraclitus was the first who noticed that the world consists of contradictions. Moreover, the struggle between them defines the meaning of all things and the processes. Operating simultaneously, these opposites create an intense state, which defines the inner harmony of things. Heraclitus explains this with an example of a bow. Both curved ends of the bow trying to strain, but the string pulls them together. As a result, their mutual tension creates a higher unity. The fight of contradictions is general and universal, and according to Heraclitus, it sets the true justice and is the

main condition of an ordered cosmos' existence.

Therefore, the law of unity and fight of contradictions s reflects a fundamental feature of objective reality. In addition, all the objects, phenomena and processes of such reality have controversial tendencies and parts that fight and interact. What is more, the law of non-contradiction expresses one of the main virtues of logical thinking such as inconsistency and sequence of thought. Deliberate use of this law helps to detect and eliminate contradictions in personals and other people's arguments, produces a critical attitude to the all kinds of inexactitude, inconsistency in thoughts and actions.

Something new and unique about the Laws of thought presented Plato. As it was said before, he supported Parmenides' statement of non-contradiction, but his thoughts were more about where and when this law is applicable. So, in order to find the answers on these questions he presented “ an attempt to isolate the object of thought by removing it from all other time but the present and all respects but one” (Danaher). For Plato thinking is absolutely independent of the sensitive perception process. It was important for him to apart from the world of experience and reality. Moreover, not only object must be abstract, but also the idea of it.

Aristotle was a person who creatively and successfully summarized the achievements of logic. Therefore, he sought to create a science of thinking, which is based on clearly defined and objective principles and which make impossible to arbitrarily build arguments.

Aristotle was the first who formulated the law of identity in detail. The identity reflects the fact that everything has a quantitative and qualitative

determination; everything belongs to a class, genus and species. According to Aristotle, “ our idea of a kind or species is best conceptualized by uniting the genus of a species with its differentia or the characteristic that differentiates that species from the other members of the genus” (Metaphysics). What is more, things have special features that are preserved during some period of time. These characteristics remain unchanged within a certain space-time dimension. That thing which keeps its identity during the whole period of its existence should find adequate expression in thinking. Therefore, this expression is the law of identity.

Talking about this more, the law of identity has also practical meaning in all cases when it is about the correctness of the discussion, the effectiveness of the consideration of important issues. Before to start the discussion of any question, you should determine its precise, specific and relatively stable content, and later during the discussion to try to stick to these positions. The law prohibits replacing the content of concepts and judgments, mixing notions and statements, and permission of ambiguity in their use.

Another law of thought that Aristotle analyzed was the law of contradiction. In his Metaphysics he describes it as “ the most certain of all principles” and as “ a principle which everyone must have who understands anything that is”, moreover, as something “ which everyone must know who knows anything” (Aristotle).

This law reflects a fundamental feature of the being of objects and phenomena. Nothing can have these given and opposite indications in the same sense. Therefore, if the paper is white, it cannot be also black.

Aristotle, who gave this law first strict formulation, considered this law as a

reflection of essential features of the objective world. Aristotle says, “ The same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect” (Metaphysics). What is important here is that contradiction is not the feature or part of an object or phenomenon, but it is a stating of their existence or lack of it (non-existence). Therefore, for Aristotle, as also for Plato and Parmenides, contradictions make and form the essence of everything in this world.

Talking about these laws, Aristotle concluded “ not only that the two laws are distinct but that they are independent, that neither implies the other” (McGill).

The third law of the excluded middle was also analyzed and formulated by Aristotle. It can be formulated in the following way: from the two expressed contradictory views about something similar and expressed in the same sense, one necessarily is true. For instance, if we say: “ This statement is simple” and “ It’s not a simple statement”, as a result, the true statement will be just one of them.

In addition, it is very useful to know the requirements of the law of excluded middle, which can be used in everyday life and communication, and even in the arguments of a scientific nature. If we know that one of the scientific positions is true, we immediately reject that one which contradicts it.

Talking about the Laws of thought and the path of their exploration, it is important to mention about corpuscular philosophy. The main idea of it is “ distinction between the kinds of qualities that we attribute to physical entities” (Danaher). Corpuscularians divided characteristics of the object on two groups: “ primary” and “ secondary”. First group consisted of such

qualities as shape, extension, motion and others. Second group had taste, color, smell, sight. If the first one were dependent on objects themselves, the second were connected with human reflection.

Also, materialistic era broke all the things and phenomena into parts from which they are consisted. In other words, materialism destroyed the conception of unity, " things were no longer organic wholes" (Danaher). Another important stream of philosophy that discussed the laws of thinking was phenomenism. As Plato and Aristotle believed that there are some absolute characteristics of the thing are independent from the influence of this world and human beings, some abstract determinations. On the contrary to their position, representatives of phenomenism put the human experience on the first and originate place in the process of proper thinking. Nevertheless, the main representative of phenomenism is Hegel, who attacks the idea of abstract identity. He criticized the metaphysics concepts and as a result, he created his own laws. First is the law of transition from quantitative to qualitative relations (by changing the quantitative relations after a certain stage, is happening the change in quality due to the non-destruction of extent). The second is law of the direction of development (objection of objection). Everything that appears after an exact object completely destroys it. In other words, something is kept from the first object, but in other quality. For instance, it is water and ice. The third is law of unity and struggle of contradictions. The cause of development is the unity and struggle of opposites. As for Hegel reality is moving all the time he says, " Contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality; it is only in so far as something has a contradiction within it that it moves, has an urge and

activity” (Danaher).

Despite of many theories about human thinking, the questions of the usage of the Laws of thought are still unexplored fully.

Works Cited

Aristotle. Metaphysics. Translated by W. D. Ross. eBooks@Adelaide, Feb 26, 2014. Web

10 Nov, 2014.

Danaher J. The Laws of thought . The Philosopher, Volume LXXXXII No. 1.

Web. 8 Nov.

2014.

McGill J. V. Concerning the Laws of Contradiction and Excluded Middle.

Vordenker, 2004.

Web 9 Nov. 2014