

Descartes vs locke a
nativism vs
empiricism
comparison
philosophy essay



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Throughout history, mankind has tried to develop a philosophy that will explain the existence of life. There have been abstract ideas, concrete ideas and spiritual ideas to try and explain the foundation of life, in a way that can be understood in future generations. Descartes and Locke are two of the most scientifically respected philosophers in history that worked to develop theories about the foundation of life that could be understood in a scientific manner. John Locke and Renee Descartes are well known for their theories about life. Their theories have several similarities, as well as several differences. The men made history with their theories about the foundations of life, though in my opinion Descarte's theory seems to be the easiest to understand.

Renee Descartes developed the theory about the foundation of life that is founded in the " I think therefore I am" basis of science (I Think, therefore I am . . . NOT!). According to Descartes the fact that he has the ability to think and examine things intellectually proves his existence and provides the foundation of his life (I Think, therefore I am . . . NOT!). He extrapolates this to mankind in general and believed that anyone who can think therefore is.

Because Descartes wanted to eliminate the uncertainties in philosophy, and make it more like the " certainties" of mathematics he proceeded to discard all preconceived philosophic notions and started from what he conceived to be a rock solid foundation. The only thing Descartes found certain was the fact he was thinking. He further felt that thought was not a thing-in-itself, and had to proceed from somewhere (vis., cause and effect), therefore since he was thinking the thoughts, he existed -by extension-also. Hence, " thought" and " extension" were the very beginnings from which all things

proceeded, “ Cogito ergo sum” (I think therefore I am) (I Think, therefore I am . . . NOT!).

Descartes belief and theory was the corner stone for the western belief that life is man-centered.

Descartes did not believe that this theory extended to animals and believed that the ability to think was reserved for man and man alone and that ability created the human evolution. In addition Descartes believed that the invention of God and all other spiritual truths were based in the ability of man to think it up in the world.

John Locke was also a scientifically minded philosopher and his foundation of life belief were similar to Descartes however there were certain differences that set it apart.

According to Locke human thought was a base reality that involved minute particles moving around in space, using physical laws as the determining factor to their purpose and existence.

I think Locke’s theory about the foundation of life differs from Descartes in the way it occurs. Descartes believed the thoughts created the reality, whereas Locke believed the intake of information caused the human mind to create a new or current reality based on that information that was taken in.

“ Vision, hearing, feeling, taste are the result of our sensory devices (eyes, ears, tongue, finger tips) being bombarded by these minuscule particles outside the body - and coming to be organized by the brain into sight and thought packages. This process of the mind becoming aware of and learning <https://assignbuster.com/descartes-vs-locke-a-nativism-vs-empiricism-comparison-philosophy-essay/>

about the outside world was all very mechanistic - and stripped away the remaining medieval thoughts about how our souls are God-breathed and reflections of God's own nature. Under Locke's treatment the human mind as mechanism was as devoid of "life" as much as the mechanical world "out there" that the scientists of the Enlightenment were subduing."

Conclusion

The two philosophies are similar in that they are scientifically based and believe that spiritual beliefs are a creation of the foundation of life. Why they are different is in what they believe drives the ability to intellectually reason existence and information. Descartes said "I think therefore I am" while Locke believed the taking in of particles and their assembly creates the foundation of life as we perceive it. Descartes had a theory closer to reality when it comes to life and reactions of people. His basic belief was that the thoughts create reality, which is a loosely based method for behavior modification and other types of current theories about life and human nature. Locke's theory has an unanswered element with the pre-existing particles that we depend on, while Descartes theory seems to say that we create reality from the beginning with our intellectual abilities. Descartes and Locke disagree on the beginnings of knowledge itself, innate ideas, and the meaning of the actual self. Both however offer thoroughly different answers to important philosophical questions.