

Idols

Science, Statistics



Four idols of Bacon Francis Bacon in his book, Idols that beset men's minds clearly identifies four idols. This term, idol, is used figuratively to mean fallacies that distort the perception of reality by men and their pursuit of truth. They represent psychological barriers and relate to all imaginations which prevent men from seeing an object as it really is (Bacon, pg. 36).

There are four idols which beset the minds of men.

Firstly, idols of the tribe relate to human nature and ethnicity. An example of this relates to the need by men to see order in the universe even when it is not there. When we look at the sky, we see stars in a disorganized form and try to organize them in a pattern, into objects and forms. The second form, idols of the cave relate to distortions that apply to certain groups of people as opposed to others (Bacon, pg. 45). For example, some people are more inclined to tradition and culture than others, while some people are inclined to new philosophies more than others.

Thirdly, the idols of the market place are distortions arising from semantics or social activities. Bacon has noted that incorrect use of language and words has led to problems in comprehension and thus urges people to use words correctly and precisely. For instance, we are wrong to say, 'the sun is up' because the sun does not move. Rather, it is the earth that rotates.

Lastly, he notes the idols of the theater which influence the mind into excesses of denial or dogmatism (Bacon, pg. 56). An example of this is the various theologies, theories and philosophies that people come up with and interpret their world. Their thoughts, actions and views are interpreted based on this new philosophy and world view. He notes that people need to be aware of how the views distort their perceptions of world and seek to change

that.

Works cited

Bacon, Francis. Advancement of learning; and, Novum organum; and, New Atlantis.

Encyclopædia Britannica. Chicago. 1955. Print.