

Francis bacon vs john locke philosophy essay



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Cognition is one of the main principles of philosophy. Searching for the ways to understand the surrounding world, trying to make sure that people live in the world they can explain, many philosophers tried to create their own theories of nature reasoning. People have always been interested in the nature, its processes, and the way in which scientific discoveries are made. There are two ways to consider the nature, deductive and inductive. Francis Bacon and John Locke are two philosophers who searching for the most effective ways of cognition have come to opposite perspectives and presented those in their writings, *Novum Organum Scientiarum* and *An Essay on Human Understanding* respectively. Bacon's *Novum Organum Scientiarum* and Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* are two pieces of writing which do not only present the points of view of the authors, but also describe two important ways for considering science and conducting the process of condition, even though the perspectives of these two people are opposite, they are both applied in the modern world with the same frequency.

The main reason for writing these two pieces of scientific discussion was the desire to understand the modern world. Cognition is important for philosophers of the whole world and searching for the most effective ways for understanding the nature Locke and Bacon came to two opposite ways in understanding different processes. Bacon and Locke apply to deductive and inductive methods, which differ by the starting point and the vision of the beginning of the research. It is difficult to understand the surrounding world, as sometimes it seems to be indescribable and confusing; however, Bacon and Locke managed to prove that appropriate approach to cognition under

correct conditions and in appropriate time with a restricted number of actions may lead to solving the mystery of the surrounding world. Each mystery should be considered from the side of an appropriate perspective or theory.

Considering the main idea of inductive and deductive method, one should imagine a problem, which he/she wants to dwell upon. Applying to the deductive method, the problem should be considered from a general perspective. Further, the researcher should concretize and specify the issue turning to the very particular aspect, which is important. Having an opportunity to prove that the general rule is appropriate for the specific one, a person applies to the deductive method. Inductive method presupposes another vision of the situation, when dealing with one specific action a person has to prove that the same condition is typical for the general audience. Thus, the generalization of the results is based on the inductive method. Bacon and Locke described these two methods in detail. Writing their pieces of literature, Locke and Bacon tried to deliver their vision of solving the problem of world cognition. Trying to present their methods, these people could not imagine that they open up the methods which are going to be used in the scientific world for many discoveries, as trying to solve any problem, working on the mystery, etc. researchers and scholars use either inductive or deductive methods to conduct a research.

Bacon's *Novum Organum Scientiarum* is more directed on logic than on philosophy, as applying to the discussion of the general issues, one should create the chain of events, consequences and conclusions which are based on the central general idea and come closer to the specific issue which is to

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be considered. Bacon states that “ for the powers and motions of things act and take effect at distances not indefinite or accidental, but finite and fixed; so that to ascertain and observe these distances in the investigation of the several natures is of the greatest advantage to practice, not only to prevent its failure but also to extend and increase its power” (Bacon “ Novum Organum” 206). In other words, Bacon tried to prove that the processes in the nature are interconnected and trying to come from the general aspect to the concrete one, a person will find the expected results only if the correct way is followed. The human disbelief in the fact that things are possible makes the scientific research more complicated.

Turning to close discussion of the very inductive method proposed by Bacon, it is important to point at the procedure of the research. A scholar should gather several events which have the same characteristics, outcome or other features. Considering each of the issues individually, the scholar should remember that they are the part of the general issue. Thus, trying to find the individual features of the common generalized cases, he/she will be able to draw “ conclusions by means of posteriori reasoning concerning the validity of hypotheses that were formulated a priori” (Vignais and Vignais 113) only in case the conditions are met and the procedure is followed ideally.

Bacon’s Novum Organum Scientiarum is a revision of the Aristotle’s Organon. Bacon tries to make sure that the specifically new order in cognitive processes should be used. Being totally based on logic, Bacon tries to prove in this work that “ the science of a better and more perfect use of reason in the investigation of things and of the true end of the understanding” (Bacon “ The essays or counsels civil and moral” 33). One

more important aspect in the Bacon's work is the reference to the practical experiments, which helps understand the problem and increase the chances for drawing the conclusion faster. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the contribution of Bacon in the development of the cognition and scientific world is invaluable

Locke's Essay on Human Understanding is based on the process of cognition, when one pays attention to the details and tries to generalize the ideas, which one gathers. Searching for the explanation of different natural processes, the researcher presupposes to gather the details, the parts of the general picture and step by step to come closer to the final goal. "The consideration... of ideas and words as the great instruments of knowledge makes no despicable part of their contemplation who would take a view of human knowledge in the whole extent of it" (Locke 718). The importance of Locke's essay is the ways and methods he offered for understanding the human nature. Later, Locke's essay will be exercised as the "profound influence upon the Enlightenment, providing the epistemological foundations for modern empiricism" (Hyland, Gomez, and Greensides 40). The main idea of this work is to make sure that people understand the importance of their knowledge and the way how this knowledge may be considered. The perception of the surrounding world plays a great role in Locke's theory. Each person is a thinking being who has an opportunity to distinct ideas in one's mind and draw appropriate conclusions. The failure to consider the necessary issues, the failure to check the information which is really important for this very research is one of the main barriers on the way of human cognition.

The main idea of Locke's inductive method is to gather all the necessary facts related to the problem and make the necessary connections. The failure to find all the issues and to make the correct connections is a failure many people do not know how to cope with. Locke is sure that once a person manages to understand an issue having created the correct chain of conclusions, the more complicated cognitive processes will be available for this person (Hyland, Gomez, and Greensides 42). Locke paid much attention to enthusiasm and Rudrum, Black, and Nelson correctly say that "enthusiasm to Locke is the refusal to apply reason to ideas that the believer thinks are revealed truth, and the question he seeks to answer is ... how to distinguish between true revelation and mere enthusiasm" (1029). These words just support the information mentioned above. A person who wants to conduct a cognitive process of thinking should make sure that purpose and the process is lead correctly, otherwise, nothing will come out. Commenting on Locke's Essay on Human Understanding, Clarke confirmed that the main idea of the Locke's method is to understand the correct principle and to find the appropriate data, which perfectly meets the problem (Clarke 1).

Trying to compare and contrast these two pieces of writing, Bacon's *Novum Organum Scientiarum* and Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*, the most important similarities and differences should be identified. These two works are directed at helping people conduct cognitive processes and find out the truth about human nature and the surrounding world. However, the approaches these two authors apply to differ greatly. Bacon bases his theory of logical thinking trying to prove that the pieces of information considered from the general scope of data is the most effective way for cognition. Locke

does not try to contradict Bacon's ideas, but he refers to another approach, trying to prove that the correctly selected pieces of information and the chain of appropriate conclusions is a guarantee of cognition.

Therefore, it may be concluded that even though Bacon's and Locke's ideas are diametrically opposite and the way of cognition these authors offer have nothing in common, these two theories deserve attention. Being absolutely different they neither contradict, nor supplement each other. These two theories have found the supporters in the world of science as both logical and knowledge-based methods are used in the modern science. Bacon's *Novum Organum Scientiarum* and Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* should be considered as the greatest contributions to the scientific world as these people have presented the society with inductive and deductive methods of cognition, which help modern scientists conduct research. Moreover, separate parts of the discussion in these two pieces of writing offered the ideas for further research as science is a dynamic sphere, which requires constant movement ahead with the return to the already drawn conclusions to make sure that there is nothing to be added.