

WHO IS FRANCIS BACON?

FRANCIS BACON (1561-1626) was an English Renaissance statesman and philosopher, best known for his promotion of the scientific method.

He was born into a prominent wealthy family in London, England, on January 2, 1561. He was the family's youngest son.

Bacon's education reflected his upper-class background. He was tutored at home until, aged 12, he entered the University of Cambridge, where he was again tutored privately. His lessons were conducted entirely in Latin, focusing on arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, grammar, music theory, logic, and rhetoric.

Bacon began to think that, although Aristotle's intellect was formidable, his ideas and methods led nowhere. Bacon deplored the unquestioning way scholars treated Aristotle's work, making the Ancient Greek philosopher a dictator in all but name – a dictator Bacon believed now stood in the way of scientific progress.



This image conveys an important symbolic message from Bacon to his readers.

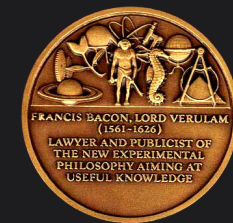
The two pillars are the mythical Pillars of Hercules, marking the end of the Mediterranean Sea and the beginning of the Atlantic Ocean.

Bacon believed it was time to move beyond the ancient philosophies which had come from Mediterranean countries, and with fresh minds and new methods set out on an up-to-date exploration of the laws of Nature. The discoveries would be rewarding, both financially and intellectually, as the voyages to the New World had been.

The image shows one ship returning, bringing new discoveries, while another sets off in search of more. The words in Latin at the bottom of the image are "Multi pertransibunt & augebitur Scientia." The meaning is: "Many will pass through and knowledge will be increased."



FORMER LORD HIGH
CHANCELLOR OF GREAT BRITAIN



FRANCIS BACON

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THEORY OF THE IDOLS AND THE SYSTEM OF SCIENCES

Bacon makes a distinction between the Idols of the human mind and the Ideas of the divine mind. The former are for him nothing more than “certain empty dogmas”, the latter show “the true signatures and marks set upon the works of creation as they are found in nature”

IDOLS OF THE TRIBE

The Idols of the Tribe have their origin in the production of false concepts due to human nature, because the structure of human understanding is like a crooked mirror, which causes distorted reflections (of things in the external world).

IDOLS OF THE CAVE

The Idols of the Cave consist of conceptions or doctrines which are dear to the individual who cherishes them, without possessing any evidence of their truth. These idols are due to the preconditioned system of every individual, comprising education, custom, or accidental or contingent experiences.

IDOLS OF THE MARKET PLACE

These idols are based on false conceptions which are derived from public human communication. They enter our minds quietly by a combination of words and names. These words react on our understanding.

IDOLS OF THE THEATRE

According to the insight that the world is a stage, the **Idols of the Theatre** are prejudices stemming from received or traditional philosophical systems. These systems resemble plays in so far as they render fictional worlds, which were never exposed to an experimental check or to a test by experience. The idols of the theatre thus have their origin in dogmatic philosophy or in wrong laws of demonstration.

