

SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY AND NAVIGATING MORAL FRONTIERS IN REAL WORLD CONTEXTS

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Abstract

This in-depth analysis follows the development of philosophical ideas across time and space and from one culture to another. The fields of epistemology and metaphysics investigate the connections between knowledge and reality, whereas the fields of ethics and moral philosophy provide light on the norms that should direct our actions. Understanding the influence of political and social philosophy on community formation is essential. Discoveries about the nature of being and the pursuit of meaning can be made by delving into Eastern traditions, phenomenology, and existentialism. Dialectical travels through reason, science, and individualism have shaped civilizations and challenged customs in Western philosophical traditions from ancient Greek philosophers to current thinkers. Vedanta, Buddhism, and Taoism, on the other hand, incorporate insights from a wide range of cultures and emphasize things like peace, self-awareness, and cosmic oneness. By comparing philosophies from around the world, we may see where they overlap and where they divide. Applied philosophy is the practical application of philosophical principles to actual moral problems. Both environmental ethics and medical ethics include making difficult choices, while environmental ethics place a greater emphasis on environmental stewardship. Responsible technical development is shaped by in-depth ethical examination in fields like bioethics and digital ethics, which are prompted by these practical extensions.

Keywords: Scientific, Philosophy, Navigating, Moral Frontiers, environmental.

1. Introduction

Philosophy is an extraordinary journey through the investigation of existence, knowledge, ethics, and the essence of reality, and its threads are woven throughout the tapestry of human intellectual history. Philosophy has unfolded as a timeless search for knowledge, beckoning us to ponder the big issues that have always shaped our perspective on the world and our place in it. Philosophical thought has developed, diversified, and intertwined with many elements of human existence from the first contemplation of ancient civilizations to the intricate frameworks of modernity. Both epistemology and metaphysics investigate the nature of knowledge and reality, asking questions about how we know what we believe we know and what reality is. Ethics and moral philosophy steer individuals and communities through the complexities of human behavior, promoting ethical reflection and laudable actions. Philosophy of Mind and Consciousness delves into the mysterious inner workings of the human mind, whereas Political and Social Philosophy investigates the frameworks of government, justice, and social organization. In this investigation, we set out on a trip across history and the human mind in search of

the revolutionary concepts that have changed the course of human culture. This rich tapestry of philosophical thought continues to spark thought, encourage discussion, and shed light on the way to greater comprehension.

2. Historical Development of Philosophical thought

The growth of philosophical ideas over the ages and across cultures provides a fascinating window into the mind of humanity. Questions about the nature of reality and the cosmos first arose in ancient civilizations like Mesopotamia and Egypt circa 3000 BCE, laying the groundwork for later philosophical musings. Beginning with Thales in the sixth century BCE, Ancient Greek philosophy established the concept of rational inquiry and gave birth to Western philosophical traditions. According to AyÄ±k and CoÄŸtu (2020), Plato and Aristotle, who lived in the fourth century BCE, gave a boost to epistemological thoughts by delving into the nature of knowledge and the processes of thinking. Growth in Chinese and Indian philosophies occurred simultaneously. Both Confucianism and Daoism developed in China at roughly the same time; both delved into questions of ethics, government, and the coherence with nature. The Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Buddhism (from around the sixth century BCE) explored questions of metaphysics, consciousness, and liberation. As per Dwyer (2019), Avicenna and Thomas Aquinas, for example, helped to bridge the gap between faith and reason during the Middle Ages by synthesizing ideas from the Greek, Islamic, and Christian traditions. The resurgence of interest in classical ideas during the Renaissance of the 14th to 17th century set the stage for contemporary philosophical thought. In the 17th century, René Descartes ushered in the period of epistemological foundationalism by placing a premium on skepticism and rational inquiry as the bedrock of the human quest for truth.

As opined by Keighren (2020), philosophers like John Locke, Immanuel Kant, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau exemplified the Enlightenment ideals of the 18th century, which included the promotion of reason, empiricism, and individual rights. Alterations were also being made to Eastern philosophies at the same time. With its focus on the present moment and meditation, Zen Buddhism became popular in Japan. As per Martyninuk *et al.* (2022), in the nineteenth century, thinkers like Friedrich Nietzsche and Edmund Husserl popularized existentialism and phenomenology to probe questions of subjectivity, individuality, and the nature of consciousness. Meanwhile, Karl Marx's thought was instrumental in the development of several social and political ideologies, most notably Marxism. According to Solomon and Higgins (1996), analytic philosophy, which was popularized in the 20th century by philosophers like Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein, focuses on dissecting language and using rigorous reasoning. Eastern ideas, especially Zen and mindfulness practices, gained hold in the West, while Existentialism, which explored freedom and authenticity, reached its height with Jean-Paul Sartre. Interactions between thinkers from different backgrounds improve philosophical discussions as they travel over time and space. With the rise of comparative philosophy, similarities and differences between various philosophical schools became more apparent. Environmental ethics, bioethics, and the ethics of new technologies have all contributed to applied philosophy's rise to popularity (Dwyer, 2019). The evolution of philosophical thinking over the centuries is a reflection of our insatiable curiosity about the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge, the nature of right and wrong, and the nature of the human

experience. It reflects how civilizations change over time, how ideas clash, and how people always seem to be looking for more purpose in their lives.

3. Epistemology and Metaphysics: Unveiling the Nature of Knowledge and Reality

The two mainstays of philosophy are epistemology (the study of how we know things) and metaphysics (the study of what things really are). While metaphysics investigates the ultimate essence of life, reality, and the cosmos, epistemology investigates the origins, boundaries, and limits of human knowledge. Beginning in ancient Greece, philosophers explored the nature of knowing (or "epistemology"). Ancient thinkers like Plato and Aristotle explored the nature of perception, logic, and experience in their attempt to understand how humans learn (Broncano and Carter, 2021). Debates regarding the trustworthiness of human reason and the limits of certainty were sparked by the skepticism of thinkers like Sextus Empiricus and, later, David Hume. The idea that human knowledge is shaped by both our cognitive structures and sensory experiences was proposed by Immanuel Kant's combination of rationalism and empiricism. Epistemology became entangled with the developing scientific method during the scientific revolution, examining such issues as the validity of induction and the plausibility of evidence. Analytic philosophy, which examines language, logic, and the breakdown of ideas, emerged as a major trend in the twentieth century (Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya, 2021). Philosophers like Ludwig Wittgenstein probed the boundaries of what can be discussed and how language impacts our perceptions of the world. On the other hand, metaphysics investigates the very fabric of reality. Questions like existence, matter, and the possibility of universals were at the heart of ancient metaphysical investigations. According to Plato's notion of forms, there exists a metaphysical realm inhabited by immaterial forms (Bueno and Shalkowski, 2020). Aristotle's metaphysics investigated the fundamental causes of reality's many occurrences. Metaphysics has developed over time to address questions about the mind-body conundrum, causes and effects, the passage of time, and the very fabric of space itself. The separation of mind and body proposed by René Descartes' dualism paved the way for philosophical investigations into the nature of the mind's connection to the physical world. Some parts of reality are molded by our cognitive frameworks, a theory introduced by Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealism (Bakhurst, 2020). Existentialism and phenomenology, both of which focused on the nature of human life and subjective experience, reemerged as influential philosophical schools in the twentieth century. Philosophers like Willard Van Orman Quine spearheaded a movement called "analytic metaphysics," which sought to unpack the ideas that form the basis of our worldview.

Table 1. Summary of important content for teaching broad epistemic integrity

Epistemic Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Metacognitive competences ✓ Awareness of cognitive biases ✓ Critical use of heuristics to identify reliable sources ✓ Basic understanding of scientific methods and statistics ✓ Understanding of the logical structure of arguments and vigilance regarding the link between evidence and conclusions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Love of truth

Epistemic virtues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Intellectual humility ✓ Open mindedness and search for impartiality ✓ Epistemic responsibility
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4. Ethics and Moral Philosophy

The fields of ethics and moral philosophy serve as directional lights lighting the ways to live virtuously and ethically. These fields, which are ingrained in every human being, investigate questions of right and wrong, guiding principles, and the search for fulfillment. As per Smith (2019), ancient societies laid the groundwork for the study of ethics, which has since travelled across time and space to understand the moral intricacies of human behavior. Virtue ethics, consequentialism, and deontology, three classic ethical theories, have influenced the discussion. Aristotle's theory of virtue ethics stressed the need of developing morally excellent attributes to a happy and successful existence. Utilitarianism, promoted by thinkers like Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, held that people should always aim for the greatest good for the greatest number of people. According to Immanuel Kant's deontology, moral judgments should be based on duty and moral principles. According to Anscombe (2020), in addition to exploring theoretical frameworks, moral philosophy delves into practical ethics and the nuance of moral conundrums. The field of medical ethics, for instance, addresses questions like "who gets to live" and "who gets to die" in the context of medical treatment. Concerns for the environment and future generations are at the heart of environmental ethics. Ethical concepts are woven into the fabric of daily life via the intricate considerations required by these practical contexts.

Moral theories have progressed over time in tandem with cultural developments and scientific discoveries. Feminist ethics, which developed in the 20th century, criticized dominant patriarchal ideas of ethics and brought to light moral wrongs committed on the basis of gender. Postmodern ethics challenged the concept of absolute morality, drawing attention to the fact that different cultures place different values on different things. As opined by Cozma (2021), normative ethics, which dictates how people should act, is a prime example of the overlap between ethics and moral philosophy. The debate over whether moral principles are culturally conditioned or universally applicable is at the heart of this subfield of philosophy. Justice, equality, and human rights are all topics where ethics and political and social philosophy overlap. Philosophers like John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Rawls developed theories of social contracts that explain the just allocation of resources and the legitimacy of political authority.

5. Political and Social Philosophy: Probing the Foundations of Governance and Societal Order

The study of political and social philosophy provides the conceptual foundation for delving into the complex systems of human government, justice, and social organization (Tylan, 2022). These interrelated fields investigate the most fundamental issues concerning the nature and distribution of power, the legitimacy of individual rights, and the ethical foundations of institutionalized social order. From the ancient Greeks to the present day, thinkers in the field of political philosophy have pondered the nature of political authority and the best possible systems of government. Aristotle classified several forms of government, triggering discussions over the advantages of democracy, oligarchy, and tyranny; Plato's "Republic" imagined a just society ruled by philosopher-kings (Estlund, 2019). Thomas Hobbes,

John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau epitomized the social contract theory with their exploration of the foundations of political authority and the consent of the governed. Individual rights, democracy, and the limits of state power were all topics that were expanded upon by Enlightenment philosophers like Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill. Karl Marx's criticism of capitalism and promotion of a classless society sparked debates over economic fairness and the state's role in defining social structures. Complementing political theory, social philosophy delves into the rules that regulate interpersonal relationships within communities. Issues of social inequality, distributive fairness, and the moral imperatives behind collective action are all explored (Sorokin, 2020). Justice theories created by philosophers like John Rawls place great emphasis on being fair to society's weakest members.

Feminism's ascent brought a critical lens that questioned established social orders, exposing discrimination against women that stemmed from stereotypical assumptions about their positions in society. Theorists such as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno established the critical theory that probed the implications of power structures and cultural norms to better comprehend the nature of oppression. Politics and social philosophy meet in modern debates over such topics as multiculturalism, identity politics, and the relative importance of individual freedom and the common good (Cole, 2020). Concerns regarding privacy, monitoring, and the effect of technology on democratic engagement have been brought to light by the advent of the digital age. The importance of political and social philosophy goes beyond the academy, influencing actual government policy and motivating social change (Taylan, 2022). Human rights and democracy are two such ideas that have shaped history and set the stage for equitable administration of power. Philosophers are still trying to figure out how to deal with the challenges posed by globalization, environmental issues, and the changing face of political engagement.

6. Existentialism and Phenomenology: Unveiling the Depths of Human Experience and Meaning

Philosophical schools such as existentialism and phenomenology explore the most fundamental questions about life, the mind, and the quest for meaning. The challenges of modernity prompted the emergence of these related schools of thought, which shed light on the subjective nature of existence and the intricacies of personal identity (Jedlickova *et al.*, 2022). Sren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus are only few of the many thinkers that contributed to the development of existentialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Existentialism tackles the existential difficulties of human life, and it has its roots in the acknowledgment of human freedom and the uneasiness that comes with it. It explores issues of sincerity, despondency, and the search for meaning in an apparently indifferent universe. According to Muller and Jedlickova, (2020), there is a strong emphasis on free will and individual agency in the work of existentialist thinkers. Jean-Paul Sartre famously said, "Existence precedes essence," which means that people don't have a set nature at birth but rather shape who they are via their own actions and choices. The themes of alienation, loneliness, and the search for meaning in the face of life's difficulties find common ground with this emphasis on individual agency.

On the other hand, Edmund Husserl's writings in the 19th century gave rise to phenomenology as a philosophical methodology. The goal of phenomenology is to investigate the mental architectures underlying our perceptions and understandings of the world. It focuses on the phenomenon itself, rather than trying to impose meaning on our experiences from the outside. As per Zieske (2020), to engage in

phenomenological reduction, where one analyses their conscious experiences as they occur, phenomenology recommends suspending one's preexisting beliefs and biases. This technique reveals the richness of our perception, emotion, and intention in our actions. Later thinkers built on Husserl's work by applying phenomenology to existential topics and putting an emphasis on the connection between existence and time. One such philosopher is Martin Heidegger. As opined by Pula (2022), the existential-phenomenological trend shows how existentialism and phenomenology have come together. Philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, known as "existential phenomenologists," combined existential questions with the study of actual human experience. Their goal was to shed light on the subtleties of human existence by analyzing our interactions with the world and drawing attention to the complex relationship between internal states of mind and the objective world.

7. Eastern Philosophical Traditions: Exploring Wisdom beyond Borders

The spiritual and intellectual landscape of Asia has been affected throughout ages by the vast body of knowledge contained in Eastern philosophical traditions. According to Hung *et al.* (2021), Vedanta, Buddhism, and Taoism are only a few examples of ancient traditions that are also rich in spiritual wisdom and offer distinctive insights into the nature of reality, the human condition, and the way to enlightenment. Vedanta is a Hindu philosophical tradition with its roots in ancient India. It dives into the profound investigation of the connection between the individual soul (Atman) and the global consciousness (Brahman). Self-realization is highly valued in Vedanta, with the goal of achieving spiritual freedom (moksha) through letting go of the ego and worldly attachments. The Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita are two of the most important philosophical writings in Vedanta, detailing ideas like karma, dharma, and the search for ultimate truth.

As per Moore (2021), the goal of Siddhartha Gautama's (the religion's namesake and namesake) Buddhism is the end of suffering, or dukkha. Understanding the impermanence (anicca) and interdependence of all occurrences is fundamental to Buddhist thought. While the concept of emptiness (shunyata) in Mahayana Buddhism questions intrinsic existence, the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path serve as a guide to ethical living and mental development. Different Buddhist schools of thought, from Theravada to Zen, offer their own unique perspectives on enlightenment and compassionate life. Taoism is a philosophy with its roots in ancient China. Its central concept is the Tao, an ineffable principle that underpins all of reality. Aligning oneself with the cosmic flow and embracing minimalism are important tenets of Taoism. To establish harmony with the Tao and equilibrium, the philosophy stresses wu wei, or effortless action. Taoist philosophy and Daoist practices such as meditation, qigong, and feng shui work together to achieve enlightenment and harmony with the universe.

As opined by Sobirovich (2020), all of these Eastern practices have one thing in common: they look beyond the surface level for meaning and peace. Fundamental to their beliefs is the quest for enlightenment, the alleviation of suffering, and harmony with the laws of nature. They promote meditation, introspection, and moral behavior as means to self-realization. As these religions have grown over the world, they have encouraged countless people to delve into the mysteries of the mind, practice kindness, and look for oneness with the cosmos. The eternal insights into the universe and the

human experience found in Eastern philosophical traditions continue to resound with individuals seeking knowledge.

8. Western Philosophical Traditions: A Journey Through Ancient Greek to Modern Thought

From the deep meditations of ancient Greek philosophers to the complexity of modern philosophical dialogue, the Western philosophical traditions comprise a rich tapestry of intellectual investigation. These philosophies and practices have shaped the way we think about the world and the people in it by laying the groundwork for analytical reasoning, scientific investigation, and the pursuit of meaning in life. Figures like Thales, Pythagoras, and Heraclitus, who pondered the nature of existence and the universe in ancient Greece, indicate the beginning of Western thinking. Philosophical inquiry can be traced back to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who introduced dialectic, conceptions of reality as a starting point, and questions about ethics, politics, and metaphysics (Cottingham, 2021). Mainstays of philosophical thought include Aristotle's notions of virtue and Plato's allegory of the cave.

By combining Greek philosophy with Christian theology, scholasticism emerged during the Middle Ages. Aristotelian ideas were integrated into religious theology by thinkers like Thomas Aquinas in an effort to bring faith and reason closer together. Debates about the existence of God, the nature of reality, and the limits of human understanding emerged throughout this time. The Renaissance and the Enlightenment heralded the arrival of modern philosophy, which places a premium on rational thought, empirical evidence, and the importance of the individual. In the 17th century, René Descartes advocated skepticism to verify facts and establish certainty. His famous dictum "Cogito, ergo sum" ("I think, therefore I am") summed up the movement towards inward reflection and self-knowledge (Ershov *et al.*, 2019). During the 17th and 18th centuries, while the Enlightenment was in full swing, a new breed of philosophers emerged who valued reason, science, and human rights. The foundations of contemporary political thought can be traced back to John Locke's writings on natural rights and the social compact. Freedom, separation of powers, and the general will were all topics that Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau elaborated on, and their writings influenced political thought and sparked revolutions.

Table 2: The philosophy of science and its implications for business research

The philosophy of science. The implications for business research Philosophical anchor.	Philosophical principle.	Philosophical questions.	The implications for business research Role of anchor or principle in business research	Impact of neglecting this anchor or principle
Ontology	Concerns the nature of reality and how we understand	What are our assumptions about the nature of reality is there a	Reflects our assumptions about the nature of the business world	Could lead to a mismatch between the business

	things.	single, observable reality or multiple realities shaped by subjectivity. • How do we perceive reality to exist, function and evolve independent of or interdependent with our perceptions?	and influences our choice of business research topics, methodologies and interpretations	reality we seek to study and the methods we employ, undermining the validity of us findings
Epistemology	Considers nature of knowledge and how we come to know things.	What constitutes or qualifies as knowledge? • How is knowledge discovered or constructed? • How is the validity of knowledge established?	Guides the exploration of the relationship between the business researcher and the business knowledge they seek • Determines what qualifies as “Acceptable knowledge” in the business field	Can result in business knowledge claims that lack support or credibility within the business community
Methodology	Embodies the strategies and methods used in the research process	What research strategies and methods (methodology) are being used? • How does the methodology align with the ontology and epistemology of the research? • How does the	Embodies the strategy or plan of action underlying our choice and use of specific business research methods • Informed by our philosophical understanding of ontology and epistemology guiding the	Could result in misaligned business research processes, leading to potentially inconsistent or inconclusive findings

		methodology ensure effective investigation of the research questions?	business research	
Axiology	Encompasses the values that influence research	What values (and biases) might influence the research? • How might these values (and biases) affect the formulation of research questions and the interpretation of findings? • How are these potential influences recognized and mitigated in the research process?	Examines the role of values in the research process of business research • Helps in acknowledging the potential influence of personal values on our business research and mitigating any unintended biases	Could result in business research that is biased, unbalanced, or skewed toward the business researcher's personal values
Rhetoric	Entails the convention of communicating research	How is the research being communicated? • Is the language used to communicate research appropriate and congruent with the other philosophical anchors? • Is the research Communicated clearly, convincingly and	Relates to the language and presentation employed to communicate our findings in the business world • Enhances the clarity, persuasiveness, and impact of our business research • Strengthens credibility by mitigating misrepresentation	Can result in business research that is unclear, unpersuasive or misrepresentative, making it less accessible or less credible to others in the business field

		impactfully?	of business findings	
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In the late 18th century, Immanuel Kant proposed a synthesis of empiricism and rationalism in response to the skepticism of David Hume (Gupta, 2021). He questioned the significance of a priori ideas and the bounds of human knowledge in his Critique of Pure Reason. The theories of Immanuel Kant connected the Enlightenment with the later eras of intellectual thought. Existentialism, phenomenology, and analytic philosophy appeared in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, further developing modern philosophy. Individualism, freedom, and the absurdity of life were all topics explored by existentialists such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre. Analytic philosophers like Ludwig Wittgenstein concentrated on linguistic analysis and logical rigor, whereas phenomenologists like Edmund Husserl investigated the structure of consciousness.

9. Applied Philosophy: Navigating Moral Frontiers in Real World Contexts

An exciting new subfield of philosophy, "applied philosophy" connects abstract ideas with real-world problems faced by people. The field applies philosophical principles to problems of moral complexity in areas as diverse as environmental ethics and medical ethics. Applied philosophy aids communities in making rational and ethical choices by providing concrete examples of abstract philosophical concepts. The study of Environmental Ethics examines the moral obligations that humans have to the natural world and its ecosystems. Environmental ethics demands a rethinking of humanity's place in the natural world in light of urgent problems like global warming, habitat loss, and depletion of natural resources. To highlight the inherent worth of all living things and the environments they inhabit, philosophers such as Aldo Leopold and Arne Naess established ethical frameworks that go beyond human beings (Estlund, 2019). This perspective opposes anthropocentrism and promotes environmental protection and responsible land use. The field of medical ethics is responsible for navigating the complex moral terrain surrounding medical care, technical progress, and respect for human life. Medical ethics offers direction on everything from patient autonomy and informed permission to end-of-life care and genetic alteration in today's era of complicated medical interventions and bioethical challenges. Medical practitioners and politicians can find ethical guidance in the principles of beneficence (doing good), non-maleficence (not doing harm), justice, and autonomy.

Due to its focus on issues of law, science, and society, applied philosophy frequently calls for cross-disciplinary efforts. Bioethics is the study of the intersection of medical science, law, and public policy with the philosophical inquiry into ethical problems arising from reproductive technology, genetics, and medical research. Discussions about the morality of medical innovations like gene editing, organ transplants, and universal healthcare access necessitate in-depth ethical study grounded in philosophical foundations. Furthermore, the ethical implications of technology, AI, and data privacy are discussed in applied philosophy (Cole, 2020). When discussing digital ethics, it is important to strike a balance between fostering technological progress and protecting individuals' privacy and civil liberties as new problems arise around data collecting, surveillance, and the impact of new technologies on society. Applied philosophy promotes analytical thinking, ethical thought, and an appreciation for the moral

intricacies of our society by focusing on real-world ethical problems. It promotes ethical decision-making in areas that influence the well-being of the global community and the environment, and it urges societies to examine the long-term effects of their activities.

Conclusion

Philosophy's many strands, from ancient lore to contemporary conundrums, come together in a tapestry of human thought that sheds light on life's intricacies. Ethics and moral philosophy serve as our compass, whereas epistemology and metaphysics investigate the foundations of knowing and reality. Existentialism, phenomenology, and Eastern traditions explore profound human experiences, while political and social philosophy creates governing and societal institutions. These philosophies have been developed by people all across the world and throughout history to encourage introspection, direct ethical decision-making, and help us make sense of our place in the cosmos.

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