

Philosophy and Research

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What is Philosophy?

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Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental problems, such as those connected with reality, existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language.

Glossary of Terms

Philosophy: Love of wisdom.

Aesthetics: The study of beauty, ugliness, and maybe even the sublime. The question, What is art?, is an aesthetical one.

Epistemology: The study of belief, truth, knowledge, and rationality.

The Love of Wisdom

- A philosopher is someone who is obsessed with wisdom. He is an advocate of knowledge and truth. He desires to understand what it means to know and what it takes to consistently and constantly apply knowledge rightly.
- Thus, he cherishes wisdom (the right application of knowledge). From this, we can deduce that everyone is and can be a philosopher.
- As long as one is curious to know the what, why, where and how of occurrences around him, one is definitely demonstrating an important virtue in philosophy.
- However, there remains a difference between “learned” philosophers and “lay-men” philosophers. A few scholars belong to the former group, while everyone and anyone with a sound mind belongs to the latter group.

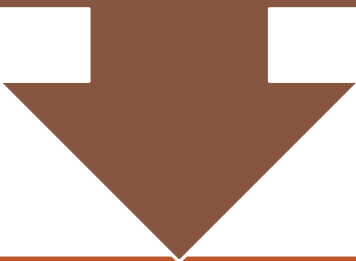
Glossary of Terms

Metaphysics: The study of *being*, or what really exists. All the 'ultimate stuff' questions are metaphysical ones. Meta means *after* or *transcending*.

Wisdom: Practical insight for living.

Glossary of Terms

Ethics: The study of good and evil, right and wrong, rules and virtues, character and vice, success and happiness.



Ethics has lots of sub-areas,
including:

Business
ethics: What
is it okay to
do?

Legal ethics:
Who is it
okay to sue?

Medical
ethics: When
is it okay to
clone?

Techno
ethics: Why
is it okay to
tap a phone?

SOCRATES

"The unexamined life is not worth living."

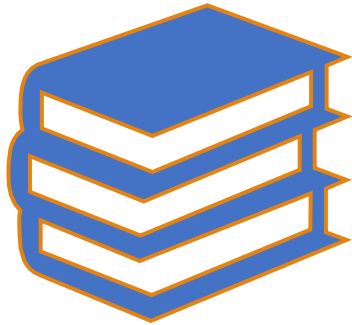
"There is only one good -- knowledge; and only one evil -- ignorance."

Socrates didn't write books; he just liked to ask probing and sometimes humiliating questions, which gave rise to the famous Socratic Method of Teaching

Plato

Plato became an enthusiastic and talented student of Socrates and wrote famous dialogues featuring his teacher verbally grappling with opponents.

Aristotle



Aristotle was Plato's best student. The founder of logical theory, Aristotle believed that the greatest human endeavor is the use of reason in theoretical activity. One of his best known ideas was his conception of "The Golden Mean" — "avoid extremes," the counsel of moderation in all things.

Nature and Scope of Philosophy

- Philosophy talks about universals and general realities.
- It sees things from the widest perspective. It perceives things as a whole.
- It considers the entirety of being as a vast interconnected system. This is why philosophy is regarded as a universal discipline.
- For example; if philosophy were to talk about man, it would do so in connection with those elements that are globally and objectively present in all men.

What philosophy does not talk about?

- Philosophy, due to its nature does not talk about particulars or individual entities.
- It is not concerned with specifics. It would never consider reality in isolation from the whole.
- For example; considering the problem of democracy, philosophy is not concerned with the democracy of a particular country alone (like Myanmar) but the concept of democracy on a global scale.

The asking of fundamental questions

- Philosophy is the practical act and habit of asking fundamental questions about reality.
- These are those basic and objective questions that strike at the very heart of any issue that is concerned with existence as a whole.
- In order to properly fulfil this role, a philosopher has to become annoyingly inquisitive.
- This is not to foster irritation or to prove intellectual power, but mainly to dive deep into salient issues in order to discover what they are really about.

- **Here's a sampling of some of the questions always under consideration in philosophy:**
- Can we really ever know anything?
- What is the good in life?
- Are we actually free, as we seem to be, or are we just robots programmed by nature or God?
- Are we just bodies, or do we have souls?
- Do we survive death?
- Is there a God?
- Does life have meaning?
- What are we like and what should we do? (ethics)
- Is the world such that we can do it? (metaphysics)
- How do we know all this? (epistemology)
- How much faith can we place in this knowledge? (logic)

A Critically rational enquiry

- Philosophy as it were actually began in “wonder”; wonder about the usual and unusual occurrences in the universe.
- These “wonder” sprung out of leisure of the Greeks, whom were the original proponents of philosophy.
- Pioneered by “Thales” the first philosopher, these ancient Greek thinkers wondered about what the ultimate and unifying principle of the universe could be.

A critically rational enquiry

- This dimension influenced the growth of philosophy out of “religion and mythology” which were based on pseudo-beliefs about the gods.
- Hence, there was a need to be rational, sensible and intellectual about sensitive issues on human existence. This led to the birth of philosophy “a rational enquiry that is critical”.

Subjectivity and Objectivity

- Man (subjectivity) and the universe (objectivity) are the dual beings that philosophy is generally concerned with.
- The ontological issue of what man is and how he relates interactively with the universe around him is deeply grounded in the very presupposition of philosophy.
- In relation to this, the concept of “change but basic continuity” is synonymous with the nature of man and the universe as philosophical issues.

Subjectivity and Objectivity

- For example, man is born today and dies tomorrow (change); but, as some men die, some others are born automatically (basic continuity).
- Likewise, we have dry seasons now, and then rainy seasons next (change); but this is a cyclical process which goes on continually unending.
- Thus, philosophy seeks to analyse the relationship between these beings and their usual occurrences.

Dialectical Argumentation

- The art of “dialectics” entails the verbal communication between a subject and an interlocutor, of which there is a systematic pattern of “question and answer” in order to dive deep into issues, and reach for its underlying truth.
- In doing this, there entails some level of argumentation and logical reasoning, which asserts a very unique quality of philosophy.

Philosophy vs Science

- Both philosophy and science are intellectual enterprises, but they differ in their essential nature and methodology. Science is an objective study of the world supposedly existing independently of any thinking mind. Hence nature it is realistic.
- But philosophy does not have any compulsion to be realistic-though there are realists among philosophers. There are idealists too, who declare that experience is ultimately based on mental activity.

Philosophy vs Common Sense

- Common sense thrives on what is given by senses. It does not go deeper into our beliefs and understanding.
- It rests contented with the prima facie- based on the first impression; accepted as correct until proved otherwise or disprove.
- Philosophy is a deep inquiry and asks for the reason for making any statement about any phenomenon.

Core Scope of Philosophy

Epistemology- is the philosophy of knowledge. It is often called theory of knowledge also. We have the experience or concept or phenomenon of knowledge. Philosophy explains that concept. And that is called epistemology. It is not knowledge of any other thing, but discussion on the problem of knowledge itself.

Metaphysics

Metaphysics is the philosophy or theory of the 'real'. Knowledge that is studied in epistemology automatically leads us to the question of the 'known'. Knowledge is different from mere thought or imagination

Ethics

Any consideration that you will bring to bear on your choices will have what is commonly called the ‘moral’ implication. The sense of goodness or propriety or duty is central to all human thought and behaviour. Ethics is the study of human conduct based on moral impulses and wisdom.

Logic

Logic is concerned with proper reasoning. The study of logic features most prominently in the subjects of philosophy, mathematics, and computer science. Logic is generally considered formal when it analyzes and represents the *form* of any valid argument type.

Aesthetics and theology

Aesthetics and theology are also important branches of philosophy. The first is concerned with the inquiry into the nature of beauty and the second investigates the nature of religious experiences.

In fact aesthetics is concerned with the creation and appreciation of all arts. Theology, which constitutes a deep inquiry into religious phenomena, is more commonly called philosophy of religion.

Critical Thinking and its importance

Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally. It includes the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking. Someone with critical thinking skills is able to do the following :

- understand the logical connections between ideas
- identify, construct and evaluate arguments
- detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning
- solve problems systematically
- identify the relevance and importance of ideas
- reflect on the justification of one's own beliefs and values

Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking is evaluating information and evaluating our thoughts in a disciplined way. It is also the act of analyzing, conceptualizing, defining, examining, inferring, listening, reasoning, questioning, and synthesizing. It helps us refine our thought processes so that we can think and assess information more comprehensively. It helps us identify and reject false ideas and ideologies

Moral Philosophy

Moral Philosophy is the rational study of the meaning and justification of moral claims.

A moral claim evaluates the rightness or wrongness of an action or a person's character.

For example, "Lying is wrong" claims the act of lying is wrong, while "One shouldn't be lazy" claims a character trait (i.e., laziness) is wrong. Moral philosophy is usually divided into three distinct subject areas: metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics.

Metaethics

Metaethics examines the nature of moral claims and arguments. This partly involves attempting to determine if moral claims have clear essential meanings (i.e., they avoid vagueness and ambiguity). But it also attempts to answer questions such as: Are moral claims expressions of individual emotions? Are moral claims social inventions? Are moral claims divine commands? Can one justify moral claims? How does one justify them?

Normative Ethics

Normative ethics examines moral standards that attempt to define right and wrong conduct. Historically, this has involved examining good and bad habits, duties, or an action's consequences. In addition, historically, normative ethics has focused on the prospect of a single moral standard defining right and wrong conduct; but it has become more common for philosophers to propose a moral pluralism with multiple moral standards.

Applied Ethics

Applied ethics examines specific moral issues. For example, one is doing applied ethics when one addresses the morality of abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, environmental concerns, or homosexuality. By using the conceptual tools of metaethics and normative ethics, discussions in applied ethics try to resolve these issues.

MORAL JUDGEMENT

The moral judgement is the judgement which deals with the moral value or quality of an action. It is a judgement of value and it evaluates the rightness or wrongness of our actions.

When we analyse a moral judgement then we find that it contains a) a subject which will judge, b) an object whose action will be judged, c) a standard in conformity to which the action of the subject will be judged and d) a power of judging the action as required.

Moral judgment is the judgment of moral quality of voluntary habitual actions.

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Thank You