# The History of Philosophy: An Exploration of the Evolution of Our Views on the Human Condition

### **Introduction and Exploratory Questions**

As society progressed, did our views change? Did our priorities and struggles? What themes persisted?

### **Exploratory Data Analysis**

(please refer to the EDA file under the lib folder for code that produced some of the findings below)

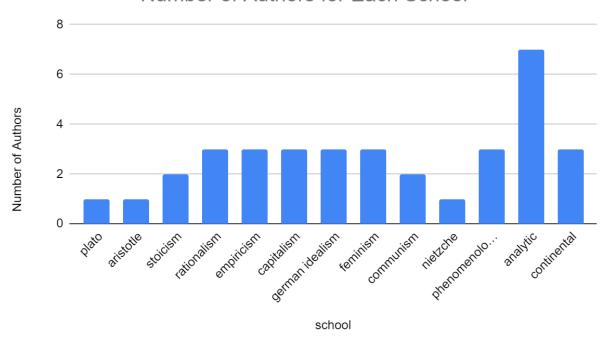
Basic Information About the Schools

The schools' timelines are as follows:

plato -350 - 350 aristotle -320 - 320 125 - 170 stoicism rationalism 1637 - 1710 empiricism 1689 - 1779 1776 - 1936 capitalism german\_idealism 1781 - 1820 feminism 1792 - 1981 1848 - 1883 communism nietzsche 1886 - 1888 phenomenology 1907 - 1950 analytic 1910 - 1985 continental 1961 - 1972

There are 13 main schools of thought in this dataset - each of them had different numbers of contributors. What can the increasing number of contributors to each school tell us about how we viewed the human condition? (The code for this can be found in the EDA file under lib).

### Number of Authors for Each School



We see a shift of pluralism of scholars in each school over time, very likely due to a more democratic barrier of entry into what it means to be a philosopher. In Ancient Greece, people who could 'philosophize' were restricted to the most noble and upper echelon castes of society. The common classes were relegated to doing all of their laborious work for them; farming, cooking, building, etc. and very likely did not have time to immortalize their thoughts unlike the privileged Plato and Aristotle who were part of the Greek nobility. Not only that - but literacy was a skill that was also reserved for nobility. As time went on as we know, globally, literacy has become an expectation of the average person due to education being a necessary skill to survive as our world changed. With that, it has given the means for people to immortalize their thoughts. Additionally, as education became more accessible, being able to broadcast ones thoughts did too as academic institutions offered a platform for publishing – all consequenting in a temporal trend of more philosophical contributors for each school.

What are the most common phrases used in each school? What does that tell us about the progression of philosophy as it pertains to society's?

Let's take a look at the most common phrases used in each school by observing their corresponding word clouds. (The code for this can be found in the EDA file under lib).

### **Data Cleaning Methodology**

Please note that prior to creating the word clouds, I removed stopwords from NLTK's default vocabulary as well as iterated through each school's most common words and phrases in order to remove philosophy-specific language that would not be especially informative for the use

case of this project that I wanted to achieve. You can find this file under 'data preprocessing' under the lib folder of this project.

Dates of School	School Name	Word Cloud	School Philosophy
-350 - 350	Plato	others fact policy of the poli	Plato was concerned with virtue-based ethics, and how one should conduct their life. He was heavily influenced by Socrates.
-320 - 320	Aristotle	people movement of the principle change better of the principl	Aristotle was concerned with the composition of the world as well as virtue based ethics, and what does it mean to be excellent.
125 - 170	Stoicism	make right ardeath for house of the search o	Stoicism concerns itself with how virtuous ethics, and having virtue be the main source for flourishment.

**Potential trend of this era:** self-actualization, virtue-based ethics, what it means to live a good life. All of the word clouds above have these words in common: man, kind, good, desire/pleasure, nature, which fits in what we know to be true about these schools' philosophies.

1689 - 1779	Empiricism	The second of th	Empiricism argues that natural truths need to be experienced to be attained.
Potential trend of this era: based on words that are common in the word clouds (e.g. man, mind, object, idea) as well as what we know to be true of these schools; the 17th and 18th centuries were concerned with what constitutes reality. It is also interesting that rationalism and empiricism are almost counter arguments of each other; with the former arguing that reality is an internal assertion, and the latter is an external.			
1776 - 1936	Capitalism	make effect state land of the price of the p	Capitalism is an economic system in which individuals control a country's trade and industry.
1781 - 1820	German idealism	latter end rate law ground to the control of the co	German idealism teaches that reality is largely a consequence of our experience of it.
1792 - 1981	Feminism	Time make husband  Town hord nature traper section of the representation of the represen	Feminism examines the oppression of women, and how it persists in other schools of philosophy.

1848 - 1883	Communism	Capitalist surplus value society part whole become labour power labour	Communism is the economic structure in which the central power is responsible for trade and industry.
1886 - 1888	Nietzche	speak great that world love morality made morality morality made morality morality made morality morality made morality made morality	Nietzche was concerned mostly with self actualizing to reach their highest form without reliance on God or transcendental forces.
Potential trend of this era: We see a trend with capitalism, communism and feminism			

**Potential trend of this era:** We see a trend with capitalism, communism and feminism examining the individual in the framework of the power structures they live in. Interestingly enough as we see those schools propose frameworks for individual power, German idealism and Nietzche also assert that an individual's ability to experience reality and self actualize is their own autonomous responsibility.

1907 - 1950	Phenomenology	daseinlife the street of the s	Studies structures of experience and consciousness
1910 - 1985	Analytic	proposition Sentence language  sentence language  sentence language  form 2  form 2  given raise  form 2  given raise  form 2	Analytic school concerns itself with semantics, logic, language in order to gain knowledge

1961 - 1972	Continental	1anguage
		within the world relation reason with longer of sign L
		difference tarion term nothing whose appeared with the difference tarion term nothing whose appeared the difference tarion term nothing whose appe
		question place already knowledge of the concept desire y still conce

A school that pertained to non-analytic philosophy in Europe during this time period.

**Potential trends:** In the 20th century, we see more schools having general philosophies with nothing directly in common.

We can see two divergent trends; schools that are concerned with the individual and their relation to the world around them, and schools that are concerned with what constitutes reality. The former can be observed through the Greek schools, and the 18th and 19th century schools. For example, based on the word clouds and what we can look up about each of the schools' philosophies, we can observe how philosophy became more sophisticated over time. Up until 150 A.D., philosophy was concerned with how people should conduct themselves in order to lead a fulfilling life. The 18th and 19th century was more aware of the power structures people lived in, and philosophy was more encouraging of people's autonomy not just within them but also to propose power frameworks that would enable them further. However, the theme of self-actualization and autonomy still seems to be at the core of each of the schools, as with the Greeks' philosophies. Conversely, the 17th and 18th century schools were concerned with what reality meant and how to best attain natural truths, as did the 19th century schools. In conclusion, we can group philosophy into two groups; the "internal examination" group which concerns itself with how an individual can lead and contribute a fulfilling life, and "external examination" group which concerns itself with what universal truths and appropriate methodologies therein.

Indirectly, it's also interesting to see as philosophy expanded to include more emphasis on the autonomy and power of the individual, it is interesting to observe the increasing number of contributors to the schools.

#### **LDA Topic Modelling**

Please refer to the LDA file under the lib folder for the code that produced the findings that are expanded in this section.

What are the main topics in philosophy? Where do each of the schools lie within those topics?

In order to confirm some of the findings above, I implemented an LDA model to observe what the 5 most relevant themes of the history of philosophy corpus are, which is outlined in the table below.

Theme	Most common words according to LDA model
Relation to others	Life, love, labour, good, mother, great, self, husband, people, child
Macroscopic questions	World, whole, part, god, real, class, quantity, hand, existence, nature
Political power	Price, wages, produce, working, trade, right, political, know, value, moral
Social power	Work, money, value, society, home, time, interest, social, rate, marriage
Miscellaneous	Capital, movement, sometimes, alone, means, employment, eyes, time, situation, idea

This does somewhat align with our observations in the EDA section. Relation to others can contain questions about ethics and virtues - common themes of the "internal examination" mentioned above. Macroscopic questions entail considerations of the larger world around the individual; religious and existentialist inquiry are included here. Political power examines the power structures an individual exists in. Social power examines the role that society plays in an individual's life. Miscellaneous includes anything that perhaps isn't captured already.

This leads us to consider them as perhaps the five most important themes of philosophy. I then looked into where each of the schools fall within the five topics:

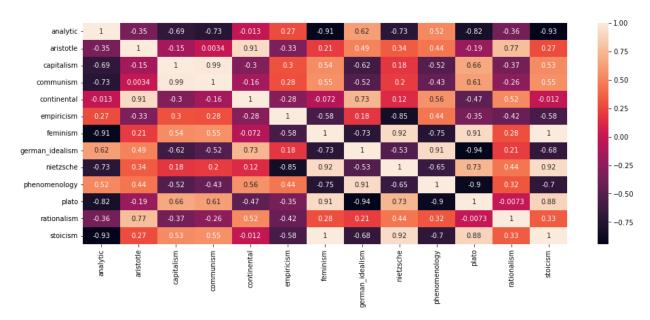
School	Most common two topics
Analytic	miscellaneous (26%), social power (23%)
Aristotle	Macroscopic questions (26%), relation to others (22%),
Capitalism	Social power (30%), relation to others (23%)
Communism	Social power (27%), relation to others (22%)
Continental	evenly distributed between all topics
Empiricism	evenly distributed between all topics
Feminism	relation to others (31%), social power (21%)

German idealism	macroscopic questions (25%), miscellaneous (24%)
Nietzche	relation to others (33%), miscellaneous topics (18%)
Phenomenology	macroscopic questions (28%), miscellaneous topics (22%)
Plato	macroscopic questions (27%), social power (22%)
Rationalism	macroscopic questions (25%), relation to others (23%)
Stoicism	relation to others (36%), social power (21%)

The output above is not unpromising; but I was hoping I would see political power show as a main topic for capitalism, communism and feminism at the very least, which means there is some opportunity for finetuning the LDA model. Nevertheless, if we were to sort the schools by my "internal" and "external" examination postulation mentioned previously, we can see the Greek and 18-19th century schools which I determined to be "internal" examination schools are mainly concerned with relation to others and social power – which I don't disagree with. The "external" schools (e..g rationalism, empiricism, continental, phenomenology, analytic) were mostly macroscopic questions and miscellaneous, which I'm also not unaligned with.

## Which schools are similar to each other? Which ones are consistently similar to all schools - does that tell us anything persistent about the human condition?

I used a correlation matrix to evaluate each of the school's corresponding LDA output vectors in order to see what they have most in common.



It is interesting to see that the "internal" examination schools are mostly more correlated with each other than the "external" examination schools and vice versa, although with many exceptions.

### Conclusions

We can see that there are two main branches of philosophy: schools that are concerned with the fulfillment of the individual, and schools that are concerned with methodologies for finding universal truths. It is interesting to see that as time went on, the latter schools became more dominant, and the "internal" schools over time were concerned with how to contribute to the world and power structures around them instead of focusing on the needs of the individual. Regardless, as time goes on the more abstract the ideas of the schools entailed.