Scientific and Social Research, 2024, Volume 6, Issue 3
https://ojs.bbwpublisher.com/index.php/SSR

Generative Thinking - The Way of Thinking in Modern Philosophy

Yixuan Gao*

Xinjiang Normal University, Urumqi 830054, China

***Corresponding author:** Yixuan Gao, 596707296@qq.com

Abstract: Generative thinking is different from traditional analytical thinking, as it emphasizes the importance of innovation and creativity. Generative thinking regards knowledge and understanding as not only the ways to discover or explain existing things but also to shape new possibilities through creative processes. In this mode of thinking, students explore the unknown, challenge traditional boundaries and assumptions, and use their imagination to generate new theories, viewpoints, and practical methods. At the same time, the application of generative thinking in modern philosophy spans many fields such as ethics, epistemology, aesthetics, and political philosophy, encouraging individuals and collectives to transcend the status quo, exploring new knowledge fields, and promoting the progress of philosophical thinking.

Keywords: Generative thinking; Modern philosophy; Mode of thinking; Knowledge; Existence

Online publication: March 29, 2024

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of science and technology and the acceleration of globalization, students are facing increasingly complicated problems and challenges. In this context, the traditional way of thinking is not suitable for solving these new challenges, so new methods need to be explored. Generative thinking is an innovative, open, and dynamic way of thinking that has been gaining traction among students. This paper will discuss the position of generative thinking in modern philosophy from the definition, application, and relationship with other philosophical thinking modes.

2. Definition of generative thinking

Generative thinking is a proactive and creative way of thinking that encourages students to think outside of the traditional framework and explore new ideas and solutions through innovation, imagination, and association. This way of thinking emphasizes openness, dynamics, and creativity by encouraging students to accept new things, be brave in trying, and not be afraid of failure. It pays attention to diversity and flexibility so that students can look at problems from different angles and find more solution possibilities. Generative thinking

not only focuses on existing knowledge but also encourages students to explore unknown fields to find new inspiration and creativity. By cultivating generative thinking, students can cope better with complex problems through innovation to further the development progress of individuals and society [1].

3. Relationship between generative thinking and other philosophical thinking modes

As an innovative and forward-looking way of thinking, generative thinking occupies a unique and important position in the field of contemporary philosophy. Compared with traditional philosophical thinking modes such as essentialism, positivism, and phenomenology, generative thinking shows more flexible and open characteristics, which brings new perspectives and thinking methods to philosophical research. Essentialism, as a philosophical way of thinking that pursues a deep understanding of things, emphasizes the essential attributes and internal laws of things. However, with the development of time and the progress of science, students gradually realize that the essence of things is not static, but is in constant change and development. In this context, generative thinking came into being. Students should think and understand things from a new angle and level to put forward new viewpoints. By breaking through the limitations of traditional thinking, the essence and laws of things can be revealed to promote the innovation and development of philosophy. The connection with positivism is that it pays attention to empirical facts and scientific methods, and emphasizes the objectivity and reliability of knowledge. However, positivism often ignores people's subjective initiative and creativity. Generative thinking emphasizes the importance of subjective initiative, encourages students to explore unknown areas, and puts forward new assumptions and theories. This open way of thinking is helpful to continuously expand the knowledge boundary and promote the progress and development of science. At the same time, generative thinking is also closely related to phenomenology. Phenomenology pays attention to the phenomenon and conscious experience of things and emphasizes the importance of direct experience and subjective perception. Generative thinking, on the other hand, focuses on exploring the intrinsic meaning and value of things from subjective experience. Hence, there is a close relationship and interaction between generative thinking and the mentioned philosophical thinking modes, which complement and promote each other and form a comprehensive philosophical system together. In future research, the integration and innovation of generative thinking and other philosophical thinking modes should be further explored to promote the continuous development and progress of philosophical thinking.

4. Value and influence of generative thinking

Generative thinking is an innovative way of thinking, which emphasizes thinking and understanding problems from a new angle and level, and puts forward new viewpoints and theories. Generative thinking helps break through the limitations of traditional thinking and promotes the innovation and development of knowledge. The traditional way of thinking is often restricted by historical, cultural, social, and other factors, that are difficult to adapt to the needs of the rapidly changing times. Generative thinking encourages students to dare to challenge traditional ideas and put forward new assumptions and theories, thus promoting the innovation and development of knowledge. At the same time, generative thinking helps to enhance individual creativity and innovation ability which are indispensable qualities in modern society. In addition, generative thinking can stimulate an individual's imagination and creativity to cultivate their innovative consciousness and practical ability, thus improving their creativity and innovative ability. Generative thinking also helps to promote social progress and development that need constant innovation and change. Generative thinking promotes social change and

progress by putting forward new ideas and viewpoints, thus promoting social progress and development. Hence, generative thinking has unique value and influence, which not only helps to break through the limitations of traditional thinking and promote the innovation and development of knowledge but also enhances individual creativity and innovation ability in social progress and development [2].

5. Application of generative thinking in modern philosophy

5.1. Application in epistemology

The application of generative thinking in epistemology highlights the deep pursuit of knowledge innovation and development. It challenges the inherent limitations of traditional epistemology in the existing knowledge system and advocates the continuous extension of knowledge boundaries through innovative, imaginative, and associative thinking strategies. This thinking paradigm encourages students to cross the barriers of traditional cognition and explore the unknown bravely to build a more comprehensive and in-depth world outlook. Kant's transcendental comprehensive judgment theory and Hegel's great attention to free thinking are both typical examples of biological thinking in epistemological practice. Through the application of innovative thinking, these outstanding philosophers not only promoted innovation in the field of philosophy itself but also had a far-reaching impact on the whole knowledge system, fully demonstrating the important role of generative thinking in expanding human cognitive territory and deepening world understanding.

For example, in Thomas Kuhn's groundbreaking work, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, he deeply reflected and reinterpreted the essence of scientific development. The concepts of paradigm and paradigm shift put forward by Kuhn provide a new theoretical framework for students to understand the dynamic process of scientific progress. In Kuhn's view, science is not a simple process of knowledge accumulation, but a complex process of alternating between normal science and scientific revolution. In the normal science stage, scientists conduct research within the established paradigm to constantly accumulate and improve the knowledge system through observation, experiment, and reasoning. Scientific activities at this stage are orderly and gradual, and the goal of scientists is to solve relatively easy problems under the guidance of existing paradigms. However, with the deepening of research and the advancement of scientific practice, the existing paradigm may encounter unexplained anomalies. At this time, the scientific community began to doubt the existing paradigm and seek new theories to replace the old paradigm. This process is referred to as a scientific revolution. The scientific revolution is a discontinuous and leaping progress, which involves the fundamental change and reconstruction of the existing knowledge system. In Kuhn's theory, the role of generative thinking is reflected in scientists' questioning of existing knowledge. Generative thinking is an innovative way of thinking, which encourages scientists to think outside the traditional thinking framework and put forward new theoretical viewpoints. It is through the promotion of generative thinking that scientists can discover new phenomena, ask new questions, and finally actualize the transformation of scientific paradigms. Kuhn's theory itself also embodies the application of generative thinking in epistemology. He challenged the traditional concept of linear progress and put forward a nonlinear model of scientific development. This model emphasizes the historical and situational nature of scientific knowledge and reveals the complexity of scientific progress. Kuhn's theory provides a new perspective for students to understand the development of science and also provides important enlightenment for students to think about how to deal with scientific and knowledge change. Kuhn's concepts of paradigm and paradigm shift provide a new theoretical framework for students to understand scientific development. In this framework, the role of generative thinking is reflected in scientists' questioning of existing knowledge. By challenging the traditional thinking framework and putting forward new theories, scientists can promote the progress of science. At the same time, Kuhn's theory itself embodies the application of generative thinking

in epistemology, which provides a new perspective and train of thought for students to understand scientific development [3].

5.2. Application in ethics

Generative thinking plays a vital role in the field of ethics. Unlike traditional ethics which mainly focuses on established moral concepts, generative thinking is committed to promoting the continuous innovation and development of moral concepts. By using thinking strategies such as innovation, imagination, and association, generative thinking has constantly spawned new moral concepts and solutions, thus enriching and expanding the theoretical and practical boundaries of moral philosophy. Nietzsche put forward the concept of Superman and the theory of will to power that criticize traditional moral concepts, which injected new vitality into modern Western philosophy. Sartre emphasized the core position of freedom and responsibility and believed that individuals can realize their true self-worth through free choice and action. The views of these thinkers all reflect the remarkable contribution of generative thinking in promoting the innovation of moral concepts. Generative thinking plays an irreplaceable role in ethics, as it constantly challenges and transcends traditional moral concepts, providing a steady stream of motivation for the moral progress of human society.

For example, the concept of land ethics put forward by Aldo Leopold in A Sand County Almanac is a profound reflection and challenge to traditional anthropocentrism. He advocated that human beings should respect nature, maintain ecological balance, and realize the harmonious symbiosis between man and nature. This concept is not only a call for the rational utilization of natural resources, but also a fundamental change in the way of human existence. Leopold's land ethics emphasizes the responsibility and obligation of human beings by reminding students not to ignore the destruction and pollution of nature while pursuing economic interests. Similarly, Peter Singer criticized the limitations of traditional ethics in Animal Liberation. He believed that animals are also a community of life on the earth and have the right to feel pain and happiness. Singer's view broke the moral boundary between human beings and animals and extended moral concern to non-human life. He advocates respect for animals' right to life, opposes cruelty to animals, and calls on students to adopt a more humane and environmentally friendly lifestyle. The thoughts and practices of these philosophers all reflect the application and value of generative thinking in ethics. Students constantly produce new moral concepts and solutions by subverting and innovating traditional concepts, which promotes the development and progress of environmental ethics. These new moral concepts and solutions not only help to solve the current environmental problems but also provide new ideas and directions for future moral development. Generally speaking, the application and value of generative thinking in ethics are reflected in the challenge and innovation of traditional ideas. It encourages students to look at the world from an open, inclusive, and pluralistic perspective, pay attention to the harmonious symbiotic relationship between man with animals and nature, and promote the continuous updating and improvement of moral concepts. This way of thinking not only helps to solve the current environmental problems but also provides important enlightenment for the future development of mankind.

5.3. Application in aesthetics

The application of generative thinking in the field of aesthetics is mainly reflected in promoting the innovation and development of artistic creation. Different from traditional aesthetics, which focuses on the study of existing art forms and styles, generative thinking encourages artists to constantly explore and create new art forms and styles through innovation, imagination, and association. This way of thinking enables artists to break through the traditional shackles and present their works of art with a brand-new perspective and technique,

thus promoting the overall progress of artistic creation. For example, Picasso created cubism, a new chapter in modern art through his unique artistic language and expression. Moreover, Dali pushed surrealism to a new peak through fantastic pictures and rich imagination. The successful practice of these artists fully proves the important value of generative thinking in aesthetics. By cultivating and applying generative thinking, artists can constantly open up the boundaries of art and make greater contributions to the prosperity of human culture.

An example is Andy Warhol who is a representative of the American Pop Art Movement in the 20th century. His artistic achievement lies in skillfully integrating elements of student culture and consumer society into artistic creation, thus breaking the inherent boundaries between traditional art and commerce, elegance and vulgarity. Warhol's works are not only a record of daily life, but also a profound analysis and criticism of contemporary social and cultural phenomena. In the process of creation, Warhol fully demonstrated the unique charm of generative thinking. He is good at drawing inspiration from daily life and skillfully integrating elements such as advertisements, cartoons, and celebrity portraits into artistic creation. What is more striking is that Warhol used industrial production methods such as screen printing to copy his works in large quantities. This method not only subverts the originality and unique traditional concept of artistic works but also creates a brand-new artistic expression through repetition. For example, in Warhol's masterpiece series of Campbell's Soup Cans, where he transformed Campbell's Soup cans, an ordinary food package, into a work of art to discuss the theme of consumer culture and commodity worship through repeated patterns and bright colors. This creation is not only a reproduction of commodities but also a profound reflection and criticism of social and cultural phenomena at that time. Through this series of works, Warhol reveals the blind pursuit and worship of commodities by students in the consumer society and the erosion of students' spirituality by commercialization. Warhol's artistic practice proves the important role of generative thinking in aesthetics. Through constant experimental exploration, he broke the conventional framework of art and promoted the innovation of art form and content. His works have distinctive characteristics of that period and profound social significance, which have had a far-reaching impact on the artistic creation of later generations [4]. Warhol's case shows that generative thinking can stimulate artists' creativity, help students achieve self-transcendence in artistic creation, and also promote the progress and development of the art field as a whole.

6. Conclusion

In summary, generative thinking, as an innovative, open, and dynamic way of thinking, plays an increasingly important role in modern philosophy. It not only promotes the innovation and development of knowledge but also promotes the innovation and development of moral concepts and artistic creation. Moreover, generative thinking is closely associated with other philosophical thinking modes. Therefore, students should further study and discuss the connotation of generative thinking and its possible influence and significance in future philosophical research.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

[1] Yu XL, Liu TY, 2022, Enlightenment of Generative Thinking on the Teaching Effect of Ideological and Political Theory Courses. Journal of China Three Gorges University (Humanities and Social Sciences), 44(03): 39–43.

[2] Lu WX, Shen L, 2020, The Structure and Breakthrough of Shared Factory Mode of Mixed Ownership in Higher Vocational Education - the Generative Thinking of Taking Learning as the Body and Using Production and Research. University Education Science, 2020(06): 111–117 + 124.

[3] Chen MQ, Zou Y, 2019, From Essentialism to Generative Thinking: The Shackles and Transcendence of Classroom Questioning. Educational Theory and Practice, 39(34): 57–60.

[4] Han QX, 2019, On the Generative Nature of Marxist Philosophy. Academic Circles, 2019(02): 5–13 + 233.