

I have said sometimes that, just as transcendental metaphysics is the "culmination" of the first or "analytic" phase of philosophy, so transcendental ethics is the "foundation" for its second or "existential" phase. At other times, I've relied more on a different metaphor and said that, just as I want to hold that transcendental metaphysics is rightly understood as the "core or central" task of philosophy in its "analytic" aspect, so I also want to hold that transcendental ethics is rightly understood as "core or central" to the task of philosophy in its other "existential" aspect.

Both metaphors seem apt to me. Philosophy can answer the existential question by which it is oriented only by first asking and answering the intellectual question of analysis: analysis both of all the different kinds or contexts of meaning and of their necessary presuppositions; and analysis of being as such and of being that understands, and of their necessary presuppositions as disclosed through the existential aspect or vertical dimension of our experience. For this reason, transcendental metaphysics may well be thought of as the culmination of philosophy in its analytic phase, even as the transcendental ethics determined by the being that transcendental metaphysics analyzes may well be said to provide the foundation for philosophy in its existential phase. At the same time, the other metaphor of the core or center relative to the periphery conveys the important insight that transcendental metaphysics and transcendental ethics both have to do, in their different ways, with what is core or central, as distinct from everything peripheral.

10 September 2005; rev. 21 June 2008; 17 October 2009