

What is philosophy?

Philosophy is:

. . . the comprehensive critical reflection constituted by asking about human existence simply as such.

. . . a critically reflective self-understanding that is comprehensive in scope and generally secular rather than specifically religious in constitution. As such, it includes, although it is not exhausted by, both a metaphysics and an ethics, i.e., both a theory of ultimate reality in its structure in itself and a theory of how we ought to act and what we ought to do given the structure of ultimate reality and its meaning for us.

. . . the completely general and fundamental form of critical reflection that, being oriented by the existential question about the meaning of ultimate reality for us, includes the theoretical questions about the meaning and the validity of any and all answers to this question as well as all theoretical questions about the constitution of any and all forms of life-praxis and culture, primary or secondary, including itself. Theoretical questions about the constitution of a form of life-praxis and culture ask: (1) what it means to do the thing in question; and (2) how it ought to be done. (Alternatively, one could say that they ask about the meaning of a form of life-praxis and culture, not in the sense of the "surface meaning" of its particular expressions, but in the sense of its "deep structure," or its "depth grammar," so as thereby to explicate its "tacit presuppositions" and to map its "logical frontiers.")

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