

Philosophy is commonly reckoned to belong to "the humanities." Why?

The answer is obvious if philosophy, as I have argued, is "critical appropriation—i.e., critical interpretation and critical validation—of self-understanding and life-praxis, including, although in no way exhausted by, our self-understanding and life-praxis simply as human beings in the ultimate setting of our lives" (Notebooks, 22 November 2008).

But doesn't philosophy include metaphysics as well as ethics, and isn't metaphysics, at least, properly reckoned to be a science, instead of one of the humanities?

Yes, philosophy does include metaphysics as well as ethics, because it includes, although it is not exhausted by, critical appropriation of our self-understanding and life-praxis simply as human beings. And, yes, metaphysics, at least, is rightly reckoned to be a science, insofar as it is, in its own way, like all the special sciences, properly so-called, scient or intellectual in its concern with the structure of reality in itself, rather than, like philosophy, sapient or existential in its concern with the meaning of reality for us. But there is also the fundamental difference that metaphysics is the sole *ontological*, or properly conceptual, science of reality as such, whereas the special sciences are all rightly said to be, in their different ways, *ontic*, or factual, sciences. Thus, whereas the special sciences are each dependent, in its way, on some special human experiences that an individual person may or may not actually have, metaphysics, as well as ethics, depends solely on the common experience that we all have simply as and because we are human beings, whatever the extent to which it becomes explicit, and so the object, possibly, of critical reflection or appropriation.

It seems only fitting, therefore, that philosophy, including metaphysics and ethics, should be reckoned to belong to the humanities.

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