

I have said elsewhere that philosophy, although *oriented* by the vital, existential question, is *constituted* by "appropriate forms of the theoretical questions of meaning and truth." But just what forms of these theoretical questions *are* appropriate to philosophy?

So far as the question of meaning is concerned, the form that is particularly appropriate to philosophy is the form that asks about the "deep," and not merely the "surface," meaning of things, i.e., about the *kind(s)* of meaning in question and about its(their) necessary presuppositions or conditions of possibility. (Of course, philosophy can ask *this* form of the question of meaning only by also asking about "surface" meaning—e.g., the surface meaning of the words, sentences, and paragraphs whose *kind[s]* of meaning it is concerned to analyze.) If this involves, as it does, asking about the kind(s) of meaning expressed by any and all "*Sprachspielen/Lebensformen*,"^{as Wittgenstein speaks of them,} or what Whitehead calls "the directed activities of mankind," it also involves asking about the strictly necessary presuppositions or conditions of possibility of any meaning whatever, which are the proper subject matter of metaphysics and ethics, with their respective concerns for the structure of ultimate reality in itself and for how we are to act and what we are to do given the meaning of ultimate reality for us as human beings.

As for the form of the question of truth appropriate to philosophy, it is solely *the question of existential truth*—of truth about human existence, and thus of both metaphysical truth about the structure of ultimate reality in itself and moral or ethical truth about how we are authorized to act and what we are authorized to do by the meaning of ultimate reality for us. Philosophy, in other words, neither asks nor answers *the question of empirical truth*, and thus of scientific truth or empirical-historical truth; nor does it ask or answer any other form of the question of truth about the merely factual or contingent things that are the proper subjects of nonphilosophical fields or disciplines.

This does not mean, naturally, that philosophy may not quite properly integrate empirical or factual truths into its account of existential truth, provided

only that other appropriate fields or disciplines have first critically validated their truth.

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