

If philosophy can be appropriately defined as "the attempt to achieve forms of valuation, or principles of valuing, that are as little as possible *arbitrary, self-serving*, individually or collectively, and as little *merely regional or provincial*" (DL: 26 f.), then, clearly, philosophy must have a *moral* or ethical aspect just as surely as it has a *metaphysical* aspect. But, then, it would seem rather too simple, or one-sided, to say that "metaphysical truth . . . is the core of philosophic truth" (362). Evidently "the core of philosophic truth" comprises moral or ethical truth as well as metaphysical truth.

Why, then, the priority (or unique centrality) assigned to the metaphysical, and thus to metaphysics? The answer, it would seem, is that philosophy, being critical reflection on existence as such, and thus on all answers to the existential question, implicit as well as explicit, itself rests on the basic supposition that authentic self-understanding can only be appropriate or authorized self-understanding and therefore has to be realistic, i.e., self-understanding that agrees with ultimate reality in its structure in itself, rather than disagrees with it. In this sense, or to this extent, the moral or ethical aspect of philosophy depends on, or derives from, its metaphysical aspect. Hence the priority (or unique centrality) of metaphysics.

This assumes, of course, that to talk about "forms of valuation, or principles of valuing" is only verbally different from talking about "self-understanding."

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