

To say, as Melanchthon does, that "in philosophy we seek the things which are certain and distinguish them from the things which are uncertain," may be to say, simply, that in philosophy we seek to validate the claims to validity that are made or implied by our self-understanding and life-praxis.

This would imply, of course, that philosophy is, or includes, all forms of critical reflection, insofar, at least, as they are properly "secular." And so broad an understanding of the scope of philosophy in effect rescinds the differentiation of the special sciences from it by which our historical situation has come to be characterized. But this scarcely leaves room for a significant objection, allowing that understanding ourselves and leading our lives legitimates an integral secular wisdom whereby the results of critical reflection in the several special sciences are integrated into a reflective self-understanding and life-praxis, which it is the business of philosophy, in distinction from the special sciences, to formulate.

But isn't "the quest for certainty" that Melanchthon takes to be the task of philosophy more than simply critically validating the claims to validity made or implied by our self-understanding and life-praxis? Possibly so. But there can be a critical, nondogmatic, as well as an uncritical, dogmatic, understanding of what it means to seek certainty; and it is arguable that a properly critical, nondogmatic understanding is only verbally distinguishable from critically validating claims to validity in the only relevant sense of the words.

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