

Foundational for philosophy's work in its second, existential phase are the transcendental ethics and also the transcendental metaphysics that are central to its work in its first, analytic phase.

Necessarily presupposed by any meaning and any kind of meaning as well as the presuppositions thereby implied are certain necessary conditions of possibility: of the possibility of human existence as the being that understands, and that is therefore capable of expressing all kinds of meaning as well as of understanding them; and of the possibility of any being whatever as what any meaning or any kind of meaning must somehow be about—directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly. Necessarily implied, then, by the transcendental metaphysics analyzing and explicating these necessary conditions of possibility is a transcendental ethics consisting of completely general first principles as to how any existent, in the sense of any being endowed, as human beings are, with understanding and moral freedom, is to act and what she, he, or it is to do.

On the foundation of this transcendental ethics and metaphysics, philosophy's work in its second, existential phase consists in critically appropriating any and all answers to the existential question, implicit as well as explicit. In this indirect way, at the secondary level of critical reflection and proper theory, philosophy may be said to answer the existential question by which it is and ever remains oriented—even if only remotely, as when it pursues the intellectual question that proximately orients its work in its first, analytic phase.

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