

INTRODUCTION

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This first issue on metaphilosophy is mainly concerned with the classical problem of the relation between science and metaphysics. Recently a re-examination and a re-evaluation of the ontological significance of scientific theories has taken place, especially regarding metaphysical realism. It seems that scientific research presupposes a metaphysical framework and that scientific results are fully intelligible only if theories are, ultimately, interpreted as descriptions of the "nature" of reality as such. Ontological preconditions of scientific research and ontological implications of scientific results are therefore the main subjects of this first issue on metaphilosophy.

It is a significant fact that almost all articles of this volume tend to arrive at the same general conclusion, namely, that scientific and metaphysical theories are essentially on the same — ontological — level, and that their difference is mainly a question of degree of generality. After the introductory survey of the domain by Joseph Agassi, Robert Meyers examines the classical positions of the logical positivists. He concludes that their fundamental presupposition that truth and reality are circumscribed by human capacities must be abandoned and that their, as he calls it, tender-minded ontological pre-copernicianism might be replaced by a revised verificationism implying the continuity of science and metaphysics. John Kekes re-examines Moore's theory of common sense as the foundation of science, and argues that any position — the logical positivist's as well as the realist's — presupposes the common sense framework, but that this fact cannot justify common sense : primacy does not guarantee rationality. In Stephen Noren's article this primacy is used to deny the legitimacy of scientific realism : according to him there exists an unbridgeable conflict between science and common sense, so that one cannot be a metaphysical realist regarding both at once. Moreover, the primacy of common sense is a good reason to prefer some form of common sense ontology. In the last three articles,

however, respectively by Rold Gruner, Rom Harré and Roy Bhaskar, the scientific realist's position is resolutely and consistently argued for. As Rom Harré contends, scientific explanation always leads into realms beyond all possible experience where objects are known only by their manifestation in the reaction of things of which we have experience. Within this perspective, the ontological primacy of ontology can, in my opinion, be combined with the epistemological primacy of some form of common sense. In my own article, to appear in the second issue on metaphilosophy, I shall revert to this position, in the framework of a conflictological and actionistic ontology.

In short, this first issue on metaphilosophy reveals the existence of a tendency to seek an adequate solution for the problem of the interpretation of science and metaphysics in some form of ontological realism. In this way, after many years of unprofitable estrangement, science and philosophy seem to be growing together again.