ARE POSITIVISTS METAPHYSICIANS?[1]

MANY verbal battles have been waged in the past few decades over the possibility and/or necessity of metaphysics in an empiricist philosophy. Positivistic empiricists have argued that from an empirical standpoint metaphysics is illegitimate—in fact, meaningless; and their critics, empiricist and otherwise, have countered not only with defenses of the metaphysics in which they were themselves engaged but also with *tu quoque*'s in which they have tried to convict the positivists themselves of metaphysical doings and, more generally, to argue that some metaphysics or other is inescapable for any philosophy, whatever its standpoint. In recent years there has been a great deal of clarification of the doctrine which has been central in this conflict, the verifiability theory of meaning. But unfortunately this clarification has not thus far been extended to the issue with which we are here concerned. One factor responsible for the fog surrounding these disputes is the failure of all concerned to formulate a conception of metaphysics which would reflect the actual practice of philosophers ordinarily called metaphysicians and would make the distinctions required for doing this job. We are all too liable to get from the one camp pious shudderings at such statements as "Nothing nothings itself," and from the other camp solemn assurances that, since all knowledge involves more than a mere passive registration of sensations, we are all really metaphysicians after all. This situation can only be alleviated by a withdrawal from the immediate polemical scene and a careful examination of actual metaphysical systems, their nature and function. When this is done, certain distinctions emerge which can be used to effect some clarification of these disputes. This paper constitutes an attempt to move in that direction.

I

Although it is perhaps impossible to formulate a definition

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which will apply univocally to all metaphysicians, let us begin with a preliminary characterization of metaphysics as the attempt to establish principles (or, better, a system of principles) of absolute generality. Whatever the particular aim of a given metaphysician, it always seems to include the general aim of framing a set of categories in terms of which everything that is can be interpreted, of putting into a coherent system all the principles which apply unrestrictedly. And, of course, the metaphysician is interested not only in specifying the properties common to everything that is but also in cataloguing the most general types of things and determining the basic characteristics of each type as well as the ways in which these types are interrelated.[2] In short, his work always involves an attempt to reveal the most general features and divisions of the world.[3]

Such being the primary aim of metaphysics, it seems that there are two rather sharply different ways in which such an aim might be realized. On the one hand, absolute generality might be secured through the use of a special method which can provide us with necessary conclusions concerning what must be the basic characteristics, or alternative forms, of everything that is, regardless of what detailed information we acquire in special inquiries regarding the specific characteristics of specific sorts of things. On the other hand, we could proceed by taking the conclusions of all the special disciplines as a basis and distilling therefrom a series of hypotheses concerning the most general characteristics of things. There is apparently no third alternative. If we want to make statements about everything that is, we must either have a specially privileged method which can tell us what structure things *must* have in order to be, no matter

[2] For example Aristotle is concerned to tell us not only that everything is one, is identical with itself, etc., but also to enumerate the most general sorts of things (the categories) and to explore their basic properties and interrelations.

[3] It must be admitted that we cannot give any *syntactical* criterion which would distinguish the sort of universal applicability which is characteristic of metaphysics from the sort which holds for any general statement. For any general statement—e.g., "all swans are white"—says something of everything that is, viz., that if it is a swan it is white. But we can give an *epistemic* criterion: a metaphysical system provides us with predicates which are applicable in an epistemically important way to everything that is.

what is revealed about them by other, inferior, methods; or we must make use of all the information garnered by every valid method which tells us anything about the world, and construct the completely general system which is best supported by all this more particular information. Either a method specially tailored for the metaphysical job, or an induction from what is learned by all valid methods. We shall call the first the a priori, the second the a posteriori, approach to metaphysics.[4]

II

In terms of this distinction we can divide the question of the possibility and/or necessity of metaphysics in an empiricist philosophy into two parts. To take the easier one first, it would seem that an a posteriori approach to the metaphysical task is quite legitimate in any epistemological framework, and hence in the empiricist framework; and, indeed, that it is a necessary function for the empiricist, as for anyone else, assuming that he has a concern not only for the pursuit of isolated investigations but also for the widest possible generalizations which can be drawn from these. In any epistemological framework which recognizes as legitimate more than one discipline for the pursuit of knowledge, there arises a second-level problem distinct from any problem within the first-level disciplines—viz., the problem of deriving from the assumptions and results of the special disciplines principles of widest generality, however meager they may be. It is true that within an empiricist framework this task is relatively restricted and simplified by the fact that the only pursuits recognized as yielding knowledge are the empirical sciences; while the job becomes more complex in a framework which recognizes other avenues of cognitive contact with the world, such as religious faith or experience, aesthetic response, or "common sense." For in the latter case we have a much wider field of data to be accounted for by our unifying hypotheses, and the possibility of conflict between special fields is correspondingly

[4] We choose these terms with some hesitancy because, as we have defined them, the a priori approach includes experiential methods of a sort, such as Bergsonian intuition, and the a posteriori could include in its basis nonempirical sources of information like religious faith and moral experience as well as the empirical sciences.

greater. But simple or complex, it is an enterprise which is not only legal for positivists but positively enjoined by their creed; as witness their vigorous efforts to clarify such notions as causality, time, space, mind, etc., as employed in various sciences, and to make explicit basic principles of the sciences through such devices as axiomatization; all of which is, apart from its intrinsic value for the sciences in question, a necessary propaedeutic for the formulation of concepts and assumptions which will apply to the subject matter of all sciences. That the latter falls within the scope of their intention is shown by their concern for formulating, e.g., a general notion of causality applicable to any science and a universal language in which all of science can be expressed. (Such a language would, of course, involve in its structure basic concepts of widest generality.)[5]

In engaging in these enterprises, positivists do not, of course, think of themselves as metaphysicians; but this is because they have defined "metaphysics" not as we have done, in terms of the sort of results aimed at, but in terms of method, thus limiting metaphysics to what we are calling a priori metaphysics; and it would seem that this sort of metaphysics is clearly ruled out by the positivist epistemology.[6] One can of course define his terms as he chooses, but it seems to me that the positivist usage on this point obscures the fact that we can use empirical methods to achieve results comparable in scope, if not in certainty claimed, to those of an a priori metaphysician.

III

One half of our problem is thus settled. A posteriori metaphysics is both possible and necessary for any serious philosophic thinker, whatever his epistemological orientation; although the materials on which he exercises this metaphysical activity will vary with that orientation. Can we settle the other half in an equally facile manner? Can we not say that here, by contrast, the legitimacy of a priori metaphysics depends on the episte-

[5] For an example of a bit of a posteriori metaphysics growing out of the attempt to frame a universal language, see below, pages 51 ff.

[6] This statement is subject to qualification in the light of our later discussion.

mology and, more specifically, that for an empiricist any such pursuit is out of the question? Unfortunately our path here is not so simple. The critics of positivism often argue that positivists, in spite of their protests, do not really escape a priori metaphysics; that having ostensibly ejected metaphysical principles, they are forced to reintroduce them under the guise of linguistic proposals or rules of language; that they maintain many such linguistic principles, such as phenomenalism and physicalism, which presuppose, or are equivalent to, a priori metaphysical principles. Let us take physicalism as a case in point.

Roughly expressed, physicalism is the doctrine that all science can be expressed in a physicalist language, i.e., a language whose only undefined predicate terms are physical; and physical terms are, in the last analysis, terms referring to properties which can be directly observed sensibly—what Carnap calls "observable thing predicates." [7] Now this thesis has been defended by positivists in two quite different ways (and hence given two different meanings). Before we proceed further we must distinguish these, since it is only the second interpretation which is relevant to our present discussion.

First, physicalism has been defended by appealing to the actual results of the sciences; so approached it is, in effect, a generalization from scientific results, an example of a posteriori metaphysics, and will fall in the area of the previous section. So interpreted, no positivist can reasonably object to considering it a hypothesis "about the world." If it is supported by the fact (or supposed fact) that all validly confirmed scientific hypotheses are expressable in physical terms, then this higher-order generalization has as good a claim to be a hypothesis about the world as the lower-order theories on which it is based. Since it is, at a further remove, subject to the control of the experience which

[7] More recent versions of this thesis hold, not that the meaning of every term of the language of science is expressable without residue by means of observable thing predicates, but that its meaning is *reducible* to such predicates; which means that conditions for its applicability under certain circumstances (though not necessarily all) can be given in terms of observable thing predicates. To take account of this revision in the body of the discussion would complicate our statements but would not essentially modify our basic points.

controls scientific hypotheses, we can consider it to be "about the world" in the same sense as science.[8]

But, in the second place, physicalism has often been defended by arguing that a hypothesis can be confirmed or tested only by reference to sensory observation, i.e., observation of physical characteristics; and that since the meaning of any statement consists in the actual or possible confirming evidence relevant to it, any statement can have its meaning completely expressed in a physicalist language.[9] In this version physicalism becomes a logical thesis about the conditions under which any statement can have meaning and hence applies to any meaningful statement whatever, not just those which in fact constitute the body of scientific knowledge. Hence it is defended by direct reference to basic epistemological criteria themselves, rather than by reference to theories which have in fact been established on those criteria. It is therefore, in the sense in which we were earlier using the term, a priori. That is to say, it constitutes a prior condition for the acceptability of results in the special sciences, not a generalization from results which they have actually achieved. As Hempel says, with special reference to the bearing of physicalism on psychology:

> It by no means offers a theory belonging to the domain of psychology, but rather a logical theory about the propositions of scientific psychology. . . . Consequently, it seeks to show that if in psychology only physicalistic statements are made, this is not a limitation because it is logically impossible to do otherwise.[10]

It is with physicalism conceived in this way that we are concerned in this section.

Now antipositivists often argue that this thesis, although ostensibly concerned with language, really presupposes a metaphysical principle. For, they say, this linguistic principle is justifiable if

[8] For this way of conceiving physicalism see M. Schlick, "On the Relation Between Psychological and Physical Concepts," tr. by W. Sellars, in *Readings in Philosophical Analysis,* ed. by H. Feigl and W. Sellars (New York, 1949), esp. p. 399.

[9] Examples of this approach are to be found in C. Hempel, "The Logical Analysis of Psychology," *ibid.,* pp. 373–384, and (with the revision noted above) in R. Carnap, "Logical Foundations of the Unity of Science," *ibid.,* pp. 408–423.

[10] Hempel, *op. cit.,* p. 381.

and only if all the entities contained in the subject matter of science are in the last analysis physical. Therefore an assertion of the adequacy of a physicalist language for science really involves an assertion of the ultimately physical nature of everything that is (assuming that the scientific subject matter is the only subject matter). But positivists feel forced to reject this imputation, since to accept it would be to accept an a priori principle "about the world" as meaningful and as constituting genuine knowledge. Therefore they refuse to budge out of the formal mode of speech.[11]

Perhaps we could contribute to the resolution of this impasse if we were to leave aside the straightforward question as to whether physicalism *is* or *is not* metaphysical and consider instead the functions it performs for those who hold it, in comparison with typical functions performed by a priori metaphysical principles. If we consider an avowedly a priori metaphysician like Descartes or Hobbes, we can see that his metaphysical system has certain functions with respect to the whole of knowledge. In the first place, since it gives us a general conspectus of what sorts of entities there are, it provides a basis for the organization of the sciences which are to deal with these entities. Descartes' dualistic metaphysical scheme provides him with a basis for saying in general what fundamentally different sorts of sciences there are, how they are related, and, to a certain extent, what their proper methods and categories are. For Descartes psychology will be something radically different from physics in its basic categories, whereas anatomy will be a more complicated branch of physics; more generally, there will be two basically different sciences, one of matter and one of mind (three, counting theology). But for Hobbes all the sciences will be branches of a general science of physics, employing a single set of categories and principles. And in terms of the early metaphysics of Russell, we must make a sharp distinction as to method, categories, etc.,

[11] The same sort of dispute arises over other linguistic principles held by positivists—e.g., phenomenalism, construed as a logical thesis about the structure necessary for a meaningful language and supported by an appeal to the verifiability theory of meaning plus the thesis that all verification depends on phenomenal reports.

between sciences dealing with subsistent universals and those dealing with existent things.

Second—and this is perhaps the other side of the same coin—the metaphysics provides a framework for putting the results of the various particular disciplines into a single coherent body of knowledge; in contemporary terms it provides the basic categories and general direction for the construction of a unified science. From the standpoint of a given metaphysics we can know in advance the general features which a completed system of human knowledge would exhibit; in the case of Hobbes a single system all subordinate to a single set of materialistic principles; for Hegel a system of truths arranged in a dialectical hierarchy from the most abstract to the most concrete; for Aristotle a set of independent bodies of knowledge, each having the characteristic that it proceeds deductively from principles about the essences of substances of certain kinds to statements of essential attributes and operations of those substances. Of course a unified science is to be worked out in detail by putting together the specific results of specific sciences, but this task is greatly facilitated and more effectively directed if we have, prior to digging out specific results, an insight as to the general framework into which the results must fall. Such an insight is provided by an a priori metaphysics.

One of the subordinate tasks involved in this general task of constructing a framework for unified science is the adjudication of conflicts in the assumptions or results of particular disciplines; and an a priori metaphysics provides us with a higher standpoint from which a decision in such cases can be reached. If there is a conflict between a basic tenet of religious faith and an assumption of physical science (e.g., concerning the absoluteness of natural law), or between the assumptions or results of different sciences (e.g., introspective and behavioristic psychology), we can in terms of a given metaphysical scheme often indicate which of the contestants must give ground, or, perhaps, to what extent each will have to be modified, or, perhaps, the way in which each is correct but in different senses or on different levels. For example, in terms of Thomism natural law need not be absolute, but in terms of Spinozism it must, whereas in the

Kantian metaphysics it can be both violable and inviolable but in different realms. Likewise in terms of a materialist metaphysics behavioristic psychology has precedence over introspective, whereas for dualism the reverse is the case.

Third, even where a metaphysics throws little light on the actual organization of the sciences or on the proper categories for the systematization of their results, it tells us something of the ultimate significance of what they are saying,[12] although perhaps this significance indicates little for the actual conduct of scientific investigation. Thus Bradley's metaphysics, though largely indifferent to the specific form which scientific results may take, can at least tell us that the scientist, insofar as his work is valid, is describing certain partial aspects of the experience of the Absolute, even though it is not particularly enlightening for the physicist to view his work in this way. And Leibniz can, with analogous restrictions, tell us that in science we are really dealing with windowless monads, Whitehead that we are really dealing with momentary acts of feeling, and so on.

Now I submit that the a priori linguistic theses of the positivists, such as physicalism and phenomenalism, perform these same functions.[13] Physicalism provides its adherents with a platform from which to issue pronunciamentos concerning the sort of unity of which the sciences are susceptible, the sort of basic categories and methods they can properly employ (witness the proscription of mentalistic psychology and *verstehende* social science), and the kind of framework within which a unified body of knowledge must be construed; just as an a priori materialist metaphysics provides its adherents with such a platform. And

[12] That is to say, how their results would appear in the light of metaphysical truths, truths about the world more general than anything attempted by the sciences.

[13] It is not claimed that these principles will serve every purpose for which a priori metaphysics has been invoked. For example, one thing Descartes expected from his metaphysics was an a priori demonstration of the basic principles of physics; and no one has supposed that a thesis like physicalism could do anything like that. But differences over the proper functions of metaphysics occur among avowed metaphysicians as well as between them and positivists. Neither Aristotle nor Bradley, e.g., recognize the above-mentioned function as a legitimate one, but the title of metaphysician is not therefore withheld from them.

phenomenalism is a striking example of the third function mentioned above. The proponents of a linguistic phenomenalism claim that all meaningful statements are properly interpreted in terms of a phenomenalist language—i.e., construed as referring to actual and possible data of immediate experience. It is usually admitted that the scientist is not aided in his own work by so considering them and that this interpretation throws no light on the actual organization or specific results of scientific activity. But there are felt to be general philosophical (epistemological) reasons for imposing this interpretation.

This basic similarity of function between the linguistic proposals of the positivists and avowedly a priori metaphysical principles can be shown more simply and directly by considering the fact that the former as well as the latter serve their proponents as criteria of what can be taken account of as serious possibilities. The metaphysical materialist cannot admit as a real possibility any disembodied spirit, the pan-psychist any absolutely insentient matter, the Heraclitean any static changeless essence, the Hegelian anything independent of thought, etc. In a precisely analogous way the physicalist is forbidden by his position to consider as possibly existent, or as furnishing legitimate objects for discourse, such things as private mental states, a *Zeitgeist*, or a vital entelechy; the phenomenalist will not entertain the possibility of the universe containing independently existing material substances or unknowable things-in-themselves; and nominalism formulated as a linguistic proposal prevents one from treating classes and properties as real, as effectively as does an admittedly metaphysical nominalism. To be sure, positivists sometimes explicitly deny that they are committing themselves as to what does or does not exist, but are only stating what sort of language can be meaningfully used. Carnap, e.g., denies that physicalism rules out the *existence* of mental states which have no behavioral manifestation and claims that it limits only what can be said in a legitimate scientific language.[14] But the point is that a limitation on what language is permitted leads us in our intellectual practice to reject, or ignore, or fail to consider certain possibilities—viz., those which cannot be formulated in the

[14] *Op. cit.*, p. 420.

language—as effectively as does an explicit denial of their existence.[15] To refuse to use any but physicalist language is to act as if there were no incorrigibly private feelings just as much as if that assertion were made as such. Why then insist on a sharp distinction where things function so much alike? If principles of the conditions of meaningfulness and principles of the nature of being have so similar a function in the intellectual enterprise, why should we consider them as *toto caelo* different? Positivists have indeed sometimes noticed this similarity but have expressed it by saying that if this is what metaphysical principles are used for, they are *really* just logical principles about language after all. But why couldn't we turn this around and say that if this is what "linguistic proposals" are used for, they are metaphysical principles after all? Or better still, instead of engaging in these flat charges and countercharges, couldn't we point out that if a "linguistic" principle functions by limiting what suggested entities we shall take seriously or as worthy of consideration, then the principle seems to be "about the world" in any *pragmatic* sense which can be given that term? This sort of principle, as much as a statement like "all swans are white," functions as a limitation on what we will recognize as "really there to be taken account of" in our physical and intellectual activities.

IV

If we confronted an intelligent present-day positivist with this argument, he would, I think, in defending himself, once more have recourse to his epistemology; but this recourse would consist not only in reiterating the positivistic prohibition of a priori knowledge of matters of fact but also in pointing to the special epistemological status the doctrines in question have within an

[15] This is not to say, of course, that *any* ascription of meaninglessness functions like a denial of existence. For there are many such ascriptions—e.g., " 'brillig' is meaningless," in which the sign in question has no cognitive meaning in any language. In such cases there could be no corresponding denial of existence, and so there could be no question of an identity in function between the two. But many of the signs declared meaningless by the principles considered above are used cognitively in other languages. In *these* cases, unlike the former, there is the possibility of an at least partial identity of function between a denial of meaningfulness and a denial of existence, and therefore there is a point to arguing, as we have done, that this possibility is actualized.

empiricist framework. He would say that whatever functions these theses perform, they must be construed as linguistic rather than ontological in import because of the way in which they are defended. Physicalism, phenomenalism, etc., like the epistemological doctrines on which they are based, are proposals or decisions, which can be recommended as useful or valuable for certain purposes, but defended in no other way. Now while it is reasonable to make proposals or decisions concerning language, a human tool over which we have control and which can be affected by our decisions, it would be absurd to make decisions or proposals about the nature of the universe or the ultimate constituents of the world, as if these were matters about which we could choose or which would obediently yield to our practical decisions. Thus as having the status they do in an empiricist philosophy, these principles can receive no other interpretation than the linguistic.

With this answer we come to the heart of the matter. It seems to me that three comments are in order here.

1. Let us recognize that it does sound strange to speak of making a decision as to the ultimate constituents of the world. Nevertheless, if our principles function by leading us to recognize, intellectually and practically, certain things as real and others as not and hence have the force of beliefs about what the world contains, it is only the part of honesty to recognize that they have this role and to give them a formulation which will reveal rather than obscure this fact. We can, if we like, call both phenomenalism and the suggestion that "who" be used in the accusative case instead of "whom" "linguistic proposals"; but the fact remains that there is a tremendous difference between them—a difference obscured by applying the same term to both but revealed by calling the former metaphysical, or at least by pointing out that it performs many typically metaphysical functions. If we feel that volitional positing is an improper method of establishing principles which do this metaphysical job, let us feel contrition for our sin and search for some more apt approach; but let us not try to relieve the difficulty by stating the principles so as to obscure their real function and so obtain a specious harmony between method and result. In short, if we must state

these principles as linguistic, let us realize that they are linguistic principles of a very special kind, and make explicit in what this specialty consists.

2. In any event the fact that a principle has the status of a volitional decision should not in itself prevent it from being called metaphysical. It is quite true that positivists introduce and support such theses as physicalism in a manner quite different from that of rationalist metaphysicians like Spinoza and McTaggart. But it should be remembered that many so-called metaphysicians, notably Fichte, have considered their principles as having the status of voluntary choices or posits; and, more generally, that what we have been calling the a priori method in metaphysics embraces a wide variety of devices, ranging from the Cartesian intuition of clear and distinct ideas, through Hegelian dialectical reason and Bergsonian intuition, to the Fichtean voluntary posit. It is because of their lack of historical perspective and their resultant lack of sensitivity to what has gone on in metaphysical inquiry that positivists have supposed that, in giving their fundamental principles the status of decisions or proposals, they were decisively placing themselves outside the metaphysical camp, whereas actually they were rather continuing the efforts of one of the many factions in that complex and heterogeneous assemblage. Moreover, as Quine has pointed out, if we adopt the pragmatist position that any statement is in the last analysis justified by showing that it is useful for certain purposes, then we are left with no basis for making a sharp distinction between a principle like phenomenalism and an ordinary statement of fact like "my automobile is green." Within such a framework the pragmatic status of a principle is no bar to considering it to be "about the world"; unless we were to deny that any statement is about the world, in which case the phrase would lose all useful meaning.

3. Supposing that we allow the positivist to retain his linguistic formulation, with the qualifications noted above, we should not suppose that reliance on this mode of statement automatically absolves him of metaphysical taint. On the contrary, if we look more closely at the philosophers commonly called metaphysicians, we shall find an important distinction which presents a

curious parallel to the positivistic distinction between material and formal modes of speech. Some metaphysicians (e.g., Aristotle, Descartes, Whitehead) state their principles of absolute generality as dealing with things, entities, being; they are concerned to tell us what is true of all being, or what are its chief modes or types, etc. Others, especially Hegel and his followers, have been concerned to formulate necessities of thought or discourse about things, rather than to state principles directly asserting the generic characteristics of things. For example, in Hegel's chief metaphysical work (significantly called *Logic*), he develops his position, not by way of telling us that everything that is is so-and-so, but rather by asserting that in order to think adequately we must use such-and-such concepts in such-and-such a way. Likewise Hegelian philosophers (e.g., Bosanquet and Blanshard) often explicitly reject the notion of any "transcendent" reality beyond thought to which thought has to conform and claim to be concerned only with thought itself and its immanent necessities. The root of this second sort of approach seems to lie in the insistence that reality or existence be defined and discussed in terms of what is necessary for any adequate discourse, a tendency strongly exemplified in the positivist movement.[16] Again it would seem that lack of historical sensitivity has betrayed the positivists into supposing that their predilection for the formal mode of speech marks a decisive break with the metaphysical tradition en masse, instead of being a particular version of one of the important strands of that tradition.

V

While the considerations we have adduced do not provide a simple solution of the question "Are positivists metaphysicians?" they do provide some distinctions and relevant facts in terms of which we can indicate at least some of the senses in which this is and is not true. Let us now try to specify some of these senses. If we define "metaphysics" so as to retain application to the cases usually covered by the term and so as to emphasize im-

[16] For example, the positivist will treat the question whether physical objects are real only under the form: How are physical object terms to be defined in a meaningful, or a scientifically useful, language?

portant affinities, we shall characterize it generally as an attempt to establish principles, or a system of principles, of absolute generality. We must then distinguish different ways of achieving this aim: a priori and a posteriori. In terms of this distinction we can see that a posteriori metaphysics is a legitimate and necessary enterprise for any philosopher; the differences between empiricists and nonempiricists on this score arise from the differences as to what data are recognized as a basis for the metaphysical generalization. As for a priori metaphysics, it would seem that in certain epistemological frameworks, including the positivistic, it would be impossible. But we found the positivist drawing from his basic epistemological commitments principles which have many of the same functions as the principles of a priori metaphysicians. He prefers, because of the way in which they are defended, to state them as decisions or proposals about the structure of language rather than as assertions about the world; but we saw that many so-called metaphysicians gave their principles a similar basis and that many displayed a similar tendency in their formulation. Thus it seems reasonable to say that positivists do propound a priori metaphysical principles, provided we recognize that they support and construe these principles in a way quite different from that employed by many (though not all) metaphysicians.

Finally it is to be noted that such clarification as has been achieved here has come from a more careful examination of the metaphysical tradition and a greater concern to make explicit the differences involved in it, as opposed to the usual more cavalier treatment, in which the word "metaphysics" is used either as a red flag or as a banner lifted on high.

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