

If metaphysics is, in its own way, a science—namely, as Heidegger says of "ontology," "*the science*," "the ontological science," as distinct from any and all "ontic sciences"—it would seem in order to ask whether any more than a merely "minimal" account of the objectivity of truth in the sciences wouldn't also have to be applicable to the objectivity of metaphysical truth. In other words, if metaphysics is properly a science, notwithstanding its differences from the "special," or "positive," sciences, must not metaphysical propositions get their truth-job done in something like the same way in which the propositions of the other sciences do?

According to one widely discussed account, scientific propositions that are nonmetaphysical get their job done of telling the truth, and thus have the higher-level, "deeply normative," property of being true, because or insofar as they have the lower-level, merely descriptive, property of being "causally responsive" to reality. Assuming this account, then, one would need to ask whether metaphysical propositions, also, are thus "causally responsive."

My answer is, unhesitatingly, "Yes, they are." If, as I argue, metaphysical propositions have their basis in the existential, as distinct from the empirical, aspect or dimension of our experience; and if a Whiteheadian-Hartshornean account of our experience is essentially correct, then metaphysical propositions must be, in fact, the paradigm case of propositions being "causally responsive" to reality. Why? Well, because the existential experience on which they are based is, in Whitehead's term, experience in the mode of "causal efficacy," as distinct from empirical experience in the mode of "presentational immediacy," which is the basis of the propositions of the special, or positive, sciences. To say, then, as Whitehead in effect does, that reality in this mode of experience is "causally efficacious" is clearly to imply that experience itself in this mode, together with any true propositions based on it, must be, in their ways, precisely, "causally responsive" to reality. Metaphysical propositions get their truth-job done because or insofar as they respond, in their way, to the causal efficacy of ultimate reality—the threefold reality of self, others, and the whole.

The same conclusion can be reached, obviously, by assuming another, at least verbally different account of the objectivity of truth. This is the account, sometimes said to have originated with C. S. Peirce, according to which the

truth of a proposition of any type is its success in so engaging or interpreting its object by means of its symbols that whatever is real or of value in the object, given the purposes or interests of the interpreter, is "carried over" into her or his own belief and action. Clearly, for ultimate reality to be "carried over" into the belief and action of the interpreter, the interpreter, for her or his part, must be "causally responsive" to ultimate reality, and the same must be true, in its way, of her or his propositions, given the type of purposes or interests underlying them.

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