

What are the implications of the positivistic denial of metaphysics?

The implications of the positivistic denial of metaphysics are:

(1) that there is no common character, at least none worth knowing, in the alternative possibilities of reality; and (2) that we can be aware only of facts, in the sense of actualizations of alternative possibilities, on the one side, and of our own language and arbitrary ideals or meanings, on the other.

In short, positivism implies that there is no common character pervading all possible reality, and thus no common ideal or meaning pervading all possible experience and thought.

Theism, on the contrary, implies that there is such a common character pervading all possible reality because there is a common ideal or meaning, of which it alone is the necessary ground, that is the standard for evaluating all special purposes and goods, all of which can be understood as special cases of it.

Of course, theism is not the only outlook that has this implication. All other answers to the existential question, whether religious, theological, or philosophical, and whether traditional or revisionary, have necessary implications that are similarly contrary to those of positivism. The reason for this is that even to ask the existential question already presupposes that there is a common ideal or meaning pervading all experience and thought and providing the standard for evaluating all special purposes and goods. And this presupposition, in turn, necessarily implies that positivism can only be false in denying that there is a common character pervading all possible reality and grounding this common ideal or meaning.

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