

*On Explanation and Explication as Two Modes of Seeking Intelligibility*

Given the usual more restricted sense of “explanation” as *empirical* (or, at least, *factual*) explanation, why not simply accept this usage and use the word solely in this restricted sense?

*Contra* scientism, or positivism, however, one can insist that there is also the possibility, indeed, necessity, of *explication*, where one is concerned, not to explain one matter of fact by reference to another, but to make fully explicit what is necessarily implied by all of one’s experiences or assertions.

Clearly, metaphysics is explication in this sense if it is anything; or, alternatively, it is explanation only in a broader, less restricted sense of “explanation.” But the interesting question is whether this proposition is convertible, so that one may also say, explication is metaphysics. For the present, I incline to question any such conversion. Christological assertions, for example, are explicative, as distinct from explanatory in the strict sense. But whether, or in what sense, they are metaphysical is not clear—unless being properly existential / existentialist assertions, they are metaphysical in a broad sense of the term.

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