

Title: Are the Questions of Metaphysics More Fundamental Than Those of Science?

Abstract: When pursued naturalistically, fundamental metaphysics may seem forced to navigate a narrow path. So that it may be a worthwhile enterprise, it must have claim to discovery of a distinctive set of objective truths. Yet it must also avoid potential competition or conflict with the results of scientific theories. And so this seems to require that metaphysicians avoid those topics addressed by scientific theories. This would threaten to exclude most of the traditional areas of fundamental metaphysical research. In response to this problem, some (naturalistic) metaphysicians have argued that properly understood, metaphysics is aimed at a set of truths distinct from those of science. Metaphysicians investigate a realm of truths more fundamental than those of even fundamental science. This paper examines what is required both in science and metaphysics for a theory to count as a fundamental theory. Several criteria are presented all of which suggest that metaphysics does not investigate a realm more fundamental than that of science. This then raises the question of how metaphysics can have a distinctive subject matter without stepping on the toes of science. I argue that metaphysics does not need to have a distinctive subject matter to be a worthwhile enterprise.