### SCIENCE AND METAPHYSICS: RUDOLF CARNAP, ALFRED JULES AYER AND MARTIN HEIDEGGER

***NELSON SHANG*,** PhD, Department of Philosophy, Higher Teacher Training College, the University of Bamenda, Cameroon, nelsonshang2017@yahoo.com,

**SIWIYNI Christain Wirnkar,** PhD Candidate, Department of Philosophy, the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, bishichrist@yahoo.com,

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**ABSTRACT**

*The history of the relationship between science and metaphysics is riddled with controversy. Aristotle and his followers see metaphysics as providing the foundations on which science and other human intellectual endeavors build. In opposition to the thoughts of Aristotle, Plato and his followers separate metaphysics from science as independent and unrelated sciences. With the Logical positivists, the debate is a reject of metaphysics in favour of science. Metaphysics then is seen as a pseudo-science. Rudolf Carnap’s the “Elimination of Metaphysics through the Logical Analysis of Language” and Alfred Jules Ayer’s elimination of metaphysics from the domain of knowledge are examined, while Heidegger is brought in to salvage the situation given that he holds on to the superiority of metaphysics over science.*

**Key words:** logical positivism, metaphysics, science, scientific method, meaning, verification, Vienna circle, being

**1. Introduction**

The term Logical Positivism, also known as logical empiricism or scientific empiricism refers to the ideas and attitudes towards philosophy associated with the Vienna Circle. The term was coined to characterize the standpoint of a group of philosophers, logicians’ scientists and mathematicians who called themselves the Vienna Circle. This is seen when Ayer affirms that logical positivism originated with the Vienna Circle.[[1]](#footnote-2)This group was founded by Moritz Schlick in 1924 and in effect ended with his death in 1936 and the dispersal of Austrian intellectuals at that time. Its members included G. Bergman, Rudolf Carnap, H. Feigl, Otto Neurath and Friedrich Waismann. Alfred Jules Ayer was not a regular member. He visited the Vienna Circle between 1932 and 1933, where he met Willard Van Orman Quine with whom he exchanged a lot under the advice of Ryle. At the beginning, the circle was more of a club than an organized movement. The central interest of the Vienna Circle was the unity of science and the correct delineation of scientific method. Bertrand Russell’s logic and concept of logical construction played a significant role in the doctrines of this movement[[2]](#footnote-3), an indication that empiricism foreshadowed positivism.[[3]](#footnote-4)

In the fall of the 1929 the Vienna circle published a document written by Carnap, Hahn and Neurath titled *Scientific Outlook* which had two aims; firstly, to establish a firm foundation for science and secondly to demonstrate the meaninglessness of metaphysics through the logical analysis of statements (Griesbach 267).[[4]](#footnote-5)This anti-metaphysical trend of thought reduced everything to verifiability which holds that a proposition is meaningful if it can either be proven or disproven.[[5]](#footnote-6)The movement gained publicity in the English-speaking world when Ayer published his best work *Language, Truth and Logic* in 1936 in which he summarized the views of Schlick, Neurath and Carnap.

At this stage it is important to consider the Principle of Verification which served as the *instrumentum laboris* of the logical positivists. It constituted the principal tenet of logical positivism. According to the earliest formulations, a statement is the method of its verification. However, it was given a very comprehensive outlook by A. J. Ayer thus: “A statement is held to be literally meaningful if and only if it is either analytic or empirically verifiable.”[[6]](#footnote-7) A literally meaning means that something is capable of being shown to be either true or false.

#### 2. Rudolf Carnap’s Elimination of Metaphysics through the Logical Analysis of Language

According to Carnap, the development of modern logic makes it possible to have a sharper and new answer to the question of the validity and justification of metaphysics. The researches of applied logic or the theory of knowledge by means of logical analysis, leads to a positive and negative result. [[7]](#footnote-8)The positive result is worked out in the domain of empirical science; the various concepts of the various branches are clarified. Their former logical and epistemological connections are made explicit. In the domain of metaphysics, logical analysis yields the negative result that the alleged statements in this domain are entirely meaningless. In this light, Carnap thinks that in its strictest sense, statements in metaphysics are meaningless and sterile.[[8]](#footnote-9) Thus in a strict sense, a sequence of words is meaningless if it does not within a specific language constitute a statement.

Carnap contends that a word, within a definite language, which has a meaning usually designate a concept. If it only seems to have a meaning while it really does not, it is a pseudo-concept. To explain the origin of a pseudo-concept, Carnap points out that originally, every word had a meaning but a word frequently changes its meaning in the course of historical development. Also, words loose their old sense without acquiring a new one. Thus, a pseudo-concept arises.[[9]](#footnote-10)

For a word to be significant, first, the syntax of the word must be fixed. Secondly, the meaning of a sentence consists in its truth-condition. The elementary sentence containing the word should answer the following questions: what sentence is deducible from the word? Under what condition is the word supposed to be true or false? How is the word to be verified? What is the meaning of the word? Does its correct formulation accord to with the phraseologies of logic, theory of knowledge and with that of philosophy?[[10]](#footnote-11)Thirdly, a word is significant only if the sentences in it which it may occur are reducible to protocol sentences. According to this point, a sequence of words has meaning only if its relations of deducibility to the protocol sentences are fixed no matter what the characteristics of the protocol sentences might be.[[11]](#footnote-12)Lastly, the meaning of a word is determined by its criterion of application. That is by the relation of deducibility entered into, by its elementary sentence form, by its truth condition and by the methods of verification.[[12]](#footnote-13) Carnap now examines metaphysical words without meaning.

For Carnap, many words in metaphysics do not fulfil the above requirements and are therefore devoid of any meaning. Some of these words include: principle, God, the idea, the Absolute, the Unconditioned, the Infinite, the being of being, non-being, thing in itself, absolute spirit, objective spirit, essence, being in itself, being in and for itself, emanation, manifestation, the ego and the non-ego.[[13]](#footnote-14)He takes the example of the word *principle.* If we reflect on the origin of the word *principio* or as it is in Greek *άρχή* we notice the same development. The word is explicitly deprived of its original meaning ‘beginning’. What made this attack so much more vehement and destructive than any previous critique?

The answer lies in the introduction of modern symbolic logic, together with the application of logic to language. The idea was that through application of logical analysis, the sciences could be made stronger by illuminating scientific concepts and their interrelations, while metaphysics could be *demonstrated*, rather than merely claimed, to contain only nonsense. Thus applied, logical analysis constitutes a much more powerful weapon against metaphysics than was available in the time of Hume or Kant. It is in this light that Carnap informs us that in the metaphysical domain logical analysis makes us think negatively that all statements are meaningless.Metaphysical statements thus contain words that fail to refer to anything, or if they do refer to something, are not properly put together according to the rules of syntax. This leads to Carnap examining the significance of a sentence*.*

As we have considered pseudo-statements which contains a meaningless word, Carnap says there exist a second kind of pseudo-statements. They consist of meaningful words, but the words are put in together in such a way that no meaning results. The syntax of language specifies which combinations of words are admissible and which are not. But the grammatical syntax of natural language does not fulfil the task of elimination of senseless combination of words in all cases. Many statements of metaphysics are not so easily recognized to be pseudo-statements. If it is justifiable, then metaphysics could not even be expressed in a logically constructed language. This is the great philosophical importance of the task for Carnap, which at present occupies the logicians of building a logical syntax. [[14]](#footnote-15) After focusing on that, he now looked at metaphysical pseudo statements.

After looking at some examples of metaphysical pseudo statements of the kind where the violation of logical syntax is especially obvious, Carnap tries to show that the possibility of forming pseudo statement is based on a logical defect of language. A sentence “what is outside? Rain is outside” is grammatically and logically impeccable hence meaningful.[[15]](#footnote-16) If you use nothing, and asked what is outside? Nothing is outside; this becomes analogous to the above question and does not satisfy the requirements to be imposed to a logically correct language. If you further ask what about the rain, you can get the answer, the rain rains, but if you ask, what about nothing? You get the answer the “nothing nothing.” In this case, metaphysical statements cannot be taken as working hypotheses, since a hypothesis must be capable of interring into relations of deducibility with true or false empirical statements, which is just what pseudo statements cannot do.[[16]](#footnote-17)

According to Carnap, most metaphysicians since antiquity have allowed themselves to be seduced into pseudo-statements by the verbal and the predicative form of the word ‘to be’. Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum* meets an illustration of this error. Carnap disregards the material objections that have been raised against the premise,-that is, whether ‘I think’ contains perhaps a hypostasis. He rather considers the two sentences only from a logical point of view. He identifies two essential logical mistakes.[[17]](#footnote-18) The *first* lies in the conclusion ‘I am’. The verb ‘to be’ is undoubtedly meant in the sense of existence here; for a copula cannot be used without a predicate; Descartes’ ‘I am’ has always been interpreted in that sense. But in that case, this sentence violates the above mentioned logical rule that existence can be predicated only in conjunction with a predicate, not in conjunction with a name. Carnap goes ahead to state that our language express existence by a verb ‘to be’ or ‘to exist’ but it is not in itself a logical fault but only inappropriate and dangerous. The verbal form misleads us to the misconception that existence is a predicate. [[18]](#footnote-19)

Having found that many metaphysical statements are meaningless, Carnap now confronts the question whether there is perhaps a core of meaningful statements in metaphysics which remain after the elimination of all the meaningless ones, but the situation is that meaningful metaphysical statements are impossible. They are divided into various kinds. First, there are statements which are true by virtue of their form – tautologies according to Wittgenstein – they say nothing about reality. The formulae for logic and mathematics are of this kind. Secondly, there are the negations of such statements-contradictions. They are self-contradictory, hence false by virtue of their form. With respect to other statements, the decision about falsehood or truth lies in the protocol sentences. They are therefore, empirical statements and belong to the domain of empirical sciences.

Any statement one tries to construct out of the above is meaningless automatically. It is thus evident that pseudo-statements are inevitable products.[[19]](#footnote-20)

## 3. Alfred Jules Ayer’s Elimination of Metaphysics from the domain of Knowledge

According to Ayer, metaphysics is “that branch of philosophical discourse, which deals with the fundamental question about the structure of reality.”[[20]](#footnote-21)This means that metaphysics goes deep to investigate the structure of reality. Reality is the state of the things as they really are and not as we might imagine or would want them to be. When a sentence purports to express a genuine proposition, but finds itself expressing neither a tautology nor an empirical hypothesis, it is a metaphysical sentence. It is undoubtedly for this reason that Ayer considers metaphysicians are misplaced poets, when he suggests that the statements they utter “have no literal meaning, they are not subject to any criteria of truth or falsehood; but they will still serve to express, or arouse, emotion and thus be subject to ethical or aesthetic standards.”[[21]](#footnote-22) This means that metaphysical statements are meaningless, have no criteria of either truth or falsehood, they only express emotions, making it either ethical or aesthetical. It was probably for this reason that Alfred Jules and his colleagues thought that philosophy could be improved upon if philosophers adopted for the rigour found in the mathematical and scientific domains. Weinberg supports this view when he affirms that “[a] metaphysical statement, […] is a non-empirical proposition with existential import. […] such statements are pseudo-propositions.”[[22]](#footnote-23)

Most metaphysical systems use either the intuitive and deductive approach, as in the philosophical system of Rene Descartes, who through his famous I think therefore I am, presented a system. Although there exist other methods, the fact is that metaphysical statements discard any form of empirical verification. This possibly explains the formulation of Rudolf Carnap’s who thinks that the meaning of a proposition depends on its method of verification. When an assertion cannot be determined by any method of verification, it is metaphysical.

The major criticisms of metaphysics in Alfred Jules Ayer’s philosophy are found in his *Language, Logic and Truth*. In this work, he shows that the sources of metaphysical mistakes are due to the commission of logical errors in our usage of language. According to Ayer, “[t]he metaphysician, on the other hand, does not intend to write nonsense. He lapses into it through being deceived by grammar, or through committing errors of reasoning, such as that which leads to the view that the sensible world is unreal.”[[23]](#footnote-24) The idea in the above quotation is that it is not in the wish of the metaphysician to fall in to error. The metaphysician falls into it when he is deceived by grammar and mistakes in reasoning especially that which pushes some to lead to the view that the sensible world is not real.

Ayer is conscious of the fact that it is easy for philosophers to engage in metaphysics without being aware. He projects this clearly when he says “[t]he metaphysician, on the other hand, does not intend to write nonsense.”[[24]](#footnote-25) This view is further seen when he affirms that “[the metaphysician can] write sentences which are literally nonsensical without seeing that they are nonsensical.”[[25]](#footnote-26) The source of error in metaphysics is in attributing existence to objects like unicorns, when a copula such as ‘are’ is used. In both examples given above, the ‘are’ do not have the same signification. It is real in the proposition dogs are faithful, and unreal in the proposition ‘unicorns are fictitious’ since unicorns are only the fictitious. A unicorn does not exist as a being in an existential sense.

The sources of mistakes in metaphysics also come about when Ayer presents the manner in which metaphysicians are looked at. Metaphysicians are considered as misplaced poets, since the statements they put up do not have any literal meaning. Ayer thinks that they are specialized in expressing and arousing our emotions, reasons for which metaphysics has to be completely eradicated. It is in this line of reasoning that Kant argues that “human understanding was so constituted that it lost itself in contradictions when it ventured out beyond the limits of possible experience and attempted to deal with things in themselves.”[[26]](#footnote-27) Kant thought that our minds could not have had the power to penetrate beyond the phenomenal world. To him, the human mind is devoid of it. This explains the fact that the metaphysical claim that God is a Perfect Being, cannot possibly be verified, leading us to pose the question to know how perfection can be attributed to him. This is the manner in which the ontological fallacy is committed. According to Ayer, Heidegger is guilty of committing this error. This is seen when he writes:

*[N]ot only the utterances of a Heidegger, who bases his metaphysics on the assumption that ‘Nothing’ is the name which is used to denote something peculiarly mysterious, but also the prevalence of such problems as those concerning the reality of propositions and universals whose senselessness, though less obvious, is no less complete.[[27]](#footnote-28)*

Following these errors committed, metaphysics has been attributed the name misplaced poetry. According to Kant they can only be of service to lay down ethical standards. This idea is not accepted by Ayer who thinks that metaphysicians can neither moralize nor create works of art.

The Elimination of Metaphysics most respects some principles. The first is that meaningfulness depends on the method of verification. This is illustrated when Ayer says that “[t]he principle of verification is supposed to furnish a criterion by which it can be determined whether or not a sentence is literally meaningful.”[[28]](#footnote-29) The theory should be able to explain natural phenomena and serve as tools for the development of scientific theories. Secondly, scientific knowledge is based on empirical evidence. The disciplines of science share common rules of evidence used to evaluate explanations. In the scientific activity, there is the process of coordinating patterns of evidence with current theory. It is for this reason that while rejecting metaphysical statements, Ayer, makes it very clearly that “no statement is literally meaningful unless it describes what could be experienced.”[[29]](#footnote-30) By experience, Ayer is talking about empirical evidence.

Ayer thinks that not every type of metaphysics has to be eradicated. The type that has to be eradicated from the domain of knowledge is characterized by the fact that the authors claim to be “endowed with a faculty of intellectual intuition which enables him to know facts that could not be known through sense-experience.”[[30]](#footnote-31) This means that if one claims to be endowed with intuition that claim to penetrate the core of objects to discover its unique and inexplicable characteristics, instead of deducing its contents from the evidence of the senses, such metaphysics has to be whipped out. Also, when one comes in contact with the claims that “philosophy affords us knowledge of a reality transcending the world of science and common sense.”[[31]](#footnote-32) Ayer does not think that metaphysicians are overzealous to want to go beyond the limits of experience. To him, “the many metaphysical utterances are due to the commission of logical errors.”[[32]](#footnote-33) Reasons for which he thinks that if language is properly used, metaphysical mistakes will no longer be committed. But why was it necessary to eradicate metaphysics from the domain of knowledge?

According to Ayer, we can only trust that whose truth or falsity can be empirically verifiable and not what is beyond the physical. This is because philosophy is not capable of providing us transcendent knowledge. Metaphysical arguments do not have the possibility of being empirically verifiable, making them to be nonsensical. Ayer says that “if a putative proposition fails to satisfy […] [the verification] principle and is not a tautology, then […] it is metaphysical, it is neither true nor false but literally senseless.”[[33]](#footnote-34) This point is further supported by O’connor who indicates the logical positivist’s rejection of metaphysical statements when he argues that “they purport to express neither logical truths nor empirical hypotheses […] without meaning.”[[34]](#footnote-35) Since they neither ascertain the truth or falsity of statements, what they do is nonsense.

When Ayer entitled one of the early chapters of *Language, Truth and logic* “*The Elimination of Metaphysics*”, he was sending a signal to the worldthat the elimination of metaphysics was an indispensible tool to knowledge. Ayer thinks that “[n]o statements which refer to 'reality' transcending the limits of sense-experience can possibly have any literal significance”.[[35]](#footnote-36)Thus meaningful statements that make mention of reality beyond the limits of sense-experience do not exist. An example of a metaphysical pseudo-proposition which is meaningless is found in the expressions “‘the Absolute enters into, but is itself incapable of, evolution and progress’”[[36]](#footnote-37). This cannot be verifiable because an individual cannot conceive an observation that will enable him or her to decide whether or not the absolute entered into evolution and progress.

Furthermore, it is important to demolish metaphysics since a metaphysical project is impossible. Beyond the physical world, reality cannot be gained since things can’t be empirically observed. According to Ayer, “if a putative proposition fails to satisfy […] [the verification] principle and is not a tautology, then […] it is metaphysical, it is […] literally senseless.”[[37]](#footnote-38) Metaphysics is thus without any sense or meaning. Moritz Schlick, further suggest that “metaphysics is […] impossible because it demands the impossible.”[[38]](#footnote-39) It follows that the eradication of metaphysics is justified since it talks about what does not exist.

#### 4. Martin Heidegger: Metaphysics as Man’s Fundamental Concern with theWorld

While Rudolf Carnap and Alfred Jules Ayer occupied themselves with the elimination and complete destruction of metaphysics, Martin Heidegger (same as his other contemporary Alfred North Whitehead) was concerned with metaphysics as the foundation on which science should base its entire enquiry about nature. In his inaugural address of 1929 entitled *Was ist Metaphysik?* Heidegger states that metaphysics is man’s most fundamental concern with the world but that in traditional metaphysics, understood as a specialized science, a narrowing of vision has taken place: analysis and systematization came to dominate. Ever since Plato, Heidegger argues, the question of Being was no longer being raised by metaphysicians since they pre-occupied themselves merely with expressions of Being.

This pushed Heidegger to the *seinsvergessentheit,* that is, forgetfulness, or oblivion of Being. For Heidegger, the oblivion of being is simply “the self-concealing of the origin of Being divided in to whatness and thatness in favour of Being, which opens out Being as beings, and remains unquestioned as Being.”[[39]](#footnote-40) It is this self-concealment of Being that led to its forgetfulness. Metaphysicians forgot the most fundamental subject of their inquiry; the *Sein,* the *Ens,* the *Being* of the different levels of being. That which was forgotten is what Heidegger calls the *Ontological Difference.* In his *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* Heidegger writes: “we call the distinction between Being and beings, when it is carried out explicitly, the ontological difference.”[[40]](#footnote-41)

One cannot resist the temptation to ask why metaphysicians forget the main subject matter of their inquiry. Why was Being was forgotten in favour of beings? Pantaleon Iroegbu beautifully points out that Being was forgotten, “not out of the poverty of human memory, not out of some psycho-somatic defects in metaphysicians, not out of intellectual negligence or investigational carelessness”[[41]](#footnote-42) but because, as Heidegger himself says, it is in the nature of being to conceal itself. Being in its destiny is hidden and essentially veiled. In his 1929 inaugural speech *What is Metaphysics,* Heidegger held that metaphysics has no choice in its essence of a two-fold character of studying beings and forgetting Being. In *The Philosophy of Being,* Van der Veken, Commenting on Heidegger’s *seinsvergessentheit,* says that Being is forgotten because of the self-concealing ambivalence of the *to on* (to be, being) and the distinction between the sensible and the supra-sensible in western traditional metaphysics since Plato.[[42]](#footnote-43)

In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger contrasts metaphysics with the more fundamental enquiry into being as such. Heidegger writes that “if we consider the question of being in the sense of an enquiry into being as such, it becomes clear to anyone who follows our thinking that being as such is precisely hidden from metaphysics, and remains forgotten – and so radically that the forgetfulness of being, which itself falls into forgetfulness, is the unknown but enduring impetus to metaphysical questioning.”[[43]](#footnote-44)

As a result from this “forgetfulness anxiety assails man about being which has lost its foundation. Through such an experience of anxiety man understands that he is a special being, namely *Dasein*. He experiences his own being as surrounded and threatened by nothingness.”[[44]](#footnote-45) Thus the question arises as to why anything exists rather than nothing at all. Heidegger apparently intends to carry out a metaphysical investigation because he is seeking the last causesof things, same as Aristotle and scholastic metaphysicians.

Heidegger maintains that the fields of science are quite distinct, and their respective methods for investigating objects are fundamentally different. Nowadays the only thing that unites the expanding array of disciplines and gives them some coherence is the technical organization of universities and their departments, along with the practical goals set by each discipline.[[45]](#footnote-46)Yet all sciences, in Heidegger’s view, relate to what is and no one field has priority over another nor does any one method.

However for Heidegger, there are certain questions that science cannot answer, science investigates only what is, and nothing else; just what-is, and nothing besides; only what-is and nothing more. What about this “nothing?” Heidegger asks, and his answer is that Science rejects it, dismisses it as “just nothing.” It lies outside of the scope of science to answer such questions as “what is nothing?” or “why are there essences rather than nothing?” or “what is Being?” These are fundamental and necessary questions that only metaphysics can answer. For instance, let us consider metaphysics and the most general and all-embracing of the physical sciences like cosmology and the physics of elementary particles. These two fields of study have turned out to be closely connected and have since the 1960s, produced significant results for metaphysics. Physical cosmology seemsto show that the physical universe had a beginning in time (between 15 to 20 billion years ago) – or at least that it does not have an infinite past throughout which it has been much the same as it is now.[[46]](#footnote-47) But it cannot answer all metaphysical questions such as: Why does the World exist? Physical cosmology cannot tell us whether the physical universe is all there is.

To highlight the depth of the shallowness of science and the fundamental necessity of metaphysics, Heidegger invokes Descartes imagery of the tree of philosophy.[[47]](#footnote-48) The roots of the tree represent metaphysics, the stem is physics and the branches are the other sciences. The tree seems to be complete but what is the source of its life? What is the soil on which the roots (metaphysics) rests, from where the entire tree gets its nourishment and on which its foundation rests? The soil, Heidegger answers is Being. It is the unperceived revelation of Being, the truth of Being. To dig back to the soil, the being that constitutes the foundation of all philosophy and ontology, is the imperative task of metaphysics. This digging back ipso facto constitutes the overcoming or the destruction of traditional metaphysics. Far from being a rejection of metaphysics, the overcoming is an assumption of it, a destruction that ultimately leads to a reconstruction of ontology.[[48]](#footnote-49)Thus, while science ends at the level of what is, that is at the things-in-themselves, Heidegger holds that metaphysics goes right back to the foundation of the things-in-themselves. The next section will throw more light on this Heideggerian position.

It is important to state clearly the fact that the central question which Heidegger set out to investigate was the problem of Being and not man as such. He was preoccupied with working out the meaning of Being. Although Being is considered the most universal concept, this does not presuppose that it is the clearest of all to understand. Rather, it is the darkest of all. This does not, however, hinder the search for the meaning of Being but instead promotes it as Heidegger says: “the indefinability of being does not eliminate the question of its meaning; it demands that we look that question in the face.”[[49]](#footnote-50)Stressing the necessity of the search for the meaning of Being, Heidegger’s lectures on the ‘law of sufficient reason’ concluded with the exhortation: “Does not the essence of man, does not his belonging to Being, does not the essence of Being itself remain ever yet and ever more overwhelmingly what befits thought?”[[50]](#footnote-51)Although Being is continuously manifesting itself in things, Being itself has been forgotten. Human beings have been caught up in the web of their own ideas.[[51]](#footnote-52)

Heidegger insisted that Western Metaphysics has always considered particular beings and not Being itself. As such, Western Metaphysics was ontical, not ontological. Ontological metaphysics studies Being*qua* Being rather than particular beings. Heidegger again posed this question in another way: “Why are there *essents* rather than nothing? That is the question. Clearly it is no ordinary question. ‘Why are there *essents*, why is there anything at all, rather than nothing?’”[[52]](#footnote-53) Heidegger was, therefore, concerned with what he considered the most essential philosophical question, which is the meaning of Being, its sense or its purpose, that is, what renders it intelligible.[[53]](#footnote-54)

**5. Conclusion**

As a result, this paper attempts to establish the link between science and metaphysics. This relationship is sifted with a lot of tribulations.In classical philosophy with Aristotle and his followers, the knowledge of reality *in itself*was limited to the domain of metaphysics and there was an intimate relationship between metaphysics (philosophy) and science. But, with the rise of the empirical sciences in the (17th century) and logical positivism in the (20th century), metaphysics gradually lost its credibility. The debate was a reject of metaphysics in favour of science, since it was considered as a pseudo-science.This paper shows Rudolf Carnap and Alfred Jules Ayer keen on eliminatingmetaphysics at all cost. This is because statements of this nature arenot backed by any empirical evidenceand are therefore meaningless. Martin Heidegger on his part comes in to salvage the situation given that he holds on to the superiority of metaphysics over science. He thinks that metaphysics is the foundation on which science should base its entire enquiry about nature. This is because it is man’s most fundamental concern with the world. Although Heidegger thinks that ever since Plato the question of Being was forgotten, it is not due to the limited intellectual capacities of man, but because the nature of being conceals itself.

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