

Metaphysics and the Challenge of Logical Positivism: An Interrogation

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ABSTRACT Metaphysics ranks as one of the core branches of philosophy, after epistemology, ethics and logic. The word 'core' is deliberately used here to underscore the point that metaphysics is such a fundamental area of philosophy as distinct from the applied areas such as philosophy of science, philosophy of law, philosophy of education etc. The intention is not to belittle these areas of philosophy, but rather to show the centrality of metaphysics in the programme of philosophy since no such curriculum can hardly be complete if it omits metaphysics. A quick flashback in history reminds us that metaphysics, otherwise called 'After Physics' following a posthumous title given to Aristotle's works by Andronicus of Rhodes, had a beginning dating back to the ancient times when the Ionian philosopher-scientists reflected on the ultimate stuff or substance of the universe or what is there? The term metaphysics has come to mean the science of being as such and in recent times, it has concerned itself with the investigation into the nature of reality and raises questions as to what is the ground of being? What is the essence of being? What is the meaning of life and the purpose of man? Metaphysicians carried on their business unchallenged right from the ancient, through the mediaeval and the early modern period, although, there were disagreements and disputations which is a common feature in philosophy. However, there was a certain conspiracy, as it were, a gang-up in the modern period emanating from the activities of the logical positivists to destroy and erase metaphysics from the compass of philosophy. It is the challenge posed by logical positivist to metaphysics that will pre-occupy us in this article and the grounds as well as the justification for such revolt and whether the revolt was successful or botched.