Chapter V

The Possibility of Metaphysics - A Critical Survey in Logical Positivism

Logical Positivism featured an unique distinction in the criticism of metaphysics in the contemporary period of analytical philosophy, from which 'metaphysics' seemed to have received the most hard-line attack, after David Hume. It was David Hume, the thoroughgoing sceptic, who by this empiricistic theory of knowledge, committed 'metaphysics' to flames since it contains nothing but sophistry and illusion, as he opined. Hume's distinction of knowledge into 'relation of ideas and matters of facts' was the basis for such outright rejection of metaphysics.

If we hold in our hand any volume of divinity or school metaphysics, so Hume contended, let us ask; does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matters of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames; for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion...¹

Such fate of 'metaphysics' seemed to have received in the contemporary age of analysis with the rise of 'Logical Positivists' movement in philosophy, during a period of time when the entire world was in full spate of revolution in the sector of science. Technology and philosophy with the advent of new and revolutionary perspectives with regard to methodology and technology in these sectors. Logical Positivism was a by product of such a revolution in philosophy as one of the most conspicuous analytical and anti-
metaphysical movement in philosophy with distinctively two-point programmes or objectives; namely, first, to demonstrate the impossibility of metaphysics that constitute the negative aspect of its philosophy; and secondly, to defend and safeguard the interests of the sciences and to provide a more secure foundation to them, which was shaken by the triumphing regime of the absolutistic metaphysics of Hegel and Bradley which reigned supreme for decades and which pronounced against the contentions of science and common sense quite to the embarrassment of the scientists and philosophers.

Logical Positivism stood for the philosophy of a group of thinkers called 'Vienna Circle' who all resolutely set up a group, joint campaign against 'metaphysics' or philosophy as a speculative enquiry of some sort, having all learnt from the background of science and mathematics, and all working on the borderlands of science, mathematics and philosophy. Almost all the exponents of this anti-metaphysical movement essentially belonged to a wider movement of the "Unity of Science" or "Scientific Empiricism" which often shaded off into scientific philosophy or philosophy of science.

In history of philosophy, there are alternate periods of construction and destruction. Hume's empiricism with his extreme scepticism marked a height of the destructive moment following the constructive rationalistic metaphysics. Logical positivism exhibited the peak of a destructive moment that follows the constructive metaphysics of Hegel and neo-Hegeleans, particularly the Bradlean absolutistic metaphysics. In this plight, it combined the anti-transcendental and empirical teachings of earlier thinkers like Hume, Mill, Mach, with the analytical methods of scientific thinkers like Helmholtz, Poincare and Einstein, and of mathematical philosophers and symbolic logicians like Frege, Russell and Whitehead, of contemporary analysts like
Moore and particularly the early Wittgenstein whose Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus exerted a great influence on the movement.

Logical positivists approached metaphysics on purely analytical and linguistic ground and consider the question of its possibility from the standpoint of the logic of language or the criterion of meaning. The fundamental question that now arises: In what sense metaphysics has been condemned by the logical positivists? Why they consider metaphysics impossible? How do the statements about 'metaphysical' become senseless, devoid of any cognitive meaning? How do the metaphysicians commit the violation of the logic of language and render statements into meaningless nonsense?

By 'metaphysics' the logical positivists mean any theory of Reality beyond or behind what can be grasped by experience. As Prof. A.J. Ayer puts it in an article entitled, "Demonstration of the impossibility of Metaphysics", in Mind, July, 1934, "The fundamental postulate of metaphysics" is that there is "a super (or hinter) phenomenal reality". He further points out that "it is the aim of metaphysics to describe a reality lying beyond experience and, therefore, any proposition which would be verified by empirical observation is ipso facto not metaphysical".

The above contention of Prof. Ayer provides a clue to the nature of 'metaphysical' which metaphysics claims (or pretends) to describe and question. 'Metaphysical' is understood to mean "trans-phenomenal empirical reality" that necessarily transcends our means of representation or experience. Hence, metaphysical statements about these 'super (or hinter) phenomenal reality' are ipso facto not subject to the conditions of meaningful representations or of 'experience' and, as such, are not meaningfully,
determinable either as true or false by reference to 'empirical verification' or logical conditions of verifiability by facts of experience. All meaningful representations or statements in the view of the logical positivists are required, as fundamental requisites, to be verifiable by observation directly or indirectly or by at least some conditions of verifiability by experience (in principle), if there are to be meaningful at all. These are to be analysed into simple statements expressing what is called "observation sentences" that bear the reports of the immediate experience. As all experiences and so the statements required to be verified for their truth and falsity, these ultimately must depend on the method of verification (or conditions of) by facts of experience. What is not subject to such 'principle of verification' or the conditions of verifiability by experience and so, not subject to determinability either as true or false is ipso facto not a genuine statement expressing a proposition at all and, hence, it is determinable on such count as "senseless nonsense and pseudo devoid of cognitive meaning". It is also, in this sense of the criterion of significance, "counter-syntactical" being a product of the commission of logical errors or as it is otherwise called "violation of the logic of language". It would be seen that on lines of the logical positivists' analysis, metaphysical statements are turned out to be "senseless, pseudo and counter-syntactical", as the metaphysicians in their pretension to state "trans-phenomenal reality" and to produce significant statements which they claim to be 'certain and objectively true', render statements which express no genuine proposition at all but only "a meaningless combinations of words or signs they have used in their language by commission of logical errors - that is, violating the logic of language. They fail to understand the rules of language - syntactical and semantics, fail to discriminate between the superficial structure and "the
deep structure of language" and, thus, fail to assign meaning to the component expressions in their language which ultimately terminate all statements "pseudo and meaningless nonsense".

This rendering of the logical positivists' regarding the nature of metaphysical statements and also of the impossibility of metaphysics seem to be different from the consideration that led some earlier thinkers like Hume, Kant and others to a similar conclusion. While these earlier thinkers regarded metaphysical questions about trans-empirical reality 'insoluble' because of the limitations of human knowledge, the logical positivists considered these very questions and statements as "meaningless combinations of words", as the metaphysicians violate the rules of meaningful employment of signs used in their language. The ground of rejection of metaphysics by these earlier thinkers such as Hume, Mill, Mach, Kant or James were empirical and epistemological, the logical positivists condemned 'metaphysics' and demonstrated its impossibility on grounds which are "analytical and logical or linguistic". It is even different from the classical positivist like Comte who rejected it as being unfruitful pursuit or being unwarranted as its truth cannot be proved by "experience". Even its contemporary thinkers such as Moore and Russell, although pioneers of the analytical movement and influenced the movement of logical positivism in their characteristic ways, differ from it as to their method of approach to metaphysics as also of the method of analysis employed by them.

The logical positivists approached 'metaphysics' from the standpoint of the criterion of meaning, - that is, the conditions which determine whether or not its statements express any meaningful proposition at all. This condition of meaning and sense constitutes the 'logic' of language. This consideration of the logical positivists when drawn, as we have already seen,
from their general empirical conviction that all meaningful statements must have their root in experience; if they are at all descriptions of facts, with reference to which their truths and falsity are 'verifiable', and also from their new, revolutionary conception of the method of philosophy - proper as being purely an 'activity' of logical analysis of language, in terms of which the efficacy of metaphysics was judged. In this, it may be observed, the logical positivists seemed to have been greatly influenced by Humean analysis of knowledge with his antimetaphysical leaning as well as the early Wittgenstein's logical analysis of language in the Tractatus.

In his 'Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding', Hume through his empiricistic analysis of knowledge, classified the domain of meaningful or significant knowledge into that concerning relation of ideas and that concerning matters of facts which exhausted the universe of meaningful discourse. On such a Humean division, 'metaphysics' was denigrated to the status of mere "sophistry and illusion", which deserved to be consigned to the 'flames'.

In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein approached 'metaphysics' also from the 'logic' of language and analysed propositions into tautology contradiction and factual contingent which encompass the entire corpus of meaningful discourse. The former two are purely formal and as such "say nothing about the world", except this that while tautologies are logically certain or valid in all possible worlds. The contradictions are logically invalid in all possibilities, their truths stem from the formal internal properties, relations and meanings of the concepts contained in the expressions in propositions - that is, to say, follow from the very conditions of analyticity or being tautologies (or contradictions). The latter, factual contingents are all meaningful significant propositions which are descriptions of a possible state of affairs and are
either true or false as being picture or representations of the world of facts. It is this descriptive statements which is either true or false of an objective situation and belong to the "natural sciences". Again, since these two cover the universe of discourse, and that there is no room for "philosophical statements" or "metaphysical ones", metaphysics terminates in producing pseudo statements devoid of meaning.

In the same vein, following Humean and particularly the Tractarean analysis of language, by which Schlicks and others were much influenced, the logical positivists also approached 'metaphysics' from the stand point of this criterion of meaning in the light of the new, revolutionary conception of 'the method of philosophy' and classified all meaningful propositions into 'analogic' and 'synthetic' factual which exhaust the whole of meaningful statements. While the farmer is 'apriori' and formal being empty of any factual contents and independent of it, the meaning of this type of statement, as of pure mathematics and formal logic, is uniquely 'determinable' and 'verifiable' by a mere analysis of the definitional meaning, axioms or postulates, the internal logical properties and relations contained in the expressions in the words, the meaning of such analytic statement is grounded in the condition of 'analyticity or being tautology. The latter, on the contrary, is 'aposteriori' and as such, 'experience' dependent as it is significant only with reference to a 'fact of experience' which ultimately determines its truth and falsity. Wittgenstein in this context remarked in the tractatus that, 'to understand a proposition, we must understand what is the case, if it is true'. The logical positivists also contended that in order to be meaningful, this type of statement must be a 'description' of a 'facts of experience' truly or falsely and this objectivity or referent of a possible experiential situation lays down the conditions of its meaning. In
Wittgenstein's parlance, every proposition must be a 'picture' or representation of a possible states of affairs. There is only one and one way of analysis that all (descriptive) propositions are ultimately analysable and resolved into simplest propositions that convey or present a station of affairs, says TLP. The logical positivists also subscribed to the self same belief that if we analyse factual statements we find that they ultimately convey some reports of 'facts of experience'. Some spoke of 'simplest statements expressing' observation - sentences' bearing the direct reports of experiential situation to which all putative statements of complex structure can be reducible and with reference to such conditions of 'facts of experiences'. Their meaning are determinable or verifiable as being true of false. Thus 'to understand the meaning of such statements, we have then to refer to the facts of experience to which they must agree, if they are true'. Now, since 'meaning' of this type of descriptive statements terminate in facts of 'experience' and this is also the 'method' by which we 'verify' (determine their truth and falsely) then it can be said that 'the method of ascertaining the significance of a statement is the same as that of its verification', so the logical positivists contended. The fundamental requisites of 'sense and meaning' of this factual statement is that is must be subject to some conditions (at least some even in principle) of verifiability by fact of experience, if this to be meaningful at all. It's factuality lies in the conditions of 'verifiability by experience directly, indirectly or even in principle. Thus, we see on such count, the logical positivism came to adopt 'the verificational theory of meaning' which was expressed by this dictum : The meaning of a proposition is the method of its verification.

On the same line of argument with Hume and Wittgenstein in TLP, the logical positivists upheld the view that since this division of meaningful
statements into analytic and synthetic factual comprise the whole of meaningful discourse, there left no room for 'metaphysical statements' that 'pretend' to be 'descriptive' of facts pertaining to 'the trans-empirical or phenomenal reality, and which are claimed to be 'certain and objectively true'. Their argument rest on the criterion of meaning that if a statement expressing a proposition which is neither formal analytic nor synthetic factual subject to the 'conditions' of verifiability by facts of experience, then it would be evident that the statement expressing no significant proposition at all. It would be demonstrated as "pseudo" proposition devoid of any cognitive meaning. On the same point of argument regarding the demonstration of the impossibility of metaphysics, it may be argued that by the principle of 'significant denial or of non-contradiction it may be seen that if a proposition is significant it must presuppose a significant denial, for proposition is as much significant as its denial. Being so, the denials of a true 'synthetic' proposition is significant though false, whereas the opposite of an analytic statement would result a self-contradiction. But the denial of a metaphysical statement like "Absolute is One, Reality is absolute. The things in themselves are unknown and unknowable etc." does not involve a significant denial nor self-contradiction. This again unravels the fact that the metaphysical statements or utterances are pseudo statements resulting from violation of the conditions of meaning. This rendering also reveals that there is also a semblance of resemblance between Hume, Wittgenstein in TLP and the logical positivists in their approach to metaphysics which has been put to question from the stand point of the logic of language or the criterion of meaning.

This consideration of the 'condition' of meaning of a statement as embodied in the method of verification, has been expressed by Prof. A.J.
Ayer in his language - Truth and Logic thus:

We say that a sentence is factually significant to any given person, if and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express - That is, if he knows what observations would lead him under certain conditions, to accept the proposition as being true, or reject it as being false. If on the other hand, the putative proposition is of such a character that the assumption of its truth, or falsehood, is consistent with any assumption whatsoever concerning the nature of his future experience, then, as far as he is concerned, it is if not a tautology, a mere pseudo-proposition. The sentence expressing it may be emotionally significant to him, but it is not literally significant.²

This above contention of Prof. A.J. Ayer illustrates the logical positivistic attitude to 'metaphysics' and also the ground of its logical impossibility or condemnation. "Metaphysics" has been viewed as being 'emotive' and clearly discriminated from what is 'cognitively significant'³. In a debate in which Prof. Ayer encountered with Coplestone as embodied in the essay 'logical positivism - a debate', Prof. Ayer seemed to have cleared the senses in which both the expressions 'cognitive' and 'emotive' has been used or referred to. By 'cognitive', he meant that which 'satisfies' the criterion of meaning and significance in which he accommodated the statements of sciences, everyday language that are used for descriptions of any experiential situation and even, the analytic statements of pure mathematics and formal logic the meaning of which can be determined and also 'verifiable'
in that restricted sense by a analysis of the meaning of the symbols employed in them. These three categories of statements are treated as 'meaningful' as these 'satisfy' the logical positivists' criterion of meaning. But metaphysical statements, even the value-statements are viewed as 'emotive' being 'noncognitive' and by this Ayer meant 'what does not satisfy' the criterion of meaning⁴. They are thus 'nonsignificant' also, being devoid of cognitive meaning and what is 'cognitive' the meaning of which depends on the method of verification and the metaphysical ones cannot be fitted into it - hence are 'not' literally significant. This amounts to meaning that the logical positivists made a restricted use of the expressions 'meaning', 'cognitive', 'significance' and even understanding or intelligibility of what we talk about or say significantly and that which must have some relevance to science, mathematics and everyday language or discourse in 'that' restricted sense. It is also important and worthy to be noted that it would be misleading and counter to the 'intent' of the logical positivists to hold that there are two distinctive criterions - one for 'cognitive, significant' and another for 'noncognitive, nonsignificant' which is literally viewed as 'meaningless and pseudo', as Prof. Coplestone pointed out⁵. There is one and only one criterion of meaning as embodied in 'the method of verification' to which all knowledge or statements expressing a (meaningful) proposition must adhere, if they are to be 'cognitive', meaningful at all.

Of course, Prof. Ayer in the same article made a passing reference that he has to make one criterion of meaning for analytic one again for factual statements of sciences, and again a third criterion for the valuational judgements or utterances⁶ which are all 'imperatives' in character and as R.M. Hare and others would be viewing, have both as 'prescriptive' and 'descriptive' role to play. The ethical statements are 'imperative, emotive
being evaluational and they illuminate or enlighten man's action, response, understanding and awareness of life and its meaningful existence (in sense of) as we attempt to evaluate our actions and meaningful existence, but they are clearly 'noncognitive' as do not 'satisfy' that very criterion of meaning as embodied in 'the method of verification', the logical positivists talk about. The reason of this restricted sense of the use of the expression 'meaning' may be subscribed to their strong conviction and adherence to the empirical sciences and mathematics, - The background from which they have all grown up and which shaped this ideas.

But the logical positivists seemed to leave no room or concession for 'metaphysics' which they in clearer terms condemned as 'senseless and pseudo' as it 'pretends' to be cognitive, but it is not so as a matter of fact which makes it pseudo and, while attempting to be cognitive, it violates the logic of language and renders in meaningless nonsense devoid of any cognitive meaning by the commission of logical errors.

What the logical positivists vehemently opposed to was 'metaphysics or philosophy as a speculative discipline. They let no space for any special kind of knowledge being expressed in distinctively 'philosophical' statements and it is with this 'super phenomenal transcendent realities (or hinters as Ayer said) that speculative metaphysics totally engaged. Schlicks followed the instance of Wittgenstein in the tractatus which he considered as 'marking a turning point in the history of philosophy and subscribed to his revolutionary view of the method of philosophy as being purely analytical not speculative. Philosophy is not a body of propositions or truths, not a theory or doctrine, nor consisted in philosophical system building. It is only an 'activity' of logical analysis and elucidation of the meaning of the concepts or expressions used
in science or mathematics or in everyday language\textsuperscript{7}, seeking clarity in the understanding of the meaningful employment of signs and expressions in these fields of significant discourse.

Moritz Schlicks thus opined, 'the great contemporary turning point is characterised by the fact that we see philosophy not as a system of cognition, but a system of acts, philosophy is that activity, through which the meaning of statements is revealed or determined. By means of philosophy statements are explained, by means of science they are verified. The later is concerned with truth of statements, the former with what they actually mean\textsuperscript{8}.

At the instance of Wittgenstein in the tractatus, the logical positivists also emphasised the correct only 'method and function of philosophy' as being purely analytical, not at all speculative, and which consists in 'purely an activity of logical analysis and elucidation' of the 'meaning' of statements expressing a proposition that pertains to science, or mathematics or in everyday language. Now, since 'metaphysics' embodies 'statements' which do not express a 'proposition at all' either analytic or factually verifiable, and since it is neither 'analytical' nor empirical it is condemned as 'meaningless devoid of any cognitive meaning and treated as 'impossible'. The efficacy of 'metaphysics' is thus judged on such revolutionary conception of the method of philosophy and the ground of its rejection has been 'analytical or linguistic', - not empirical or epistemological as shown by Hume, Kant, James, even the classical positivists like Comte and Buddha who also seemed to denounce 'metaphysics' on the ground of being 'unfruitful, unpractical or having no relevance to practical life' at all. The analytical method which formed the ground of rejection of speculative metaphysics,
by Wittgenstein and the logical positivists, constituted the distinctive mark of both Wittgenstein and the logical positivism as the most conspicuous movement in analytical philosophy.

In the article 'logical positivism - a debate', Prof. Ayer gave an account of this above position of logical positivism with regard to metaphysics as a distinctive branch of knowledge or a 'critical' or a cognitive activity in the field of knowledge be remarked that 'Logical positivism is not a system of philosophy. It consists rather in a certain technique - a certain kind of attitude towards philosophic problems .... we deny the possibility of philosophy as a speculative discipline, we should say that if philosophy was to be a branch of knowledge, as distinct from the sciences, it would have to consist in logic or in some form of analysis and our reason for this would be some what as follows. We maintain that you can divide propositions into two classes, formal and empirical. Formal propositions like those of logic and mathematics, depend for their validity on the conventions of a symbol system. Empirical propositions on the other hand, are statements of actual or possible observation or hypothesis, from which such statements can be logically derived, it is they that constitute science in so far as science is not purely mathematical. Now our contention is that this exhausts the fields of what may be called speculative knowledge. Consequently, we reject metaphysics, if this be understood, as an attempt to gain knowledge about the world by non scientific means. In as much as metaphysical statements are not testable by observation, we hold that they are not descriptive of anything. And from this we should conclude that if philosophy is to be a cognitive activity it must be purely critical. It would take the form of trying to elucidate the concepts that were used in science or mathematics or in everyday language.
Carnap also on the line of this new conception of philosophy as an activity of logical analysis and clarification of the meaning of language used in science called philosophy 'the logic of science' and tried to bring it within the domain of logic in his logical syntax of language. In the fareword to this he says 'philosophy is to be replaced by the logic of science - that is to say by the logical analysis of the concepts and sentences of science, for the logic of science is nothing other than the logical syntax of language of science'.

The fundamental point towards which we drive, Wittgenstein as well as the logical positivists such as Schlick, Ayer, Carnap and others condemned 'metaphysics' and showed its impossibility on this revolutionary conception of philosophy-itself which featured a distinctive mark of the analytical movement in philosophy to which these philosophers subscribed. If philosophy would not have been viewed in this new term as purely 'an activity of logical analysis' of the meaning of language of natural sciences or everyday discourse, would not have been viewed as 'not a theory or body of true propositions', it would have been a difficult proposition to demonstrate the impossibility of metaphysics.

The above simply boils down to saying that on the face of this new conception of philosophy as only a technique or method of analysis and clarification of 'meaning', metaphysics as a speculative philosophy withers away or loses all its ground.

Logical analysis reveals that metaphysics seems into 'meaninglessness' when it fails to 'satisfy the criterion of meaningfulness', fails to express a genuine proposition which is to be either analytic or factually verifiable - both of which totally exhaust the domain of speculative knowledge or significant
Metaphysical statements do not express any proposition at all which they 'pretend' to do, they do not say anything true or false at all which appear to do because of the superficial structure of language. The logical positivists condemned 'metaphysics for pretending to be cognitive which has not Misinterpreting his own utterances as stating some facts being deceived by the superficial grammatical structure metaphysicians misled into believing that his statements say some facts or genuine proposition, they attempt to say what cannot be said at all and these lapse into meaningless nonsense by commission of such logical errors. This makes the metaphysicians, statements 'pseudo and meaningless'. The ground of rejection and condemnation of the metaphysical statements as being so by the logical positivists is not that the statements contain no value at all, for as Ayer said, they might contain some poetic or emotive value but that they do not express what they pretend to be, that they pretend and claim to be cognitive but in reality they are 'noncognitive, nonsignificant' and as such do not satisfy the criterion of meaning' - cannot be verifiable by the method of verification by any possible 'conditions' of experience.

The logical positivists such as, Carnap, Neurath, Halm contended that if, any one asserts, 'There is God', 'the first cause of the world is the unconscious', 'there is an entolectic which is the leading principle in living being'. We do not say 'what you say is false'. Rather, we ask him, 'what do you mean by your statement? It then appears that there is a sharp distinction between two types of statements. One of the types includes statements as they are made in empirical sciences, their meaning 'can be determined by logical analysis, or more precisely by reduction to simple sentences about the empirically given. The other statements as mentioned above show themselves to be completely meaningless. The metaphysicians
and theologicians, misinterpreting their own sentences, believe that their sentences assert something, represent some state of affairs, nevertheless, analysis shows that these sentences do not say anything..." (Emphasis added)\textsuperscript{12}. This passage clearly speaks of logical positivists view on 'metaphysics' namely that metaphysical statements are devoid of cognitive meaning, that they become so due to their authors violating the rules of significance. By sheer commission of logical errors, i.e., of rules of syntax, what is devoid of significance and cognitive meaning is projected as being so, and this makes the statements, senseless, pseudo and 'what is called counter-syntactical' as they fail to satisfy, the criterion of meaning which is contained in the method of verification.

The arguments against 'speculative metaphysics' here are all drawn from the logical positivistic dictum : 'the meaning of a proposition is the method, of its verification'. By applying it to the metaphysical doctrines regarding inexperienced entities it is pointed out that such doctrines are meaningless since ex-hypothesi we cannot verify them by any 'possible' (conditions of) experience. Prof. A.J. Ayer illustrated this position by citing some instances in his \textit{Language, Truth and Logic}. Some metaphysician hold that the sensible world is a mere unreal appearance. Such a statement cannot be verified by any sense experience, the veracity of which is here questioned. It cannot, therefore, be said either to be true or false. It is nonsensical. Again, some metaphysicians hold that the ultimate substance or reality is one, others that it is many. But such statements also do not possess any meaning because substance or reality is here conceived as something lying beyond experienced facts and we cannot think of any observation by which the statements can be verified. The empiricists contention of the 'unknown and unknowability of substance' is very much
questioned, for 'logic presuppose the world, the limit of the world is also its limits, as said Wittgenstein in TLP 5.61. Wittgenstein's remark 'to know the limit of the world, we are to go outside of the limit of the world and so outside of logic, and to view it from beyond it' seems to be very much relevant in their context to dispose of such metaphysical statement. Similarly, the age­long controversy between realists and idealists is devoid of significance for we cannot think of any observation by which it can be settled whether there is any object as the external cause of our sense perception existing behind it. All these demonstrations come down to show the impossibility of metaphysics and the meaninglessness of its statements on the ground of 'verifiability' by possible experience which they fail to satisfy.

A fundamental question may be raised here, how do the metaphysical problems arise and how indeed do the metaphysicians produce nonsense? How do this statements become pseudo and meaningless combination of words? How they violate the logic of language?

These are certain questions that demand answers from within the logical positivistic framework of the criterion of meaning or the 'logic' of language, that is, the rules of language that form the basis or conditions of meaning. Kant, and even Hume, attempted in their epistemological grounds to answer the question in the mode of 'why' metaphysical problems were arise and why are they insoluble. The answers that Kant tried to extend was that the metaphysical problems are insoluble because of the limitations of human knowledge; but at the same time we cannot prevent them as there remains always a natural urge or instinct to go beyond the limits of the mind or reason and transgress such limit which consequently leads to all ideas of Reason or 'transcendental illusions'.
Wittgenstein in *The Tractatus* as well as the logical positivists took the issue from the epistemological plane to the linguistic or logical ground - from 'why' to 'how' and attempted to show how the metaphysicians violate the 'logic' of language and render their statements meaningless nonsense and pseudo.

Wittgenstein in *The Tractatus* opined that the metaphysicians violate the logic of language in their attempt to say something which cannot be said at all. The only correct method of philosophy would be to demonstrate this that they have failed to give meanings to the signs they have implored or used in their language. When they attempt to say something metaphysical, Wittgenstein in *The Tractatus* tried to solve this problem of the possibility of metaphysics by drawing a legitimate limit to 'what can be said at all' - that is, to the legitimate distinction of significant 'saying' or discourse. He equally made a logical distinction between 'what can be said' and 'what can be shown forth'; 'what shows forth itself' - the 'inexpressible', 'whereof one cannot speak and this must consign to silence'. 'Metaphysicals' are thus referred to and understood as 'that which must necessarily transcend all our means of representation'. Hence, in Wittgenstein's parlance, any attempt to say something metaphysical would render the statements meaningless nonsense resulting "violation of the logic of language".

But the logical positivists made no such explicit statement about 'metaphysicals' - their legitimate sphere or home as did early Wittgenstein in the form of 'what cannot be said' or 'what show forth themselves' or as 'inexpressible' in and through which he managed to keep 'metaphysical' survived. Of course, they spoke of 'metaphysical statements being endowed with some poetic or emotive value', though devoid of any cognitive meaning.
But some logical positivists like Neurath, at the instance of The Tractatus's contention, moved on to remark that with regard to metaphysics one must indeed be silent, but not about anything. Does this remark of Neurath serve as a pointer to an implicit admission of 'metaphysical' and its legitimate status by the logical positivists also? If so, then the logical positivists' reaction against 'speculative metaphysics' and its elimination would be delimited to 'treating metaphysics as a speculative branch of knowledge and being cognitive'. What is objected and condemned, that is, metaphysicians' pretension to bring into the texture of cognitive that which is 'noncognitive' - that is, 'nonsignificant, inexpressible' about which "we must, indeed, be silent" as held by Neurath. 'Metaphysical' is not denounced which is by very nature and legitimate status "trans-empirical and unsayable and that which must transcend all our means of representation or cognition; but what the logical positivists reacted to, is any attempt to express what is, *ipso facto*, trans-empirical, noncognitive - 'inexpressible'; for that would render the statements devoid of any cognitive meaning resulting from a violation of the logic of language". If this rendering is true, then the logical positivists in consonance with defending the empirical sciences, also safeguarded the legitimate 'home' of 'metaphysicals'. Only what they vehemently opposed to and condemned is that "there can be a science of metaphysics, that there can be metaphysical statements expressing meaningful propositions about things - metaphysicals and this is essentially because of their twofold aims of their programmes as evident in logical positivistic movement, namely, (1) to provide a secure foundation to the natural or empirical sciences by this method of verification; (2) to establish philosophy as analytical, not speculative, and, thereby, to demonstrate the impossibility of metaphysics by way of showing through its activity of logical analysis that there can be
no 'space' for any philosophical propositions or doctrines at all, that all true or false propositions are descriptive of facts which belong to the natural sciences only and that true philosophy is the 'activity of logical analysis and clarification of meaning of language used in science or everyday discourse.

Again, if this is true, then, it is misleading to view "logical positivism as radical and destructive" completely, as it ushers in a new era of analytical philosophy and trying to show "paths or ways" philosophers can investigate more profitably rather than creating puzzlement and insoluble problems. It would be viewed as 'purely critical pursuit' on lines with Kant and Wittgenstein in demarcating legitimate spheres of "empirical sciences", philosophy and metaphysical. It would also be misleading to view it as 'highly innocuous' as G.J. Warnock opined, because "it has made a very restricted use of language, expressions, meaning, statements, experience in utter disregard to other forms of language of ordinary discourse used in religion, ethics - aesthetics, art and culture, etc."

Leaving aside this here, let us reflect on how did the logical positivists see the metaphysicians producing statements which turn out to be 'senseless and pseudo' and how did they demonstrate it. According to them, the metaphysicians run into such meaninglessness of their statements by the commission of logical errors. By misunderstanding the logic of language, they lapse into nonsense by producing statements which are products of meaningless combination of words - that is, which express no propositions at all. Language consists of vocabulary and rules of syntax which determines the logical arrangements of words to form meaningful sentences. There may be two ways in which sentences may fail to be meaningful - either one or more words in it may be devoid of sense or sequence of words may
be counter-syntactical. The instances of the first type are "T was broiling and the slithy toves", "Ideas exist in the world of subsistence" or even "The Absolute is all inclusive". It may be seen that metaphysical sentences involving words that claim to represent transcendental realities or propositions fail to be meaningful in this first sense, since these cannot be analysable into sentences about anything that could be verified by facts of experience. Instances of the second type of meaninglessness of utterances resulting from being counter-syntactical are; "was by stabbed Brutus Caesar". "Quadratic equation take part in races", or even "the things in itself lie beyond all possible experience". In such cases, although each constituents words has sense in other contexts and sentences, the peculiar combination of them make no sense at all. The Logical Positivists demonstrated that all metaphysical statements involve meaningless combination of words of either varieties and lapse into senseless nonsense. Carnap in his *Logical Syntax of Language* also spoke of a logical distinction between formal mode and material mode of speech and contended that metaphysical statements commit the logical error of expressing that which is of formal mode in the material mode of speech because of the misunderstanding of the logic of language and lapse into meaningless nonsense. Thus, the logical positivists pointed out that metaphysicians render meaningless statements as they fail to discriminate such logical distinctions between two forms of speech. Misinterpreting their own utterances as saying something true (or false) about the world or reality and thus expressing propositions being deceived by the superficial structure of the sentences, the metaphysicians by commission of logical errors render statements which turn out to be meaningless nonsense and 'pseudo' devoid of any cognitive meaning. The logical positivists come down to the upshot
conclusion that the logical syntax of a proposition is shown by the method of verification on which the meaning of a statement is ultimately founded. Their main grounds for rejecting metaphysics, namely, that metaphysical statements are 'senseless' and are 'counter-syntactical' rest on their criterion of meaning that, every statement in order to be cognitively meaningful must be verifiable by a possible facts of experience, if it is not tautology - the latter being founded on the ground of its being analytic.

The logical positivism, thus, provided a purely analytical basis or method to judge the efficacy of 'metaphysics' as a speculative pursuit of the trans-empirical realities which made it one of the conspicuous movement in analytical philosophy as a forerunner antimetaphysical movement in philosophy. Its success in eliminating metaphysics root and branch may be called upon to question by its critics whose main arguments may be drawn from the considerations regarding the characteristic imperfections of the method of verification 'which served as the cornerstone' of the philosophy of logical positivism and its rejection of metaphysics, but its merit would be foremost in philosophical arena in ushering a new movement in philosophy.
References


4. Ibid., p.586.

5. Ibid., p.586.

6. Ibid., p.606.

7. Ibid., p.587.


10. See R. Carnap's *The Logical Syntax of Language*.


13. G.J. Warnock, "Logical Positivism" in *British Philosophy since 1900*, pp.35-36.