# Metaphysics Today: Challenges Posed By Scientific Materialism and Technology

## **Introduction**

Even with its might and grander, science is yet to perforate the realm of metaphysics. Innately, these two fields are analogous while still sundry. Metaphysics and Science are analogous in the sense that they both try to make plain what there is to the world- both of these fields are in the business of truth. Metaphysics and Science are diverse in the sense that the former is a priori while the later a posteriori. Metaphysics is a priori because it relates to a knowledge or a reasoning that precedes from conjectural deduction rather that experience or observation. Science, on the other hand, is a posterior because it finds essence from actual observation and experimental data (Ross, et al. 2013, p.42). Science is based on empirical studies and statistical data- in science, a premise is espoused based on quantification. Metaphysics, on the other hand, is about reality, from this, it continues to defy quantification. Consciousness is still an enigma to empirical studies and scientific quantification and as long as this persists, metaphysics will always be a hegemon in all things spiritual. This work is about the metaphysical; the essay is organized chronologically, the first part defines relevant concepts; next this document outline the relevance of the metaphysics today. Lastly, this document delineates a conclusion. Ultimately, this work postulate that metaphysics is relevant today as it was 5000 years ago.

## Natural science and the Metaphysical

The word Metaphysics comes from Ancient Greece lingo; the word is an amalgamation of the words –Meta and physics. Meta refers to over and beyond, thus it follows that metaphysics refers to beyond and over physics. Metaphysical concerns itself with time and space, properties of objects, existence, cause and effect, and possibility. The Aristotle schools of thoughts dim metaphysics as a philosophical branch that deals with the nature of being, accordingly, this school of thought views metaphysics as part of "Speculative Philosophy" (Gare, 1999). Metaphysics encumbers an assortment of many fields in today’s world. These fields vary and include religion, philosophy, mysticism, parapsychology, yoga, Jungian, transcendentalism, reincarnation, transpersonal, astrology, dreams, psychology, theocentric psychology, meditation, self-help and life after death (Ross, et al. 2013; Loux and Crisp, 2017). Intrinsically all the above realms have a common denominator which is exploration of reality idealistically and how these may benefit humanity. From these, it may be concluded that metaphysics is a way of life or spiritual philosophy because almost all practitioners of metaphysics pivot at some sought of spiritual philosophy whatever metaphysical branch they ascribe (Kessler 2000).

Provisionally natural science may be viewed as an entity that concerns itself in determining or inquiring about “what is.” Metaphysics on the other hand delves on determining “what what is is.” Science thus concerns itself with the contents of the world while metaphysics about the structure of the world discernible from its content. In all discourses of science there is that that deal with objective truth and that which deals with non-objective truth. There is the science that deal with objective truth-natural science and mathematics; and there is science that in nonobjective even subjective- ethics, aesthetics and politics (Jaffe 2009).

## Challenges Posed By Scientific Materialism and Technology to the Metaphysical

According to (Rosenau, 1991, p.77) the typical postmodernist is skeptical of truth and theory. This poses a challenge to metaphysics, which inherently is a theoretical framework of truth. The modern scientist postulates that truth is local, community specific and personal (Rosenau, 1991). To this group since knowledge and truth/ theory is language bond, truth unequivocally is arbitrary (Rosenau 1992). Language plays a pivotal role in the foundation, structure and upkeep of social reality and by extension theories/ truth and the metaphysical (Mantzavinos, 2009, p.18). This worldview poses a serious challenge to the metaphysic and philosophy.

Television and the internet have increased man’s consciousness to way of life and happenings in foreign lands. In fact, as a result of modern science and technology, the world is but one big village. Due to modern science and technology, man currently lives in a world of disillusion and fragmentation where probability has superseded reality and naïve totalities toppled through the uncovering of their ineptitude. Nihilism is in fashion as it thrives on the belief of randomness; indeed the scientific age has led to a psyche where man it seems no longer possess stable truth his ancestors once enjoyed (Miklowitz 1998).

Virtual reality and the internet are pervasive concepts in the current postmodern scientific materialism and technology (Introna 1997; Carey 2011; Heim 1994). Modern science and Technological have created multiuser dungeons (MUDS) from whence users become a “second self” as a result of virtual reality. Further, users interact with each other in a virtual community unhinged; aspects such as the weather, soil, molecular makeup et cetera are nonexistent and even when they exists are unreal, a creation of science (Cooper 1995). This poses a serious challenge to civilization and philosophy as these two go hand in hand. Critical thought is achieved only through distance; the internet technology obliterates this distance. If man is unable to distance himself from the high fidelity which technology creates through virtual reality, he will be ensnared into hi-tech representation of virtual reality and this will signal the end of philosophy and ultimately civilization (Mclaren 2012).

Knave (1995) asserts that several themes pervade postmodern thought in relation to knowledge, truth, epistemology, philosophy, theory and metaphysics. Accordingly, Knave (1995) posits that postmodernism view all human truth as simple objective representations of reality. Further, postmodernist hypothesize that society use language to create personal realities and prefer the local and the specific in place of the universal and abstract (Knave 1995). These realities obviously have negative implications on philosophy and the metaphysical.

According to (Rosenau 1992) postmodern views on epistemology and philosophy either completely refute philosophical truth in their entirety or propose drastic changes to philosophical truths such as metaphysics. Postmodern schools of thought are overly skeptical of conventional criteria used in evaluation of theory, truth and knowledge. The foundation of all postmodern knowledge it seem is hinged on some form of epistemological nihilism (Calinescu 1987). Rosenau (1992) asserts that while postmodern may seem to challenge pivotal assumptions to knowledge, truth and objectivity and in its place an emphasis on communal construction of knowledge, this is not necessarily the case. In fact, postmodernism invite new approach to the understanding of research and by extension truth (Rosenau 1992; Gergen 2001).

## The Importance of Metaphysics

Metaphysics is vital because without it, it would be hard to fashion an explanation about the world, in a sense it is from metaphysic that all else including science or philosophy finds foundation (Aristotle 2008, p. 3). Absent an interpretation or an explanation of the world humans are helpless in dealing with reality. Metaphysics exist because it has for a millennia been used as a top down methodology for investigating a premise and the substrate that is reality. Through philosophical metaphysics, the vacuum that the mystical creates is filled. Man's level of metaphysical worldview is directly proportional to his comprehension of the world and thus how he imposes his essence in the world. Absent a firm foundation of the metaphysical, all knowledge, truths or premise becomes suspect.

Nevertheless, even with the criticality an importance of the metaphysical, this realm is often dismissed by the ignorant layman and postmodernist as an inconsequential quest of the spiritual and the mystic (Aristotle 2008). The dismissal generally is proportional to the layman’s ignorance to philosophy. The irony is that every human being in the world including the ignorant layman applies metaphysics routinely on virtually all their psyche (Aristotle 2008). Ultimately, the realm of metaphysics is inescapable to man. This is so as will be outlined in next. A man who routinely or autonomously fulfills a task absent any superstitions on what they are doing intrinsically applies metaphysics (Aristotle 2008). Said man’s action is founded on metaphysical principle. The existence of the man from watering his garden to preparing a cup of coffee has a natural identity, a nature that behaves in a particular modus. Abstractly the man relies on the “law of identity” which is a consequence of the “law of causality.” The “law of identity” proposes that for a thing to exists, it must do so as something and not nothing (Aristotle 2008). From these end, these mundane acts of man are based on metaphysical principles because all existence have specific, intimate identities. Thus it follows that existence has a certain identity and will behave specifically vis a vis other identities and hence the “law of causality” (Frank And Cohen 1998).

## Conclusion

This work reviews the challenges that modern science materialism and technology has on metaphysics. By reviewing different works on philosophy by an assortment of writers, this work hypothesizes that while modern science and technology does indeed pose a challenge to metaphysics, the metaphysical is still relevant today as it was 5000 years ago. Ultimately, the metaphysical will always be part of the human psyche; it will always have a hegemon over science to matters of spiritual, the conscious and “what is.” Until science finds a way to quantify the being or concepts such as mysticism, parapsychology, Jungian, transcendentalism, reincarnation, transpersonal et cetera in a manner that these concepts can be reduced to statistical data and analyzed, the metaphysical will always transcend science despite challenges from modernism scientific materialism.

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