

# **TRUTH AS CORRESPONDENCE RECONSIDERED**

by

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## **Abstract**

Contemporary philosophical investigations of truth (especially in the analytical philosophical tradition) treat the concept as a “thin concept”, and so reduce truth discourses to conceptual analysis of intentional signs (concepts, propositions) or analysis of the truth predicate by considering its logical, semantic and anaphoric function in sentences (or propositions). This reductive conception of truth neglects the importance of the conscious and intentional act of the subject and thus results in an explosion of deflationary theories, and even the quest for the elimination of truth. Contrary to the views that consider truth as a “thin” concept, I argue that a robust substantive conception of truth as correspondence is essential if we are to account for the importance of truth in philosophy and daily human existence. To account for such an understanding of truth, a philosophical investigation of truth must be explored within a wider context of the human quest for knowledge and self-transcendence. Such examination requires an explicit articulation of the cognitional theory on which a conception of truth is founded. This is because a philosopher’s conception of truth is influenced by the cognitional theory that he or she subscribes to. In other words, a philosophical investigation of truth that aims at adequate exposition must account for the conscious and intentional acts of the human subject, since the importance of the role of the knowing subject in the quest for knowledge and truth cannot be underestimated. To account for the role of the subject and the importance of foundational cognitional theory, the conception of truth as correspondence that is defended in this thesis is based on a comprehensive tripartite (experiencing, understanding and judging) cognitional structure. Moreover, an explicit examination of the cognitional theory on which a theory of truth is based is vital to establish the relation between knowledge, truth, objectivity and being (reality).

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction to the Main Idea of the Thesis

This thesis argues that the various treatments of truth in contemporary analytic philosophy are bound to fall short of a proper account of the matter, and the reason for this has to do with the broader framing of philosophy in contemporary culture. I refer to the neglect of the human subject as the one who raises the question of truth. After this introductory chapter I will embark on a series of discussions of most of the competitors in the truth-debate in analytic philosophy. In each case I will apply my theory to that particular theory of truth. Finally, I will outline one approach that reaches back into the premodern treatment of truth, the correspondence theory, but that also takes this contemporary neglect of the subject as key to any discussion of truth, and consequently reformulates the older version. I refer to the cognitional theory of Bernard Lonergan, termed by himself as ‘critical realism’, and I will argue for the broad adequacy of his approach.

The structure of Lonergan’s conception of truth can be unpacked in terms of ‘correspondence’, or ‘relation of knowing to being’. But we need to highlight the dimension of such ‘correspondence’, seen in terms of human actualisation, that is judgment, the act of judgment. This idea constitutes the particular contribution of this thesis to the discussion of truth as correspondence, and it is an idea that allows us to make sense of the variety of theories of truth in the contemporary analytic philosophical discussion, our chosen matrix for the discussion of truth. In other words, while the idea of truth as correspondence is the more traditional one, formulated in a premodern, pre-scientific cultural context, yet in our own context of a culture dominated by science and technology, this idea can furnish a much-needed corrective to the oversights of

contemporary analytic philosophy. At least this is what will be argued at length in this thesis. And the key to understanding how the correspondence idea can do this job is to emphasize the dimension of judgment. That is what will be done in the chapters that follow. It is judgment that must be seen as interpreting what ‘correspondence’ actually means. By judgment, I mean the act by which a rational subject affirms or denies that his adequate understanding and formulation of what he has attentively perceived corresponds to what is actually the case. In other words, in judgment the subject affirms or denies that what he has experienced and understood captures what is really the case.

The context of this study is contemporary culture and mindset. In particular it is important to point to the widespread tendency to forget the ‘subject’ (cf. Robinson 2010). There are many reasons for this, which will be touched on later. Bernard Lonergan, for one, identifies this as a central problem in contemporary philosophy, speaking of the neglected subject, or, in his words, ‘truncated’ (1974). By this he means that our understanding of what it is to be a subject is somehow very incomplete, missing something important (as the paralysed person might miss the use of their legs) in our equipment. We will see below what exactly is missed, but it is a loss that is evident in the various treatments of ‘truth’ in contemporary analytic philosophy, the discussion of which furnishes the bulk of this thesis. Lonergan draws on the tradition of Thomas Aquinas and has adapted Aquinas’ treatment of the topic to take into account our own context of thought (Lonergan 1997). Heidegger who explores the concept of truth etymologically from its Greek ἀληθεια (unconcealment or disclosedness) underscores an intrinsic relationship between Dasein as the subject and truth. According to him, “*‘There is’ truth only in so far as Dasein is and so long as Dasein is*” (Heidegger 2008:269). In fact, he does not mince words while articulating the irreplaceable place of the subject as regards truth. He writes: ‘The Being of truth is connected primordially with Dasein. And only because Dasein is as constituted by disclosedness (that is, by understanding), can anything like Being be understood; only so is it possible to understanding Being’ (2008:272). Even if one is to contend that Heidegger’s position is exaggerated, the incontestable point that is made is that the important role of the subject while truth is the question cannot be undermined.

The situation that contemporary philosophy finds itself in is referred to by Michael McCarthy, another follower of Lonergan, in terms of a 'crisis' (1990:1-35). McCarthy takes us through a number of writers in the analytic tradition and we will follow some of his arguments later. McCarthy traces the crisis to 'the emancipation of the empirical and formal sciences from traditional metaphysics and logic' during the Modern period and thus resulted in the 'narrowing of the province of philosophy' (1990:1). One way to sum up the issue is to note (which is at the heart of the analytic approach) how philosophical questions, such as that of truth, are treated in terms of concepts, or by means of linguistic analysis. This shows a disconnect with the originator of concepts, namely the human subject, the rational subject, and their natural yearning. For Lonergan, the actualisation of the subject (and agent) is the ground for any adequate discussion of truth (1972:35). He points out that while understanding is the first goal of our questioning, truth is the goal of rational inquiry as such.

The drive to understand is satisfied when understanding is reached but it is dissatisfied with every incomplete attainment and so it is the source of further questions. The drive to truth compels rationality to assent when evidence is sufficient but refuses assent and demands doubt whenever evidence is insufficient (1972:35).

The term Lonergan uses to describe the process of human actualisation pointed to here is that of 'self-transcendence'. He articulates:

Self-transcendence is the achievement of conscious intentionality, and as the latter has many parts and a long development, so too has the former. There is a first step in attending to the data of sense and of consciousness. Next, inquiry and understanding yield an apprehension of a hypothetical world mediated by meaning. Thirdly, reflection and judgment reach an absolute: through them we acknowledge what really is so, what is independent of us and our thinking. Fourthly, by deliberation, evaluation, decision, action, we can know and do, not just what pleases us, but what truly is good, worth while (1972:35).

To sum up this idea, it is not sensing that satisfies the conditions for knowing, nor is it sensing plus understanding; but it is the act of judging. Furthermore, judging allows one to make choices on the basis of our understanding, so the further question to do with what is worthwhile doing is inevitably raised. So, it is not at all that our understanding of truth could be unpacked simply by an analysis of a concept or set of concepts. It might be argued, on the contrary, that going back to the older, premodern, philosophical

understanding of truth is unhelpful. But I will argue that it is precisely this older treatment that answers to the crisis of philosophy in the contemporary world of thought.

As an example of what we have said, we can take Frege's rejection of the conception of truth as correspondence in order to promote his articulation of truth purely in logical terms. The Fregean logical project contributes to the difficulties of the articulation of truth discourse in terms of correspondence (Frege 1956:290-295). The consequence of the paradigm of objective truth in terms of the primacy of logic that Frege pioneered (McCarthy 1990:41-66) contributed to the neglect or eclipsing of the knowing subject, since the desideratum of a logician regarding the concept of truth is not about how truth is attained and what activities are necessary for its attainment. The goal of logical analysis of truth is rather 'to articulate the internal organization of truths, to show how different logical elements combined to constitute the unity of a thought' (1990:41-42)

Another mark of the crisis of philosophy on the quest for truth as correspondence is exemplified by the dominant sceptical attitude towards knowledge, especially radical or absolute scepticism (Meynell 1998:3-19). The placement of a philosophical moratorium on knowledge and the possibility of its attainment, has a direct influence on the search for truth. For instance, a radical or an absolute sceptic would consider the raising of the questions, like 'what is truth?', or 'what are the conditions for the truth of propositions or statements?' as superfluous.

To say it again, for a philosophical investigation of truth to be adequate without reducing truth to a thin concept, such investigation must be carried out within the large scope of the human quest for knowledge and self-transcendence. Strawson, writing very much within the analytic tradition, seems to agree:

Under the general title *Truth* all these matters have, by one philosopher or another, been discussed; and since the Ramsey-like account of the word 'true' is rather thin fare, it would seem somewhat of a pity that so notable a title should be reserved for so unexciting a thesis. Better, perhaps, let the theory of truth become, part of some other theory: that of knowledge; or of mind; or of meaning (Pitcher 1964:84)

The thinker who set the tone for modern philosophical thinking is of course René Descartes. Frege's starting point for approaching truth via logic (1956:289-311) is

Descartes' assumption of two kinds of reality, the subjective (to do with the knowledge I have of myself, private knowledge according to Descartes 1997:91-109, 134-147) and the objective (science) (see also, today, Nagel's re-expression of this (1979:196-214)). Frege wants objectivity, not a description of some subjective psychological events. But we do not have to go along with this interpretation of Descartes. Taking Frege's quest for objectivity of truth and his exclusion of attention to the subject (so as to avoid the problems of psychologism) as our standpoint for analysing the foundation of the neglect of the subject, it could be said that the Cartesian emphasis on the subject or rather the *Ego Cogito* and his emphasis on ideas, be they innate or not, is responsible for Frege's rendering of ideas to the subjective individual realm. Consequently, there is a need for his third realm of thoughts in which the question of truth arises. But does Descartes' shift to subject necessarily pose itself as a danger to the question of the objectivity of truth? Is the "idea" in Cartesian understanding restricted to the individual or the private and so cannot be shared? My answer to both questions is no. Descartes' emphasis on the subject does not imply the loss of the objectivity of truth. Descartes himself maintained that rational evidence is the only criterion for truth (1997: 96).

Although the Fregean rejection of psychologism is important for the articulation of his objective of pointing out that thoughts rather than ideas are truth-bearers, the exclusion of the centrality of the intentional subject and his acts in order to defend the objectivity of truth is mistaken. In fact, neither the logical turn nor linguistic turn is capable of giving an adequate account of truth. While the Fregean logical primacy is important for the formulation of 'clarity, consistency, and rigor for formal terms' (McCarthy 1990:13) it is not sufficient for the articulation of a robust account of truth in general and truth as correspondence in particular. In other words, neither logic nor semantics nor emphasis on linguistic expressions is sufficient for the defence of the objectivity of truth. Any theory of truth that aims to be robustly substantive and to defend the objectivity of truth must unfailingly take into account human cognitional theory, epistemology and metaphysics.

Moreover, since truth as correspondence is adequately addressed within the context of the human quest for knowledge, and human knowing is not mere perceiving but knowing what is, it is imperative that an exposition of truth explicitly acknowledges the relation

between truth and realism. Nonetheless, that version of realism that is central to the defence of truth as correspondence is neither naïve realism (spectator theory of knowing) nor representationalism. It is rather, critical realism since it does not view knowing as just taking a look as naïve realism does, but a dynamic process that begins with experiencing, passes through understanding and culminates with an act of judgement by an intentional subject. Naïve realism (also called common sense realism) is a philosophical position which argues that in human knowing, there is immediate intuition in that there is direct access to the objects of knowledge through perception. In other words, a naïve realist is one who thinks that reality or facts have nothing to do with the mind. Representationalism on the other hand argues that the objects of knowledge are mental representations of what the senses present to us.

The polemics about truth that came into prominence from the beginning of the modern era while trying to avoid the limitation of traditional accounts of truth as correspondence in terms of naïve or common-sense realism or spectator cognitional theory had a common feature. That is, they all focused on intentional signs to the detriment of intentional operation. Regardless of whether the defended ‘mediating representations’ are psychological (Cartesian ideas), logical (Fregean thoughts) or linguistic (Wittgenstein), ‘their most important intentional relations [that is, the irreplaceable act of the intentional subject] are left obscure’ (McCarthy 1990:323). The consequence of that obscurity is their various inadequate accounts of truth.

To attain an adequate formulation of truth as correspondence, a critical attention needs to be paid to the human cognitional structure. This is vital for a proper understanding of knowledge, objectivity, being and truth. A critical analysis of human cognitional structure shows that the human process of knowing is not one-levelled but tripartite and that the various levels of intentional consciousness, that is empirical consciousness, intelligent consciousness and rational consciousness, are irreducible to one another. A reduction of knowing to any of the three levels of consciousness of the intentional subject results in a distorted account of knowledge and consequently in a deficient account of truth. This is exemplified by the reduction of the search for truth to the analysis of the truth predicate that is predominant among deflationist truth theorists like Frank Ramsey, Willard Quine

and Paul Horwich. On the contrary, when the three levels of consciousness are given their appropriate places in the process of knowing, the understanding of truth as the relation between knowing and being becomes lucid. A logical consequence of a thorough analysis of this relation is that a comprehensive understanding of truth requires a critical realist commitment.

It is such commitment that is lacking in the theories of truth that are developed within the analytic philosophical framework that tends to account for the concept of truth while ignoring the intentional subjects.

Irrespective of how hard some philosophers have tried to reduce the robust concept of truth to a thin concept, or the attempt geared at the elimination of the concept all together, the human quest for truth and self-transcendence is ever present. The motivation for this project therefore, arises from the belief that truth has a central role to play in human existence and in theoretical philosophy. However, truth discussions – whether from semantic, logical or linguistic perspective – within the analytic philosophical tradition do not sufficiently address the question of truth especially that of truth as correspondence. A sufficient articulation of truth as correspondence would require that one goes back to the tradition of the ancient and mediaeval thinkers and reconceptualise it in the light of the contemporary culture.

That brings us to the end of this brief sketch of the main ideas framing the inquiry, with some examples. Summing up, my thesis is that the break with the premodern correspondence theory of truth is unjustified, and this is because it is based on a) the spectator theory of knowing; and b) the idea of representational realism. When Russell, for example, puts forward the correspondence theory of truth, he assumes both these ideas as framing the background. In so far as these ideas misrepresent how we know anything and the nature of reality, his version of the correspondence theory will likewise misrepresent the facts of the matter. And this is what is objected to by the analytic writers following Russell. My job is to show how underlying both Russell and his detractors are these mistaken views of knowing and of reality. I therefore have to explain at the

beginning what is meant by these two ways of approaching knowing and the nature of reality.

Considering the cultural context in which we live, incessant truth controversies among philosophers especially in the analytic tradition and the rising deflationary attitudes towards truth in general and the correspondence theory of truth in particular, the following questions are vital. Is it still worthwhile to engage in philosophical investigation of truth regardless of the truth controversies or is it preferable to eliminate truth discourse as Richard Rorty (1991) seems to suggest? Can the correspondence theory of truth still be defended despite its prevalent rejection or the criticisms against it, especially as it is formulated in the analytic philosophical tradition? Bearing in mind the problems that result from the formulation of the correspondence theory with the analytic framework, must a reconsideration of the correspondence theory be carried out within a different framework? These are some of the questions that this research is investigating as the outline of chapters in the next section indicates.

Regardless of the truth controversies and the deflationary attitudes towards truth, philosophical investigations of truth are still of paramount importance because of the place of truth as one of the human values and since the pursuit of truth is situated within the human quest for knowledge and self-transcendence. The foundation of truth as a value according to Lonergan is what he calls ontological truth. 'Ontological truth is the intrinsic intelligibility of being', that is, the inherent capacity of being to be known by an intelligent and rational subject (1992 [2013]:576). Because being is that which can be known through 'intelligent inquiry and rational reflection' of a subject (1992 [2013]:576), it implies that truth expands and our understanding of it deepens as our horizons widens. In our quest for knowledge we do not just grasp facts, states of affairs and patterns. But we also try to situate ourselves within world. In other words, the quest for truth is also a quest for the meaning of one's existence.

Hence a reconsideration of truth as correspondence that is explored in this thesis takes a different paradigm from the analytic framework. It highlights the indispensability of the intentional acts of a conscious subject who not only makes individual judgments of facts

or even patterns of judgments and thus giving rise the question of objectivity. Rather it emphasises a conscious subject who affirms himself and appropriates the truth of his being in the world and thus yearns for self-transcendence. It is for this reason that I identified Lonergan's tripartite cognitional structure of experiencing, understanding and judging as a preferred framework for the reformation of truth as reflective or critical correspondence since the intentional acts of the subject are emphasised, unlike in the analytic framework which only concentrates on the intentional contents like concepts and propositions, while paying little or no attention to the intentional acts out of which the intentional contents arise.

It is important to note from the onset that there is a close connection between chapter two – especially section four which gives a preliminary outlining of Lonergan's conception of truth – and chapter eight which gives a fuller discussion of truth as correspondence within the framework of Lonergan's cognitional theory. Chapter eight is crucial in that it offers a new direction which the understanding of truth as correspondence can take.

In order to appreciate the need for a reformation of the conception of truth as correspondence, I will begin by outlining the tradition of the correspondence theory of truth by considering the understanding of truth as correspondence in Aristotle and Aristotle. Then the Modern challenges and how they led to the rejection of truth as correspondence will be considered. Furthermore, the formulations of the correspondence theory of truth within the analytic tradition by Russell and Austin, as well some of the problems that are obstacles to the analytic conceptions of truth as correspondence will be explored. Also, various theories of truth that emerged as alternatives to the correspondence theories and some problems inherent in the truth discourses within the analytic tradition will be examined.

I will now outline the chapters that form the bulk of the thesis, namely the discussion of various central theories of truth in recent analytic philosophy.

## 1.2 Outline of Chapters

The second chapter begins with an investigation of the tradition of the correspondence theory by examining its Aristotelian origin and the appropriation of the correspondence theory by St. Thomas Aquinas. This is important because the Lonerganian approach that is used in reconsidering truth as correspondence belongs to the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:575). The chapter proceeds to examine the challenges of the correspondence theory of truth in the Modern era. One of the challenges results from the paradigm of the spectator theory of knowing that equates knowing to perceiving by a passive subject. Other modern challenges that will be examined are representationalism (Descartes 1997, Kant 1998 [2016]) and the quest for the naturalisation of philosophy (Rorty 1980, Quine 1980). In exploring the modern challenges, I will explain what is meant by the spectator theory of knowing and the notion of representational realism. I will show how modern philosophy reacted against this. I will then develop the idea that the collapse of philosophy as a distinctive discipline has pushed writers to see its job in terms of conceptual analysis only (or linguistic analysis), or that it has no job at all (Rorty 1991, 1995, 2007). Truth as a standard, as normative, disappears. This is the reason for this collapse, and how philosophy became naturalized (McCarthy 1990). Moreover, Lonergan-inspired conception of truth is introduced as an approach to understanding of truth as correspondence that does not succumb to the criticism levelled against the correspondence theory.

The third chapter summarizes the way that the correspondence theory of truth has been understood in the analytic approach. Russell (1906, 1912, 2010) and Austin (1950, 1970) both advocate this theory. But how exactly do they understand it? It will be shown that subsequent rejections of this theory assume that this is the definitive way of understanding correspondence. And their criticisms are addressed to the versions of the correspondence theory developed by Russell and Austin. It will be suggested that a different way of understanding correspondence does not lend itself to these criticisms. Further the challenges that the identification of propositions and facts as truth-bearers and truth-makers pose are examined. I will argue that within the spirit of the analytic framework, equation of propositions with facts raises serious problems for the articulation of truth as correspondence within the framework. In addition, the possibility of negative truths,

invariability of the truth values of propositions will also be considered. Lastly an evaluative critique will be given to articulate why a different cognitional structure is necessary for an exposition of truth as correspondence that will overcome the challenges of the analytic formulations of the correspondence theory of truth.

Chapter four examines a spectrum of theories of truth within the analytic approach to philosophy that posit themselves as alternatives to the correspondence theory. These theories are grouped into three categories, namely deflationary, third-way, and substantive approaches to truth. In each case I will first present the theory and then comment on it, in the light of the framing remarks on the “absence of the subject” outlined in this introductory chapter. The deflationary theories posit, as the name implies, that truth has to be “de-throned” or “deflated”. Hence, their principal approach to truth investigation is to analyse the logical or semantic use of the truth predicate. In that sense, they presuppose truth since they do not articulate the concept truth but focus on the roles or functions of the truth predicate in sentences or statements. As such they are very far away from the robust substantive correspondence theory which articulates the constitution of truth. The deflationary theories neglect investigation of the constitution of truth because they contend that truth has no nature and is not a property. Even a deflationary theory like Paul Horwich’s minimalism that agrees that truth is a property, denies that it is a substantial property (1998:37-38). Consequently, deflationists argue that the concept of truth requires no metaphysical consideration. The deflationary theories that are considered include redundancy, disquotationalism, minimalism and prosententialism.

Furthermore, mid-way theories are explored. These are theories that argue that there is more to truth than the deflationists portray. The mid-way truth theorist acknowledges that concept of truth is applicable to multi-domains of discourse that so cannot be reduced to logical and semantic functions. Nonetheless, they still treated truth as a thin concept. The proponents of the third-way theories argue that the defence for such theories, rather than either substantive or deflationary theories, is necessary because of different domains in which the truth predicate is applicable. The mid-way theories that are explored are Paul Engel’s minimal realism (2002), alethic pluralism and functionalist theories. Contrary to the arguments of the third-way truth theorists, it is argued that their conceptions of truth

do not account for the nature of truth which a correspondence theorist aims at. Besides, it is contended that ultimately, a truth theory will be biased towards a substantial conception of truth or a deflationary account. This is highlighted by Engel who despite calling his theory minimal realism contends that his theory has a strong commitment to realism (2002:66). Consequently, it is concluded that Engel's minimal realism is correspondence-like and so, *mutatis mutandis*, could be formulated in terms of the correspondence theory.

The fourth chapter finally considers the alternative substantive theories. These are theories which like the correspondence conception of truth investigate the nature of truth. Three such theories are examined. They are coherence, pragmatic and identity theories. Although, the positive elements of these theories are acknowledged, it is concluded that such theories are neither adequate nor eliminatory alternatives to the correspondence theory. The coherence theory for instance avers that truth consists in the coherence of a belief or proposition to a system of beliefs or propositions. However, the first question that arises is whether all that is coherent is true. Secondly, ultimately the coherence theory presupposes some correspondence with reality. Otherwise, it leads to regress since if it is argued that truth of a proposition is ascertained by its coherence within a system of propositions, the truth of the system of propositions is assumed, if not one would have to ask, what makes the system of propositions itself true? Regarding the pragmatic theory, its problem arises from its reduction to truth to practical utility or workability. The major problem with the pragmatists' stress on the workability as the principal criterion of truth is the tendency to claim that whatever works is as good as any other.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the difficulty of the identity theory rests on its identification of propositions (or true propositions) with facts. Such identification is a result of lack of explicit articulation of one's cognitional theory, and consequently it ends in confusing epistemology and metaphysics (cf. Plantinga 1993:85).

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<sup>1</sup> John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock state the danger of taking workability as the standard for truth as follows; 'if the only measure of the truth of a practice is its success, then anything that works is regarded as just as good as anything else, so long as it works also, without regard for any judgement as to the inherent desirability of what has been constructed. In this fashion, truth becomes detached from the good.' (2001:xii).

The next three chapters, that is, chapters five, six, and seven, take issue with a number of problems that have been identified in the analytic tradition to do with any discussion of the nature of truth. The first issue is that of assertibility, and this goes to the heart of our problem: assertibility points to the action of the subject as the one who makes claims to truth. But the broadly conceptualist approach characteristic of the discussions in the analytic approach posits the proposition (already asserted) as the starting point of the discussion. How can it deal with assertibility? Can it in fact deal with it? The fact that the question of assertibility is raised, points to an awareness among these writers that there is a problem of leaving out the subject as the agent, in discussions of the nature of truth. The position that is defended in this thesis is that truth is not reducible to assertibility in any of its forms, that is, Dummettian warranted assertibility (1978), Putnam's idealized rational acceptability (1981:49-74) or Wright's superassertibility (1992:33-68). This is because the anti-realist concept of assertibility remains in the realm of semantics without taking the realm of metaphysics into serious consideration. In other words, it is an epistemic endeavour that neglects an ontological commitment.

In chapter five we will point out the connection of truth with the realism/non-realism question. Again, this is a question that frames Lonergan's approach to the problem. Lonergan points to the widespread assumption that what is real is usually thought of in terms of "the already out there now real" (1992[2013]:437). It is one of the three key "counter-positions" in his reframing of the correspondence theory: reality is 'out there'; knowing is like seeing; and the vision of the world is that of a picture (1967:236). The anti-metaphysical tendency amongst analytic philosophers can be appreciated once one understands that the notion of "real" (the object of investigation in metaphysics) is being radically prejudiced. We need metaphysics. In order to clarify why truth and assertibility in any of its forms cannot be identical, the relationship between justification, truth and knowledge will be investigated. It is concluded that though the three concepts are intrinsically related, they are irreducible to each another. Lastly with the help of the differentiation that Lonergan makes between truth and its expression, the difference between truth and assertibility will be explained (1992 [2013:576-581).

The second issue raised in the analytic framing of the problem of truth - discussed in Chapter six - concerns the alethic paradoxes, especially the paradox of the liar and revenge paradox. These paradoxes seem to undermine the principle of bivalence by claiming that there are cases in which a sentence can be true and false at the same time. Hence the proponents of alethic paradoxes argue that truth is an inconsistent concept. If truth is an inconsistent concept, it will raise problem for the correspondence theorist. The exponents of the alethic paradoxes, for instance, Stephen Yablo (1993:147-175) and Kevin Scharp (2007:606-621, 2013) claim that the logical use of the truth predicate in sentences for endorsement and rejection (especially self-referential sentences though not limited to them) is bound to end up in a contradiction. According to them, a sentence like: "The sentence on the screen is false" would lead to contradiction because if it is false, then it is true. Hence, they argue that truth is an inconsistent concept. Scharp (2007, 2013) contends that the constitutive principle of truth is the logical use for endorsement and rejection. To overcome the paradoxes, Scharp suggests the replacing of truth. The position of the logical truth theorists raises two questions for the correspondence theorist, (a) if the constitutive principle of truth is the logical use of the truth predicate for endorsement and rejection, in what way can truth be understood as correspondence? (b) if truth is an inconsistent concept is it possible to account for the nature of truth, that is, to answer the question, what is truth that a robust correspondence theorist aims at answering?

Considering that the issue for exponents of the alethic paradoxes is to analyse the logical use of the truth predicate, it is argued that their approach to truth investigation is thin and deflationary in character since they do not even answer the question: what is truth? By so doing they neglect the fundamental elements for truth investigation for correspondence theorists – the indispensable relation between truth as correspondence and realism, and the intentional acts of the subject that culminate in judgment. In fact, for there to be an analysis of the use of the truth predicate, there must be a prior act of judgment which the logical theorists tend to neglect. So even in the situation where there seems to be a contradiction, when the relation between truth as correspondence and realism is adequately examined, it becomes evident that there is no contradiction. Thus, it is

concluded that the alethic paradoxes are not obstacles to the conception of truth as correspondence and neither does the concept of truth require any replacement.

Moreover, the chapter also considers the consequence of the slingshot argument to the correspondence theory of truth, especially those versions of the theory in which fact plays the essential role of truth-maker. The core of the slingshot argument is that, ultimately, all true propositions would correspond to the same fact, or the Great Fact, as Davidson (1984:42) prefers to call it. It is defended that the slingshot theory has no devastating consequence for the correspondence theory because the primary intuition of the correspondence theorists about facts, when explicitly accounted for, is that propositions correspond to particular facts which are irreducible to one big fact. Secondly slingshot theorists tend to view truth as an issue in logic and semantics while neglecting the necessary realist metaphysical component of truth constitution.

The third of our problems is that of the indefinability of truth or primitive nature of truth and the possibility of reducing truth to justification (and elimination) as proposed by Davidson (1996) and Rorty (1995, 2000, 2007) respectively. In chapter seven we explored Davidson's defence of the indefinability of truth. We pointed out that his defence of the indefinability of truth pivots on his philosophical position that truth is a primitive concept that cannot be reduced to a more basic concept. This view arises from his understanding of philosophy as conceptual analysis. However, contra Davidson, it is argued that radical indefinability of truth is not defensible since definition does not imply mere reduction of concepts to more basic concepts. Moreover, it is pointed out that definition can be of various kinds. For instance, it could be nominal or explanatory as Lonergan points out (1992 [2013]:35-36). While nominal definition concentrates on the 'correct use of names', explanatory definition goes beyond that to the objects which names and language refer to. Besides, it is argued that if the connection that Davidson stresses between meaning and truth is possible, it implies that at least he assumes implicit definition in his exposition.

Also, in the same chapter we summarize and critically evaluate Rorty's clamouring for the cautionary use of truth or the elimination of the concept because of its irrelevance and

lack of social or practical usefulness (2007). It is argued that truth is not useless or irrelevant as he thinks. Rather, truth has practical relevance in democratic process. Such usefulness is exemplified by the establishment of Truth Commissions in some countries after troubled times. Moreover, it is contended that contrary to Rorty's opinion, truth cannot be reduced to justification. Furthermore, it is pointed out that Rorty's polemics against truth is the effect of his rejection of metaphysics and epistemology, and his adoption of pragmatism as the fertile ground for democratic politics.

Rorty's good point that the quest for objectivity ought not be detrimental to subjectivity and solidarity is acknowledged. Nonetheless, it is argued that Rorty's conception of objectivity is distorted in that he contrasts it with subjectivity as mutually exclusive. For this reason, he contraposes objectivity and solidarity as mutually exclusive values and claims that realists are incapable of solidarity since they are more interested in objectivity. On the other hand, he claims that solidarity is natural to pragmatists (1991:21-34). Contra Rorty's view, it is argued that solidarity and objectivity are not mutually exclusive. It is the distortion of the concept of objectivity, by contrasting it with subjectivity that gives the impression that realists' quest for truth immunises them from solidarity. In fact, Rorty's view that the quest for objectivity ought not undermine subjectivity is the point that Lonergan stresses (Rorty 1991, Lonergan 1992 [2013]). But unlike Rorty, Lonergan is emphatic that objectivity and subjectivity are not mutually exclusive. Rather, objectivity highlights the authentic subjectivity of the intentional subject.

The chapter further explores the connection between common-sense understanding of truth and the conception of truth as correspondence. While acknowledging the close relation between the two, since common-sense understanding is correspondence-like, it is argued that the version of truth as correspondence that is defended in this thesis is irreducible to common-sense conceptions of truth, for instance, George Moore (1959 [1970]). This is because the common-sense understanding of truth is rooted in naïve realism and trades on the "in here" and "out there" dichotomy. On the other hand, the version of truth as correspondence that is reconsidered is founded on critical realism, and so the cognitional and intentional acts of the knowing subject are indispensable when the question of truth arises.

In chapter eight, the conception of truth as critical correspondence is espoused. This reformulation is inspired by Lonergan, and an appropriation of the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition. Unlike the tradition that began with Frege which considers the objective by truncating the subject so as to postulate thought without a thinker (1956:289-311), truth as critical correspondence reaffirms the centrality of the knowing or intentional subject when the question of truth arises, and so objectivity and subjectivity are not viewed as exclusive. This is because the pursuit of truth is found within the wider context of the human search for knowledge and self-transcendence. For this reason, contra the investigation of truth in the analytic tradition that emphasises the analysis of intentional signs, concepts and propositions, or analysis of the truth predicate, the conception of truth as critical correspondence stresses the examination of the intentional acts (experiencing, understanding, conceptualising and judging) of the subject. Correspondence therefore, results from the act of judging by the subject after an exhaustive understanding of that which is experienced. Consequently, the critical realist tradition overcomes the stumbling block of the analytic correspondence theorists who cannot satisfactorily explain what truth as correspondence is, because they tend to understand correspondence empirically in terms of mapping, matching, mirroring, fitting, comparing and so forth of propositions and facts.

Further, unlike the alternative theories that analyse the logical and semantic uses of the truth predicate without firstly clarifying the nature of truth or how truth is attained, the reformulation of truth as critical or reflective correspondence attends to how truth is attained and in what its nature consists since it does not investigate truth independent of the knowing subject. Regarding the relation between truth and assertibility, it is argued that truth cannot be reduced to any form of assertibility because it is possible for one to consciously assert that which is not true since human beings are capable of lying. In other words, the difference between the act of judging and asserting entails the irreducibility of truth to assertion. Moreover, it is argued that alethic paradoxes are not obstacles to the defence of truth as critical correspondence, because while proponents of the paradoxes merely analyse the logical use of the truth predicate, they do not attend to issue of the intentionality of human knowing which is fundamental to the truth question. In other

words, they assume that there is truth without bothering to sufficiently articulate what truth is. So, it is the lack of critical realist metaphysical commitment that give rise to pseudo-problem of alethic paradoxes.

To emphasise that truth is not a 'thin' but a human value and a desired good, we conclude by pointing out that an adequate philosophical investigation of truth cannot be reduced to an analysis of the truth predicate but should go beyond theoretical endeavours. In other words, a philosophical investigation that aims at grasping the human quest for truth and self-transcendence must be robustly substantive so as to lead to the meeting point of theoretical and practical endeavours. That is when the attainment of truth entails living and relating truthfully with others in the human society.

Finally, I must admit that the nature of this thesis raises special challenges as it attempts to relate two philosophical traditions – Lonergan's contemporary Thomistic view and a variety of analytic accounts on truth. Considering that these traditions have different frameworks, it is ambitious and difficult to communicate adequately to the two kinds of reader, especially when readers from one tradition are not familiar with the other tradition. Bearing this specially in mind, I cannot hope for a complete success, but I am convinced that it is worth trying as it opens a new area of dialogue between Lonergan scholars and analytic philosophers.

## **Chapter 2**

# **The Tradition of the Correspondence Theory of Truth and the Modern Challenges**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The correspondence theory of truth is a form of realism. Any version of the correspondence theory that neglects its intrinsic relation with realism is bound to fail or at best be inadequate. Nonetheless, a realist commitment does not necessarily imply that the version of the correspondence theory that a truth theorist espouses will be defensible, considering that the commitment to realism could be naïve or critical. Consequently, since there are different kinds of realism, the form of realism that a correspondence theorist defends has consequence for the version of truth as correspondence that he defends. In fact, all the objections raised against the correspondence theory of truth both by substantive and deflationary theorists are principally directed at the types of realism which are at its background.

In this chapter, I begin by examining the tradition of the correspondence theory by tracing it back to the ancient and mediaeval periods. My emphasis will be on Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas whose tradition on philosophical investigation is appropriated by contemporary Thomists. The basis of this choice is that the version of truth as correspondence that is defended in this thesis is within that tradition. Because of the rise of modern philosophy and the challenges that it posed to the conception of truth as correspondence, I examine the spectator theory of knowledge which is based on naïve realism and representational realism and their consequences for the correspondence of

theory. I shall argue that because one's view on realism and cognitional theory is essential for the defence of truth as correspondence, both naïve realism and representational realism are bound to fail. The context within which the spectator theory of knowing and representational realism is explored is that of introducing the Aristotelian approach to truth, that is, the correspondence theory. Furthermore, I will investigate how the crisis of philosophy or the collapse of philosophy because of the emergence of autonomous scientific disciplines led to the disappearance of truth as normative. The consequence of this is the deflation of truth or even an outright call for its elimination as philosophy becomes naturalized by Rorty (1979) just as Dewey (1960) and Quine (1969:60-90, 1980) naturalised epistemology. Lastly, I will introduce the Lonerganian understanding of truth as correspondence. This is aimed to show that the challenges of modern philosophy to the correspondence theory are not insurmountable.

This chapter is based on McCarthy's work, *The Crisis of Philosophy* (1990). It briefly summarizes and comments on section F of chapter one, and chapter six. Although McCarthy's primary concern is not to establish the relationship between realism and the correspondence theory, his exposition of the fundamental issues that led to the crisis of philosophy is helpful in establishing the relationship between realism and the correspondence theory.

## **2.2 Background to the Correspondence Theory of Truth**

In investigating the concept of truth, it is necessary to explore the understanding of truth as correspondence since the correspondence theory is the oldest of all theories of truth that philosophers defend. In his preface, D. J. O' Connor (1975:1) argues that 'the earliest use of the term 'correspondence' in English to refer to 'verbal truth' is traced by the *Oxford English Dictionary* to the year 1809.' However, the origin of the understanding of truth as correspondence could be traced to the ancient and mediaeval periods. So in this chapter, the historical background to the understanding of truth as correspondence is briefly explored. This is because any philosophical investigation of the correspondence theory of truth and more particularly any research that is aimed at the reconsideration of truth as correspondence that does not trace its historical background would at best be incomplete.

The purpose of tracing the historical background of the understanding of truth as correspondence is for an adequate understanding of the ‘spirit’ of truth as correspondence<sup>2</sup> rather than solely focusing on the letter of such conception of truth. In other words, the purpose of this chapter is not merely historical. Rather, it aims at the establishment of the fundamental correspondence intuition, that is, the irreplaceable role of the agent or subject in the human cognitional process that culminates with judgment when the virtually unconditioned is grasped. That is, when the subject knows all the conditions for the truth of his prospective judgment or hypothesis, and he can affirm that all the conditions are fulfilled. This is explained more fully in section 2.6 and in chapter 8.

Though David traces the origin of the correspondence theory to Plato’s *Cratylus* 385b2 and *Sophist* 263b (David 2015), it is more explicit in the works of Aristotle especially in the *Metaphysics*. Hence, in this section, I will focus on Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas<sup>3</sup>, since there are contemporary Thomists like McCarthy (1990) and Oliva Blanchette (2003) whose understanding of truth is an appropriation of Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition in a different context.

### **2.2.1 Aristotelian Origin of the Correspondence Theory of Truth**

The exposition of the correspondence theory of truth is a modern venture in philosophy. This is because prior to the Modern epoch, the discussions and controversies about theories of truth were not an explicit endeavour in philosophical investigation. However, the understanding of truth as correspondence when critically analysed predated the modern period. Some philosophers generally trace the correspondence theory of truth to the definition of truth that Aristotle gives in the *Metaphysics* (Kirkham 1992:119-120,

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<sup>2</sup> By spirit of correspondence theory, I mean the fundamental understanding of truth by correspondence theorists which is that a fact constitutes the truth of a proposition and that the change of fact implies the change of the truth value of a proposition. The change of truth value that results with the change of fact is the fundamental feature of correspondence theory which is referred to as variability (Vision 2004:33). For instance, in the two propositions: 1. Abuja is the capital of Nigeria. 2. Enugu is the capital of Nigeria. The truth values are true and false respectively because of the change of fact. Nonetheless, the fact is only known through the reasonable affirmation of the subject.

<sup>3</sup> In taking Aquinas as my case study in tracing the correspondence theory of truth to the mediaeval period, I am not claiming that he developed a truth theory. Nonetheless, a reading of his discussions on truth especially in the *Summa Theologiae* and *Quaestiones Disputate De Veritate* could be considered as a seminal stage in the development of the correspondence theory. Besides, he defined truth as correspondence (*correspondentia*).

Engel 2002:15; Crivelli 2004, Vision 2004:12; Glanzberg 2014, David 2015). Aristotle's definition or rather description of truth is: 'To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true' (*Metaphysics* 1011<sup>b</sup>25).

A historical tracing of the correspondence theory to Aristotle does not mean that all philosophers agree that there is a fundamental correspondence intuition in the Aristotelian definition. For instance, Marian David (2015) argues that the Aristotelian definition 'does not highlight the basic correspondence intuition' irrespective of the fact that the correspondence theory of truth is traced to it. He argues that Aristotle's definition 'offers a muted, relatively minimal version of a correspondence theory' and because that even it is 'claimed as a precursor to deflationary theories of truth (2015). Hence, it becomes necessary to ask whether the tracing of the correspondence theory to Aristotle is merely for convenience or if there is any form of correspondence that is implied in the Aristotelian definition. Contrary to David's position, I argue that there is a fundamental correspondence intuition in Aristotle's understanding of truth.

In this subsection, I rely mainly on Crivelli's *Aristotle on Truth*. It is a brief summary with comments. Crivelli's work is an extensive work on Aristotle's 'theory of truth'. However, his aim is to reconstruct Aristotle's conception of truth in the light of the modern discussions of truth especially in the analytic philosophical tradition (Russell 1912, Austin 1950, Kirkham 1992, Engel 2002, Vision 2004, Rasmussen 2014). He treats various texts dealing with truth and falsehood in the various works of Aristotle. Although I do make use of Crivelli's insights in this section, I do acknowledge that the scope of this work is different from the scope of his work.

Crivelli (2004) argues that Aristotle's conception of truth is correspondence. He however, points out clearly that it is 'correspondence-as-isomorphism but not as fact or state of affairs (2004:130-131). By correspondence as isomorphism, he means that the congruence or similarity of form between that to which truth is attributed (truth-bearer) and that which makes it true (truth-maker). In the case of Aristotle, a proposition is true when it is isomorphic with reality (2004:131). Isomorphism can be understood as a

structural congruence between truth-bearer and truth-maker as is case in the correspondence theory of Bertrand Russell (1912) and Joshua Rasmussen (2014). According to Crivelli, there is threefold condition that qualifies a correspondence theory to be “correspondence-as-isomorphism”. The conditions are: (1) the capacity of the theory to classify beliefs or assertions (or whatever the truth-bearer might be), (2) one-to-one mapping of ‘the classes of beliefs (assertions)’ to the content of the belief, and (3) a belief is true only when that which it is mapped to is the case (2004:23). Based on the threefold condition, he concludes:

Aristotle’s theory of truth surely counts as a correspondence theory of truth according to the correspondence-as-isomorphism conception. In fact, the condition introduced by the correspondence-as-isomorphism conception is met at two levels by Aristotle’s theory of truth. First it is met at the theory’s most general level, i.e. in DTF<sup>4</sup>, the definition of truth and falsehood for simple beliefs and assertions. DTF relies on a very simple classification of beliefs and assertions: affirmations and denials are the only two classes. (Crivelli 2004:23).

Crivelli’s point is that Aristotle’s understanding of truth is not correspondence as fact or states of affairs because Aristotle did not make mention of fact and because ‘Aristotle allows only “affirmative” states of affairs’ respectively. (2004:130). In other words, Crivelli’s principal reason for not acknowledging Aristotle’s conception of truth as correspondence in terms of states of affairs, is that Aristotle’s theory of truth does not take negative assertions into account. According to Crivelli, the general definition of truth and falsehood (DTF) is essential for an adequate understanding of Aristotle’s conception of truth. He goes on to state that the general definition of truth and falsehood (DTF) of simple proposition<sup>5</sup> is about one object and can be either affirmative or negative. An affirmative proposition is true or false depending on whether the object it is about is true or false respectively. An example of a simple affirmative proposition is <Patrick Aleke is a Brazilian>. When it comes to a simple negative proposition, it is true or false when the object it is about is false or true respectively (2004:9). An example of simple negative proposition is <Patrick Aleke is not a South African>.

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<sup>4</sup> DTF means Definition of Truth and Falsehood.

<sup>5</sup> I choose the term proposition rather belief or assertion that is Crivelli’s preference for two reasons. Firstly, because belief or assertion in Crivelli’s usage refers to that which is believed or that which is asserted respectively, that is what I take a proposition to be. Secondly my preference for proposition is based on Aristotle’s choice in his work *De Interpretatione*. For instance, in chapter four he states: ‘every sentence is not a proposition; only such are propositions as have in them either truth or falsity.’ (Aristotle 1941:42).

Although Crivelli insists that Aristotle's conception of truth is correspondence-as-isomorphism and not correspondence as fact or states of affairs, I do not take issue with him on that for two reasons. First, the objective of this subsection is not to establish which kind of correspondence Aristotle's concept of truth is, but rather to know if the correspondence theory of truth can be traced to his description of truth. Hence, it suffices to affirm that Aristotle's notion of truth is a form of correspondence. I have already indicated that identifying the kind of correspondence theory which Aristotle's conception is, is not within the scope of this section. But it is worth pointing out that the conclusion that could be drawn from Crivelli's classification of Aristotle's conception of truth, is that any criticism levelled against the different versions of the correspondence theory in that analytic tradition does not necessarily hold against Aristotle's conception of truth as correspondence. Second, bearing in mind that within the conceptual frame of this work, the terms and expressions like facts, state of the world, states of affairs, situations which refer to truth-makers<sup>6</sup> will be used interchangeably since they are to be understood in the broader context of being, it is not essential to distinguish between facts and states of affairs. This is because I am primarily concerned with the fundamental characteristic of truth as correspondence and not mere rigorous emphasis on terms or expressions used. This central feature is that fact is the truth-maker. Taking into consideration that the understanding of fact in the analytic tradition is different from the neo-Thomist tradition, the understanding of fact that I adhere to is from Lonergan's perspective because it addresses the problem concerning the identification of facts with true propositions. That is that which is known by the agent involved in the process of knowing when he makes a reasonable judgment (1971:348). Fact, so understood, is closely related to the notion of being in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. The relationship between fact and being is explored below in section 2.6.

According to Vision (2004:38), the fundamental feature of facts is that they are cognition-independent worldly circumstances that constitute truth. Vision's choice of terms,

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<sup>6</sup> Truth-maker is that by virtue of which a proposition is said to be true. The term truth-maker is common among analytic correspondence truth theorists (David 1994, Vision2004, Rasmussen 2014). Some theorists refer to facts as the truth-maker others identifies states of affairs as the truth-maker. The truth-maker is normally contrasted with truth-bearer, that is, that to which truth is ascribed. Some of the candidates for truth-bearer are proposition, beliefs, statements, sentences, assertions and judgment

cognition-independence apparently raises the question whether it is meant as a neglect of the principal role of the subject. It seems that Vision's conception of fact neglects the role of the subject. However, the question of fact and truth arises only if there is a knowing subject. His cognition-independent world circumstance seems to be from the view that takes facts to be the "already out there now". Such understand of fact is that of common-sense realism and so is different from Lonergan's understanding of fact.

Since I am using *Metaphysics* book gamma chapter seven (1011<sup>b</sup>) to argue that the Aristotelian conception of truth is fundamentally correspondence, it is important to ask if there is a convergence of the understanding of the text by scholars. Put differently, it is worth asking: what does 'is' mean in the Aristotelian text – "To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true" -? The correct understanding of the use of 'is' or 'to be' in the text is important because it is pivotal in understanding precisely what truth and falsity mean to Aristotle and why his conception of truth is correspondence. Just like any philosophical question, there is no common interpretation of the meaning of 'is' as Aristotle used it in the quoted text. Nonetheless, the difference of interpretation does not imply that Aristotle's understanding of truth is not correspondence. Rather, the different interpretations tend to accentuate a particular aspect of truth as correspondence depending on what is considered as the truth-bearer or truth-maker.

Crivelli identifies four different interpretations of Aristotle's use of 'is'<sup>7</sup>. They are the existential sense, in which 'to be' 'means "to exist"'. The second sense is an application that is proper to universals. Hence, "[t]o be' means 'to hold of'. For instance; 'Every human being is mortal'. In this case, it would be said that the quality of mortality holds of every human person. The third sense is 'the predicative-elliptical sense, whereby it functions like a schematic expression that could be expanded to "to be so-and-so"'. The fourth sense is the veridical and it is properly applicable to states of affairs. As such in this sense, 'to be' means "'to be true' or 'to obtain'" (Crivelli 2004:133).

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<sup>7</sup> In his analysis, Crivelli used that infinite form 'to be' instead of 'is' (2004:133). I still retain the infinite form as used by Crivelli, especially when it is a quotation.

Crivelli on further analysis argues that the four senses taken independently are inadequate interpretations of Aristotle's definition (2004:134-137). For instance, he maintains that the existential sense is problematic and unacceptable because of its narrowness as it is limited only to existential assertions and so is not able 'to accommodate predicative assertions' (2004:134). A predicative assertion is an assertion that predicts a future in event, e.g. An African will be the Supreme Pontiff in the year 2068. On the other hand, the problem of the predicative-elliptical and veridical senses is that they are not able 'to accommodate existential assertions' (2004:134). As regards the second interpretation, Crivelli argues that there are only three passages (two in *De Interpretatione* and one in the Topics) in the works of Aristotle for supporting 'that to be' means 'to hold' (2004:133). The problematic of the veridical sense lies on the compositionality of states of affairs.

Crivelli's reason for insisting that any interpretation of *Metaphysics* 1011<sup>b</sup>25-26 must take into account predicative assertions is Aristotle's interest in the text which is shown by his prior reference to Excluded Middle in *Metaphysics* 1011<sup>b</sup>24 (2004:134). Hence, he argues that an adequate interpretation must take *Metaphysics* book theta chapter ten into consideration (2004:134). This is to facilitate an interpretation that takes both existential and predicative assertions on board. Though Crivelli maintains his preference for his interpretation which accommodates both predicative and existential assertions, he acknowledges that his interpretation is limited as it does not cover 'assertions composed of other assertions by means of conjunctions' (2004:135). An example of such an assertion is: John is a lecturer and a priest.

But does Crivelli's criticism of the narrowness of existential sense interpretation minimise its importance? Definitely it does not. In fact, it is the existential sense that makes the definition a proto-correspondence conception of truth. The 'is' (conjugation of 'to be') in the formulation definitely refers to existence. In other words, it is the existential dimension that supports the claim that Aristotle's conception of truth is correspondence as the existential dimension highlights cognition-transcendence which is the fundamental characteristic of truth as correspondence. In fact, the existential sense is implicit in the

veridical sense<sup>8</sup> since ‘to be’ in this sense ‘means “to be true” or “to obtain”’. So without the existential dimension it will be very difficult to defend the position that truth according to Aristotle is correspondence.

An interesting feature of Aristotle’s definition in the *Metaphysics* is that it implicitly, highlights the place of the agent or subject who makes a judgment (*Metaphysics* 1011<sup>b</sup>25-26). This is shown by introducing the definition with, ‘to say’. The ‘to say’ presupposes that some agent does the saying. Hence one could as well affirm that the subject who engages in that act of saying that that which is really is, makes such an affirmation because he or she has performed some cognitional activities which began from sensing or imaging proceeded through understanding and conceptualising and culminated with reflection and judgment.

A question that would arise from this interpretation of Aristotle is: Is the introduction of a judging subject not a forcefully reading of Aristotle? There are indications in Aristotle’s texts that allow for my interpretation. For instance, the passage from the fourth book of the *Metaphysics* that I have been examining begins thus: ‘but of one subject we must either affirm or deny one predicate’ (*Metaphysics* 1011<sup>b</sup>24). This could be taken to refer to judgment. Of course, in the contemporary context, it could be argued that to affirm or deny means just to assert or say. But that does not undermine my interpretation. In *Metaphysics* book six, Aristotle indicates that judgment is the locus of truth and falsity.

that which is in the sense of being true, or is not in the sense of being false, depends on combination and separation, and truth and falsity together depend on the allocation of a pair of contradictory judgements (for the true judgment affirms where the subject and predicate really are combined, and denies where they are separated, while the false judgement has the opposite of this allocation...); for falsity and truth are not in things – it is not as if the good were true, and the bad were in itself false – but in thought (*Metaphysics* 1027b).

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<sup>8</sup> I argue for the implicit existential connotation in the veridical sense because Crivelli’s reconstructions aim at taking account of both predicative assertions and existential assertions (2004:133-134). Since predicative assertions according to him are proper to states of affairs and veridical sense of interpretation is properly applicable to states of affairs, it becomes necessary to affirm the implicit existential connotation in the veridical sense (2004:133). Crivelli (2004:133) reformulates the definition of truth in the veridical sense thus: “To say of a state of affairs which in fact “is” in the sense of being true that it “is not” in the sense of being false, or of a state of affairs which in fact “is not” in the sense of being false that it “is” in the sense of being true, is false; to say of a state of affairs which in fact “is” in the sense of being true that it “is” in the sense of being true, or of a state of affairs which in fact “is not” in the sense of being false that it “is not” in the sense of being false, is true.”

One would argue from the above text that if falsity and truth are in thought, there is a need for the subject who engages in thinking, understanding and judging. In fact, from his analysis of the quoted text and other texts from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, *De Interpretatione* and *De Anima*, Franz Brentano concluded that Aristotle's 'basic concept of truth is always the agreement of the cognizing mind with the cognized object. (Brentano 1981:22) A remark I cannot but make is that there is a similarity between Brentano's interpretation of Aristotle's conception of truth and that of Lonergan. Nonetheless, this does not mean that Aristotle's exposition of truth is a critical realist conception through and through but it is not completely precritical either, as he indicates the importance of judgment in the quest for truth. The context of his investigation of truth is different from that of Lonergan, in which the understanding of knowledge and truth was influenced and characterized by the paradigm of empirical sciences and the neglect of the knowing subject (Lonergan 1967, 1974). Hence, Lonergan is very explicit in the articulation of the role of the knowing subject and place of judgment in the quest (Lonergan 1992 [2013]).

### **2.2.2 Truth as Correspondence in St. Thomas Aquinas**

Although it might be debatable whether St Thomas Aquinas's exposition of truth is a theory of truth as it is understood in the contemporary analytic tradition, it would be naïve to say that it is not a theory of truth since he explicitly considered the notion of truth. Hence, it is not out of place for an investigation that attempts to reconsider truth as correspondence to inquire if Aquinas's writings on truth could be considered as correspondence. Aquinas examined the concept of truth both in the *Summa Theologiae*, question sixteen and *Quaestiones Disputate De Veritate*, question one. However, none is purely a philosophical treatise. Edward Mackinnon argues that '*De Veritate* was written in the synthetic mode (or according to him, what Gilson calls the theological order)' (MacKinnon 1971:59). Irrespective of the fact, that Aquinas was a philosopher and theologian and his notion of truth has both philosophical and theological undertones, it is possible and worthwhile that a philosophical investigation on truth should pay a little attention to him.

From the outset, I argue that Aquinas's understanding of truth is correspondence. The principle reason for making such a claim is his acceptance of the mediaeval definition of truth: '*Veritas est adequatio*<sup>9</sup> *rei et intellectus*'<sup>10</sup> ('Truth is the conformity of thing and intellect') (Aquinas 1952:7) which he attributes to Isaac Israeli<sup>11</sup>.

Is it possible to place Aquinas's definition of truth in terms of modern understanding in terms of truth-bearer? My answer to this question is affirmative. According to Aquinas, judgment plays a very important role in the understanding of truth as correspondence. In modern terms, one could say that to Aquinas, the truth-bearer is judgment. It is because judgment is the truth-bearer that Aquinas insists that truth resides or is found primarily in the intellect (1920:227; 1952:13). The function of the intellect as regard truth is composing and dividing i.e. judging. He expresses the role of judgment as the truth-bearer thus:

[J]udgment is said to be true when it conforms to the external reality. Moreover, the intellect judges about the thing it has apprehended at the moment it says that something is or is not. This is the role of "the intellect composing and dividing." (Aquinas 1952:13)

The above quotation from *De Veritate* might give an impression the external reality (*extra in re*) refers to 'reality already out there'<sup>12</sup>. However, that would not be the understanding which Aquinas has of reality. The question of reality as "already out there now" began with the rise of modern philosophy because of the Cartesian dualism. In fact, he distinguishes between thing (*res*) and being (*ens*). Thing refers to essence or quiddity, whereas being refers to that which has act of being. For instance, in Thomistic understanding, centaur is a thing but not being while man is being (Aquinas 1997:33).

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<sup>9</sup> *Adequatio* is translated differently in English. Apart from translating it as conformity, it is also translated as equation (David 2015), uniformity (Crivelli 2004:137) and adequation (Wippel 2007:79). Aquinas also uses correspondence (*correspondentia*) to communicate the relation between the thing and intellect (Aquinas 1952:7). My preference here is correspondence or conformity. This is because translating *adequatio* as equation or uniformity might lead to ambiguity. The consequence of such ambiguity would be to presume that Aquinas's conception of truth is an identity theory.

<sup>10</sup> Crivelli argues that the 'Latin formula originated in the Middle Ages, and probably a translation of an Arabic formula created by an unknown medieval Arab philosopher.' His reason is that no sentence in Aristotle's works 'could be translated by [the] Latin formula' (Crivelli 2004:137).

<sup>11</sup> Wippel states that Aquinas ascription of the definition to Isaac Israeli is 'apparently incorrect' (2007:79).

<sup>12</sup> The understanding of reality as that which is already out there will be addressed below in sections 2.3 and 2.5 and also in chapter 8.

Hence the use of external reality is to emphasise that any judgment is a judgment about something.

### **2.2.3 Comments and Evaluation**

Since judgment is the primary truth-bearer in St. Thomas's exposition of truth, sentences, utterances and definitions are said to be true because of their connection with judgments (Cf. Aquinas 1952:14). In other words, according to Aquinas, when one says that a sentence, an utterance or a definition is true, the truth of a judgment is affirmed. (1952:13). Aquinas's discussion of truth is in a context in which metaphysics is the foundation for the discussion of truth. However, there has been a change in emphasis in the critical philosophy of Lonergan who makes cognitional theory and not metaphysics foundational (Lonergan 1967, 1992[2013]).

Anticipating our discussions of rivals to the correspondence theory in chapter four, it is important to point out that Aquinas's theory of truth is not an example of identity theory. Identity theory of truth claims that true proposition and fact are identical. Truth as the conformity or correspondence of thing and intellect as Aquinas emphasises cannot be confused with identity theory. In fact, he is categorical that truth does not entail any form of identity. The nature of truth according to him entails in the relation of correspondence. He affirms:

[T]he nature of the true consists in a conformity of thing and the intellect. Nothing becomes conformed with itself, but conformity requires distinct terms. Consequently, the nature of truth is first found in the intellect when the intellect begins to possess something proper to itself, not possessed by the thing outside the soul, yet corresponding to it, so that between the two – intellect and the thing – a conformity may be found (Aquinas 1952:13).

Since among analytic correspondence theorists, proposition is taken to be the primary truth-bearer, and I have argued that the primary truth-bearer according to Aquinas is judgment, is there any way of reconciling the two perspectives? Yes, there is a way because there is a link between the two. Any proposition arises from an act of judgment. As Bernard Lonergan puts it, 'the first determination of the notion of judgment is reached by relating it to propositions.' (1992[2013]:296). The relation between judgment and proposition is that the term judgment expresses both the mental act of judging and the

content of that judgment. So, when a judgment is said to be true or false, it is precisely because of the content of judgment and not because of the act of judging. This content is exactly what is referred to as a proposition in philosophy. Subscribing to the understanding that a proposition is the content rather than acts, Lonergan writes:

A proposition, then, may be simply the object of thought, the content of an act of conceiving, defining, thinking, supposing, considering. But a proposition also may be the content of an act of judging; and then it is the content of an affirming or denying, an agreeing or disagreeing, an assenting or dissenting (1992 [2013]:296-297)

Hence there is no dichotomy in defending both judgments and propositions as truth-bearers while considering truth as correspondence. However, regardless, of Aquinas's argument that judgment is the primary truth-bearer, I still take proposition to be the only primary truth-bearer while judgment is a truth-bearer because of its relation to proposition. The relation of judgment to proposition precisely lies on the fact that the content of judgment (that which could be said to be true or false) is an abstract object and so that content is a proposition. It is possible to contend that what is applicable to judgment in terms of acting of judging and content of a judgment, is applicable to proposition too in that proposition can be either the act of proposing or the content. However, considering that the common meaning of the term "proposition" by analytic philosophers who use it, is exclusively reserved for the content, that same meaning is adopted in this thesis. The adoption is not meant to imply that judgment is an inadequate philosophical term. Rather, I follow the example of Lonergan who says: 'A proposition is what is proposed either for consideration or for affirmation' (1992 [2013]:329). In fact, in endorsing the understanding of proposition as the content rather than the act of proposing, McCarthy (1990:323) maintains that propositions are intentional signs and not intentional acts.

Arguing that judgment is the truth-bearer in Aquinas's correspondence theory of truth is not sufficient, since whenever the notion of truth-bearer is mentioned, there is need for a corresponding truth-maker. Without identifying the truth-maker in Aquinas's conception of truth, the exposition would be at best incomplete. What then is the truth-maker in Aquinas's conception of truth? An interpretation of Aquinas on truth necessitates that one affirms that reality or the thing is the truth-maker. In fact, an adequate interpretation of

the first article of *Summa Theologiae* question sixteen and the second article of *De Veritate* question one is helpful for establishing the truth-maker.

In both articles, Aquinas's aim is to establish where lies the primary residence of truth, whether it is in the intellect or things. Aquinas argues that 'truth resides primarily in the intellect' but secondarily in things because of conformity. However, in his reply to the third objection he states categorically that 'the being of the thing, not its truth, is the cause of truth in the intellect.' (Aquinas 1920:227). Saying that 'the being of thing is the cause of truth' implies that the thing, i.e. objective reality, is the truth-maker.

Although I have tried to examine if it is possible to introduce the terms truth-bearer and truth-maker in Aquinas's theory of truth, the significant aspect of such endeavour is that in a saying that judgment could be considered as truth-bearer in Aquinas, it uncovers the principal problem with the analytic approach of to the correspondence theory. That is, if it is the truth-bearer or the intentional contents (proposition, statement, beliefs, judgment) that must correspond with being or fact, an adequate conception of truth as correspondence cannot be articulated. Rather, for there to be truth as correspondence, the relation must be between intentional acts or operations of the subject with being or reality as it is in Aquinas and Lonergan. For this reason, Lonergan insists that 'truth is the relation of knowing to being' (1992 [2013]:575).

#### **2.2.4 Synopsis**

Aristotle and Aquinas did not intend to formulate a theory of truth. Nevertheless, it is plausible to investigate whether their understandings of truth could be classified within the existing theories of truth. The search to see if the conception of truth of the ancient and mediaeval philosophers fit into the paradigm of truth theories is the objective of this chapter. My argument is that truth according to these two philosophers is correspondence.

I did not take into account all the details and challenges that the correspondence theory of truth faces in current literatures especially in the post-Fregean or analytic philosophical tradition. Such detail is not the scope of this section. In arguing that the concept of truth according to Aristotle and Aquinas is correspondence, the basic question that guides my

position is: Do their understandings of truth satisfy the fundamental characteristic of the correspondence theory of truth? In other words, can their notion of truth account for intentional independence? My answers to both questions are affirmative. Moreover, Aristotelian and Thomist conceptions of truth account for the indispensability of the important task of the knowing subject in the quest for truth. Nevertheless, the role of the knowing subject in the quest for knowledge and truth, and intentional independence are not to be treated as mutually exclusive. The two are essential in this pursuit of truth. Nonetheless, intentional independence stresses that attainment of truth is achieved within the human quest for being or reality. And it is not solely dependent on the subject. This is because, ‘when we say that something is, we mean that its reality does not depend upon our cognitional activity’ (Lonergan 1967:230).

The cognition independence or intentional independence in Aristotle’s understanding of truth is essentially manifested by the existential interpretation of his definition of truth in *Metaphysics* book gamma (*Metaphysics* 1011<sup>b</sup>25). Hence, the existential sense of ‘to be’ is central to the argument that Aristotle’s conception of truth is fundamentally correspondence. As regards, Aquinas, the feature of correspondence theory of truth is spelt out by my argument that in his adopting the mediaeval definition of truth: *veritas est adequatio res et intellectus*, the thing, that is, objective reality is the truth-maker.

### **2.3 Modern Challenges**

In this section I will examine the challenges of the traditional understanding of truth as correspondence. In the exposition, I will explore the naïve realist’s cognitional theory and its challenges to the correspondence theory of truth. In the second subsection, I will examine representationalism, especially as it is espoused by René Descartes and Immanuel Kant. In the last sub-section, I will briefly consider the project that aimed at naturalising philosophy.

#### **2.3.1 The Spectator Theory of Knowing**

The spectator theory of knowing is a cognitional theory that is founded on naïve or common-sense realism (Moore 1959 [1970], Searle 2015). Realism in general is a metaphysical position that contends that reality or being exists and that the human subject

is capable of knowing it. It stresses that being or the real is not a construct of the human subject and so it exists independent of whether it is known or not. So it is not human conceptual schemes or linguistic practices that give rise to the existence and the properties of objects or things that are. In the strictest sense, reality is independent of our conceptual schemes and linguistic practices (Miller 2016). Although all the brands of realism do basically agree on this metaphysical position, their major difference rests on the cognitional theory which they espouse. In other words, when the question is no longer whether things really exist or not, but rather how do we come to know that which is, the different kinds of realism differ.

The cognitional theory of naïve or common-sense realists, is the spectator theory. This theory takes knowledge to be a kind of taking a look (Lonergan 1967:224). Hence, in knowing, the human subject is just like a spectator who knows reality just by looking. Being or that which is known (or what is to be known) is taken to be “the already out there”. This conception of knowing is empiricist in outlook because it reduces the dynamic human cognitional process to mere empirical consciousness. According to Lonergan, the worldview of the naïve realist, whose cognitional theory is the spectator theory, is that of pictures. Consequently, knowing is simplified to the image of a person looking through the window to see things or objects outside. What is lacking in this vision of knowing is the central role of the dynamic activities of the intentional subject.

Despite Aristotle’s tedious attempt to break away from Plato’s cognitional structure in which the knowledge of the real is attained through direct intuition, Rorty traces the spectator theory of knowledge, to him (1980:45). The basis for Rorty’s argument is that, according to Aristotle, the human person attains knowledge through identification with the object to be known (Rorty 1980:45; McCarthy 1990:177). This according to Rorty is possible because the intellect serves as a mirror and eye. He writes, ‘in Aristotle’s conception intellect is not a mirror inspected by an inner eye. It is both mirror and eye in one. The retinal image is itself the model for the “intellect which becomes all things”’ (Rorty 1980:45).

Two considerations need to be made here. First, it is debatable whether Aristotle's cognitional theory is spectator theory. Secondly it is indubitable that the naïve realists' spectator theory of knowing is influential for rejection of or the objections that are raised against the correspondence theory of truth. Beginning with the first consideration: regardless of Rorty's insistence that the Aristotelian cognitional theory is spectator theory, one can argue that the Aristotelian metaphysical position is not common-sense or naïve realism and so his cognitional theory is not spectator, and neither is the intellect a mirror and an eye. Even if it is taken for granted that in the Aristotelian cognitional theory, '[t]he mind knows the intelligible forms not by confrontation but by identity' (McCarthy 1990:177), it does not entail spectator theory of knowing. That Aristotle's cognitional theory is not spectator theory is shown by his acknowledgment of the role of the external senses and internal sense in the process of knowing and his clarification of the two aspects of the intellect in the *De Anima* book three, that is, passive and active intellect (Aristotle 1986:204). Besides, because of Aristotle's emphasis the role of the intellect in the process of abstraction and understanding (Aristotle 1986:201-204, Lonergan 1997:94), one could argue that Aristotle was a critical realist. Moreover, his view that both truth and falsity do not apply to thinking of indivisible but in things that 'there is already some synthesis of thoughts (Aristotle 1986:205), is indicative that he does not reduce knowing to mere taking of a look. Lastly, Aristotle upholds, at least implicitly, the decisive role of judgment in the process of knowing and attainment of truth. He affirms:

Assertion is also *of* something and *that* something is the case, as is also negation, and all cases admit of truth and falsity. But this is not the way with all thought; rather the thought of what a thing is will be veridical if it is in respect of what it is for the thing to be what it is, nor is this assertion of something that something is the case (1986:207)

Two conclusions that can be drawn so far regarding Aristotle's cognitional theory: (a) it does not seem to be spectator theory, rather it is critical realist position, at least, in its initial stage of development; (b) that his conception of truth is correspondence.<sup>13</sup>

Concerning our second consideration, it is pertinent that objections against the correspondence theory of truth that arose beginning from the modern philosophical era, are the consequence of the reduction of metaphysical realism to common-sense or naïve

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<sup>13</sup> The Aristotelian background of the correspondence theory will be treated in the third chapter.

realism. Hence, a rejection of naïve realism seems to entail a rejection of the correspondence theory. If this is the case, then it follows that a kind of realism that is not naïve or common sense in perspective is capable defending a plausible correspondence theory of truth as it is done in this thesis.

One of the first alternatives to the naïve realist cognitional structure is representationalism led by René Descartes at the inception of modern philosophy and emphasised by Immanuel Kant. This perspective will be explored in the next section.

### **2.3.2 Representationalism.**

Representationalism, sometimes called representational realism (McCarthy 1990) came about because of the rejection of ancient and mediaeval epistemology especially the so-called spectator theory of knowledge and its background metaphysics, that is, naïve realism. Two figures that piloted this project are Descartes and Kant. Descartes began the project with his *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations on First Philosophy*, as he tried to break away from the traditional philosophical project. Descartes's quest for a completely new beginning meant that a methodic doubt is vital for him (1997). The major difference between the spectator theory of the naïve realist and Cartesian representationalism is the object of knowledge. Whereas in the former, what is known is reality or things as "already out there", in the latter, it is not reality *per se* or objects that are known but their mental representation, that is, ideas. The Cartesian ideas are different from Platonic ideas. While Platonic ideas are 'mind-independent transcendental forms', some of the Cartesian ones are mentally dependent<sup>14</sup> since those ideas are mental representations of external objects (Descartes 1997:91-109, McCarthy 1990:183).

An inevitable question that a critical analysis of the Cartesian representationalism brings to the fore is; what is the known epistemic relevance of the ideas and is it realisable? The ideas have a basic function of representing objects or things. However, since representation can be either correct or incorrect, it becomes imperative that a knower should be able to differentiate a correct representation from an incorrect representation.

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<sup>14</sup> Some Cartesian ideas are not purely mentally dependent particulars. This is the case with the ideas that Descartes considers to be innate, for instance, the idea of God and angels. (Cf. Descartes 1997).

Nevertheless, since what humans are capable of knowing, according to representational realism are ideas, then there is no plausibility of knowing the ideas that most correctly represent external objects. This is the quandary of Cartesian representationalism. The consequence of this is irredeemable scepticism<sup>15</sup>.

Descartes (1997:93-97, 147-162) tried to circumvent the problem that his representationalism created by postulating the infallibility of the mind when it comes to its operation and the ideas that have no relation with external realities (McCarthy 1990:184). Nevertheless, he did not succeed in solving the problem, because it does not address the relation between ideas and external realities. This situation leaves his assumed correspondence theory not accounted for properly. The predicament of the Cartesian representationalism has grave consequence for the conception of truth as correspondence in particular and philosophy, especially epistemology in general. Before we move to examine the effect of the failure of Cartesian representationalism, Kantian representationalism will be briefly outlined.

The proper context for understanding Kant's representationalism is his quest to avoid extreme positions: (a) that of the rationalists or dogmatic philosophers, as he called them, who emphasised the place of reason in the process of knowing while underestimating the importance of sense perception, on the one hand; and (b) that of the empiricists especially David Hume, who exulted sense impression while trying to obliterate reason on the other hand. To create an equilibrium, he accentuated that human cognition has two fundamental sources: sensibility and understanding. He maintains that all knowledge begins with the sense experience. Kant avers: 'Without sensibility no object is given to us, and without understanding none would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind' (Kant 2016:193-194, B75 A51). Intuitions and concepts are representations that arise from sensibility and understanding respectively. Kant

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<sup>15</sup> McCarthy expresses the dilemma of the role of ideas in representationalism thus: 'Their epistemic function was to represent these objects, which were veiled from the mind's direct acquaintance by the very ideas they cause to come into being. The first task of rational inquiry was to distinguish which of the mind's mediating ideas correctly represented the external world. When the spectator theory of knowing is coupled with representational model of awareness, how can such a distinction possibly be made? By the defining conditions of the problem, the mind can never compare the internal representation with what it represents externally in order to determine its accuracy. But if the mind cannot tell which of its many ideas are true, then the unavoidable conclusion appears to be skepticism' (1990:183)

differentiates between concepts of understanding, namely, categories and concepts of pure reason or ideas. Intuitions and concepts of understanding are objects of human knowledge but the ideas cannot be known because ideas have no direct relation to objects, and reason is not a source of knowledge. The acknowledgment of the two sources of knowledge is not a Kantian novelty, it is an appropriation of a tradition that goes back to Aristotle and Aquinas.

Nonetheless, the consequence of Kant's adherence to the two sources is different from that of Aristotle and Aquinas. Firstly, it is because the milieu in which Aristotle and Aquinas lived emphasised metaphysics and so the object of knowledge is reality or being. Whereas in Kant's milieu, epistemology was accentuated and what is known are rather ideas or representations, that is, phenomena – things as they appear to us but not noumena, that is, things-in-themselves. The phenomena-noumena dichotomy led to the inescapable Kantian trap. Although Kant championed the defence of apodictic certainty and *a priori* knowledge, his relegation of reason to regulatory function rather than constitutive function became insurmountable blow to his critique (2016:354-365, A235/B294-A259/B315). In other words, Kant's insistence that human reason cannot lead to knowledge but leads to transcendental illusion became a stumbling block to his cognitional theory. For instance, it is problematic to explain how he knows that humans can only know phenomena but not noumena and also how he knows that there are such things like noumena (Kant 2016:384-469, A293/B249-A425/B453).

In his cognitional theory, Kant tried to break ranks with his predecessors. Against Plato, he asserts that the human intellect is incapable of knowing transcendent reality (Platonic forms). Contra Aristotle, he maintains that human understanding cannot receive intelligent forms that are in external objects through abstraction. Against Descartes his fellow representationalist, Kant 'rejected [the] assertion that the mind can know itself through immediate inspection.' (McCarthy 1990:189). Nonetheless, this does not mean that Kant completely succeeded in overcoming the spectator theory of knowing. Kant still kept the conception of truth as correspondence. All that his Copernican revolution in philosophy did, is to invert the positions of cognition and objects (2016:110, Bxvi). So instead of human knowledge agreeing with objects as his predecessors argued, Kant

claimed that it is objects that must conform with cognition (or mental representation) (2016:110, Bxvi). Kant inverted the order so as to account for *a priori* knowledge especially synthetic *a priori* knowledge.<sup>16</sup> The inversion that he championed brought more problems to truth as correspondence than the solution envisaged by Kant.

Moreover, Kant's transcendental idealism raises a doubt about the possibility of knowing anything at all, apart from the structures that the intellect or understanding imposes on reality. The doubt about the possibility of knowledge implies a serious doubt about attainment of truth as correspondence. For instance, if it is the mind through its structures or categories that gives form to objects, then it becomes problematic to argue that the object could conform to human cognition.

With his representationalism Kant rightly refuted the equation of knowing with the analogy of human vision in terms of seeing and looking and as such he avers that knowing is not a form of immediate intuition (2016:360-362, B306-309, A253-254). He argued that there is no intellectual or rational intuition that is characteristic of the spectator theory (McCarthy 1990:189). Nonetheless, his representationalism made the knowing of the real impossible. And because it is the phenomena (things as they appear to us) that can be known, the question of convergence of knowing seems mysterious. In fact, the phenomena-noumena dichotomy in Kant raises the question whether things would present themselves to us as they are not. Besides, if Kant's representationalism is taken to the limit, the correspondence theory becomes indefensible both for the naïve realist and probably the critical realist. On the side of the naïve realist, Kant's rejection of knowledge as 'immediate intuition of being' becomes an impasse for the defence of truth as correspondence (McCarthy 1990:302). On the other hand, the consequence of Kant's cognitional theory for the critical realist is that if we cannot know the real, then it becomes contentious whether it is possible for the subject to reasonably affirm that which is. And without such affirmation, it becomes problematic to account for the relation of knowing

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<sup>16</sup> Kant articulates his position thus: 'Up to now it has been assumed that our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about them *a priori* through concepts that would extend our cognition have, on this presupposition, come to nothing. Hence let once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition, which would agree better with the requested possibility of an *a priori* cognition of them, which is to establish something about objects before they are given to us.' (Kant 2016:110, Bxvi).

to being. In other words, the inability to know things-in-themselves, that is, being or the real, implies inability to account for truth as correspondence. McCarthy expresses the effect of espousing representational realism:

The epistemological upshot of these critical reflections was twofold: a general rejection of representational realism in its mentalistic version and a growing suspicion of the correspondence theory of truth. This suspicion is warranted if correspondence is treated as intuitive similarity between terms of meaning and the epistemic objects they signify. The super-intuition needed to substantiate the copy theory of truth does not exist. Recognition of this fact requires defenders the correspondence to abandon a resemblance theory of truth and explore more carefully the nonintuitive operation of the intellectual and rational consciousness on which the knowledge of truth depends (1990:303-304).

As McCarthy argues in the passage above, if one is to defend the correspondence theory of truth, one must abandon both naïve realism (with its spectator theory of knowing) and representational realism. That is exactly what Lonergan does in his critical realist position that is defended in this thesis. The critical realist rejects the claim that the act of knowing involves intellectual and rational intuitions or any form of intuition at all. Human beings in their cognitional process have access to concepts and judgments not by intuition but intentionally (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:346-352). Hence Lonergan's direct and reflective insights are not intellectual and rational intuitions (1992 [2013]:304). Direct insights which result from understanding of that which is inquired about lead to formation of concepts and propositions, while reflective insights which are a product of sufficient reflection about that which is understood 'are the rational *ground* for the judgments of truth.' (1990:303)

There is no doubt that the rejection of both spectator theory and representationalism was a great blow for philosophy in general and epistemology in particular. The consequence of that rejection is the call for the naturalization of philosophy and/or elimination of epistemology and the correspondence theory of truth by some philosophers since the nineteenth century.

### **2.3.3 Philosophy Naturalized**

The historical consciousness that became the order of the day in the modern times and which led to the emancipation of the empirical sciences as autonomous disciplines reduced the province of philosophical authority. The empirical sciences were not guided

by classical consciousness as philosophy (and later theology) were guided during the time of the ancient and mediaeval thinkers through Descartes to Kant. So, unlike the classical consciousness approach which sought 'eternal and immutable truth' and certainty, the new autonomous empirical disciplines were open to mutability of truth (McCarthy 1990:229). The development and success of the empirical sciences led to the decline of the philosophical project of inquiry. Moreover, the difficulties that the spectator theory of knowing and representationalism posed on the question of human knowing and the correspondence theory of truth made some philosophers to look to the empirical sciences, especially physics, as their guide and so the 'ideal of empirical science became the norm against which all candidates for knowledge were measured.' (1990:32) Consequently, some philosophers campaigned for the naturalisation of philosophy through the elimination of metaphysics and the naturalisation of epistemology (Dewey 1960 and Quine 1969, 1980). For instance, Dewey called for naturalisation of epistemology to empirical psychology. While Rorty called for the completed elimination of traditional philosophy (especially metaphysics and epistemology) in order to uphold pragmatism (1991).

The call for the naturalisation of philosophy is a call for the complete dethronement of traditional philosophy. The implication of this is that truth is no longer normative. And so empirical science became the sole 'measure of reality and truth' (McCarthy 1990:33). Because of the disappearance of the normativity of truth, the philosophical investigation of truth is reduced to logical, semantic or linguistic analysis of the uses of the truth predicate. This is predominant in the deflationary theories of truth and in the approach to truth discourse employed by substantive truth theorists in the analytic philosophical framework. Nevertheless, the fundamental limitation of the attempt to naturalise epistemology is the inability of its proponents to clearly differentiate between intentional and nonintentional awareness. McCarthy summarises the problem of the naturalisation of epistemology:

The attempted naturalization of epistemology, modeled [sic] on the transfer of Newtonian atomism into a realm of ideas, was a colossal blunder. It treated the domain of human knowledge as the mental equivalent of the Newtonian concept of nature, as an assemblage of epistemic particles, ideas, subject to psychological laws. It systematically neglected the basic distinctions that differentiate philosophy from natural science. I am referring to the distinction between intentional and nonintentional fields of investigation, between logical and

psychological laws, between normative and descriptive categories, between causal explanation and epistemic justification. To override any of these central distinctions is to commit a specific version of the naturalistic fallacy (1990:34-35).

The intentionality character that is central to critical realism is what is obviously lacking in the current investigation of truth within the analytic philosophical tradition. However, any investigation of truth as correspondence that would not reduce truth to a thin concept or that hopes to go beyond logical or linguistic analysis would take into consideration the intentionality of human consciousness and the intentionality of the human cognitional process. Such an investigation is not primarily concerned with whether an absolute or total truth is attainable. Rather it is about outlining what truth consists in and subsequently about the value of the truth when attained towards human search for self-transcendence.

A common misconception on which the objection against the understanding of truth as correspondence by the proponents of naturalised epistemology is based, is the identification of absolute truth with objective truth. It is evident in Rorty (1980:377-378) who argues that the quest for objective truth is an obstacle to his proposed continued conversation in philosophy or 'edifying philosophy' as he terms it. And to him, a continued conversation is possible only if there are 'new descriptions' (1980:377-378). Rorty's suggestion seems to rest on two assumptions (which I think are false). The first assumption is that all descriptions are epistemically equivalent, and so critical evaluation of descriptions would not be necessary. Secondly, he seems to give the impression that philosophy is purely a descriptive discipline without any explanatory function. These two assumptions cannot be defended because critical evaluation and epistemic explanation are essential for philosophising. This is exactly what differentiates the cognitional structure of a critical realist from a naïve realist's spectator theory which reduces knowing to empirical consciousness.

Hence a blanket rejection of the correspondence theory because of the inadequacy of naïve realism and its spectator theory of knowledge or because of the limitation of representational realism only takes place if philosophy in general and epistemology in particular are reduced to a naturalised description, without taking into consideration the nature of human cognitional process. In other words, if philosophy is reduced to

conceptual analysis, it becomes problematic to outline the centrality of intentionality in the human cognitional process. However, when it is acknowledged that ‘every consciousness is a consciousness of something’, and so no process of knowing commences without a presentation of sense data or representation of data by the imagination to the subject, then the question of critical evaluation and explanation becomes inevitable in cognitional theory and epistemology. Of course, the defence of the necessity of the given in the knowing process does not entail a canonisation of what Wilfrid Sellars calls the ‘myth of the given’ (1991:127-196). The data as a given in the understanding of the critical realist does not presuppose or entail that knowledge is an immediate intuition of that which is presented. The contention of the critical realist like Lonergan is that it is ‘unquestionable and indubitable’ since sense datum is necessary for a cognitional process, but by itself it does not raise any question for intelligence or reflection. Those questions only arise in the in the levels of intelligent and rational consciousness respectively (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:406).

Furthermore, the contention that the datum is a given does not imply that a critical realist is a defender of the ‘already in here’ and ‘already out there now real’ dichotomy. This dichotomy is characteristic of naïve or common-sense realism that reduces knowing to empirical consciousness and consequently takes knowing to be mere taking of a look. The cognitional theory that is built on this viewpoint puts the subject and object (or being) as contradictory opposites. Hence, in order to know, the subject has to look just as someone who looks through the window or across a fence to see something that is ‘already out there’. Lonergan’s rejection of the ‘already out there now’ mentality which is characteristic of the spectator theory and the dominant perspective of the correspondence theory in the analytic philosophical tradition, does not mean that he claims that there are no objects like tables, chairs, houses, etc. Rather his point is that if being ‘is the objective of pure desire to know’ (1992 [2013]:372) and ‘truth is a relation of knowing to being’ (1992[2013]:575), then it is ridiculous to position the subject and being (reality or the object) as contrasting opposites because the subject itself in order to be a subject must have to be. The implication of this is that if the subject is a being then it cannot stand in opposition to being. Lonergan articulates:

Again, being is divided from within; apart from being there is nothing; it follows that there cannot be a subject that stands outside being and looks at it; the subject has to be before he can look; and once he is, then he is not outside being but either the whole of it or some part. If he is the whole of it, then he is the sole object. If he is only a part, then he has to begin by knowing a multiplicity of parts (A is; B is, A is not B) and add that one parts knows other ('I' am A). (1992 [2013]:401).

If as it is argued in the previous few paragraphs, the critical realist cannot be accused of being a spectator theorist and his defence of the sense datum as a given is not to be understood in terms of Sellars 'myth of the given', then it is hasty to dismiss his version of the correspondence theory of truth without taken into account that his 'cognitional theory, epistemology and metaphysics form a comprehensive account of cognition that advances from knowing through knowledge to the nature of the known' (McCarthy 1990:318).

#### **2.4 Truth as Correspondence: A Lonerganian Understanding**

One of the challenges of the definition of truth as relation of correspondence between propositions and facts is the tendency to view it from the empiricists' prism and so take correspondence to be a sort of an empirical comparison between two "entities"- a proposition and a fact. Such temptation arises from the inclination to view knowing as a mere taking of a look; that is the view that equates knowing with perception, and so objectivity is taken to be an extroversion of the 'already out there now' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:410, 447). However, it would be a misunderstanding to interpret the conception of truth as correspondence that is defended in this thesis from the empiricist standpoint. To avoid such misunderstanding, it is important to call to mind that my position is that truth as correspondence properly understood should be traced to the ancient and mediaeval times especially the mediaeval definition of truth as '*adequatio rei et intellectus*'. Bearing this in mind, in this section, truth as correspondence is reconsidered from the philosophical perspectives of the philosopher- theologian Bernard Lonergan.

Understanding Lonergan's conception of truth as correspondence requires that one should not lose sight of the intrinsic relationship between epistemology and metaphysics. The view that truth as correspondence is the meeting point between epistemology and metaphysics is neglected or not emphasised by truth theorists from the analytic philosophical tradition, especially those who consider truth to be a merely semantic or

logical notion (Tarski 1944, Horwich 1998, Scharp 2013). Nonetheless, in the traditional understanding of truth as correspondence, the place of truth as the meeting point between knowing and being cannot be underestimated. Blanchette (2003:49) affirms the relation thus: 'Knowing critically cannot be satisfied with just bright ideas in forming its quiddity of things. It must check the truth of its ideas in relation to what is, or to being.' The intrinsic relationship is expressed thus: 'Inversely, then, knowing is true by its relation to being, and truth is a relation of knowing to being.' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:575). It is possible to raise an objection that Lonergan's conception of truth is not correspondence since he talks of relation without explicitly including the notion of correspondence, since relation could also be a form of identity. Nevertheless, an adequate analysis of Lonergan's epistemology eliminates the possibility of interpreting his understanding of truth in terms of identity. In fact, his description of what relation entails when truth is the issue in question is clear. In order to be unambiguous that Lonergan's conception of truth is correspondence, I quote him at length. He writes:

What is the relation? In the limiting case, when the knowing is identical with the known, the relation disappears to be replaced by an identity, and the truth consists in the absence of any difference whatever between the knowing and the known being. In the general case, when there is more than one known and one of these is a knower, it is possible to formulate a set of positive and negative comparative judgments and then to employ this set to define implicitly such terms as 'subject,' 'object,' and 'the principal notion of objectively.' Within this context there follows the traditional definition of truth as the conformity or correspondence of the subject's affirmation and negations to what is and is not.' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:575).

Since it seems obvious that there cannot be an adequate understanding of truth as correspondence according to Lonergan without prior understanding his view about the act of knowing and knowledge, it is imperative to outline what knowing entails for him. Nonetheless, it is not an exhaustive account of his cognitional theory and epistemology, since such an account is beyond the scope of this thesis.

#### **2.4.1 The Act of Knowing**

According to Lonergan, the process of knowing is a cyclic, dynamic and cumulative act. This is because the various stages that make up the process of knowing are composed of activities that begin all over again since attainment of an insight might raise further

questions for both inquiry and reflection (1992[2013]:399)<sup>17</sup>. In this process, the role of the knowing subject who performs intellectual and rational activities is essential. Hence, the knower is not a passive observer, since knowing is not just taking a look. Rather, the process of knowing begins with the presentation of data, progresses through inquiring and formulation to reasonable affirmation in judgment. Knowledge is not attained just by completing the activities that are characteristic of each of the levels that are involved in the process of knowing. In other words, any awareness of experiences, that is perception by itself, does not result in knowing or knowledge. The different stages that are essential for there to be knowledge are what Lonergan calls the levels of consciousness. According to him, there are three such levels. They are empirical consciousness, intelligent consciousness and rational consciousness. All the levels are essential aspects of the knowing process (1992 [2013]:346). The core of Lonergan's cognitional structure is that for there to be knowing and consequently an attainment of truth, the conscious and intentional subject must first pay an adequate attention to the data of experience, seek to understand the given data sufficiently and then after exhaustive weighing of evidences affirm whether what is understood is actually what is experienced, and if what is experienced and understood is actually what is. In other words, Lonergan's cognitional process explicitly examines whether what is attentively experienced and intelligently grasped resonates with what is actually the case.

Lonergan's emphasis on the three levels of consciousness that are necessary for the attainment of knowledge shows that the knowing subject is not a passive agent in the knowing process, and secondly that the knower and the known are distinct except in the case of the self-affirmation of the knower where the knowing subject and the known object coincide (1992 [2013]:352-353).

The levels of consciousness highlight the activities of knower as an active agent. For instance, the level of empirical consciousness, is marked by the initial acts of the subject

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<sup>17</sup> In defending cyclicness and cumulateness of human knowing, Lonergan argues that the process of knowing 'is cyclic inasmuch as cognitional process advances from experience through inquiry and reflection to judgment, only to revert to experience and recommence its ascent to another judgment. It is cumulative, not only on memory's store of experiences and understanding's clustering of insights, but also in the coalescence of judgment into the context named knowledge or mentality' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:399).

that are basically empirical since every act of knowing begins with experiential data. In other words, 'empirical consciousness is characteristic of sensing, perceiving, imagining' since at this level the senses are presented with contents to be inquired about (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:346). Since there is a need for the analysis of any data presented by the senses (both external and internal senses) for there to be understanding, intelligent consciousness is not an empirical awareness or empirical comparison, it is rather marked by an active process in which an intelligent being attempts to understand, conceptualise and formulate that which is already presented or represented. Lonergan states what the second level of consciousness and its function are thus; 'an intelligent consciousness is characteristic of inquiry, insight, and formulation. On this level cognitional process not merely strives for and reaches the intelligible, but in doing so it exhibits its intelligence; it operates intelligently.' (1992 [2013]:346).

Considering that inquiry is not possible without prior presentation of data, it follows that intelligent consciousness begins where empirical consciousness stops. Nonetheless, it goes further than empirical consciousness. The third level of consciousness, that is, rational consciousness is a decisive stage in the quest for knowledge. It is at this level that reflection and judgment take place. The judgment that is arrived at is not supposed to be a hasty one but that which arises because of grasping the virtually unconditioned. The grasping of the virtually unconditioned takes place when there is the grasping of the conditions of a prospective judgement and the subject can attest to the fulfilment of those conditions (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:305). In talking of virtually unconditioned, Lonergan means that for anything to be known some necessary and sufficient conditions need to be satisfied before one could say that one has knowledge. It is when all the conditions of that which is to be known are satisfied that Lonergan refers to it as virtually unconditioned. It is at this third level, when a reasonable judgment is made that there is knowledge properly understood. To emphasise the indispensability of rational judgment for there to be knowledge, Lonergan argues, 'the third level is alone decisive: until I judge, I am merely thinking; once I judge, I know; as insight draws the definite object of thought from the hazy object of experience, so judgment selects the object of thought that are objects of knowledge' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:364). That is why Lonergan is insistent that knowledge arises from intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. Although the levels

of consciousness that comprise the process of knowing are distinct, they are not totally separated since there is unity of consciousness as it is the same agent (subject) that engages in all the different activities that make up the various levels. Besides, there is also unity of the object or content.<sup>18</sup>

A clear distinction between the act of knowing and the content of knowledge is an essential characteristic of Lonergan's epistemology which accentuates connection between epistemology and metaphysics, and the implication of this connection for truth as correspondence. Lonergan is unambiguous that all the three levels of consciousness are composed of activities that solely belong to the knowing subject (1972:25). However, when there is intelligible grasp and reasonable affirmation, that which is affirmed reasonably is absolutely objective and so it is not a creation of the inquiring mind. In other words that which is intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed, that is, that which is known, is being. Hence Lonergan affirms that being 'is the objective of the pure desire to know'<sup>19</sup> (1992 [2013]:372). Moreover, since it is only that which is true that can be known, it follows that that which is intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed is being and also true. It is because of this that Lonergan defines truth as 'the relation of knowing to being' (:575).

In the process of knowing, the act (levels of consciousness) and being belong to different domains. While the act belongs to the subjective domain, being belongs to the objective. Lonergan states: 'The objective of the pure desire is the content of knowing rather than the act. Still the desire is not itself a knowing, and so its range is not the same as the range of knowing' (1992 [2013]:373).

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<sup>18</sup> Lonergan expresses the unity in the knowing process thus: 'Besides cognitional contents there are cognitional acts; different kinds of act have different kinds of awareness: empirical, intelligent, rational. But the contents cumulate into unities: what is perceived is what is inquired about; what is inquired about is what is understood; what is understood is what is formulated; what is formulated is what is reflected on; what is reflected on is what is grasped as unconditioned; what is grasped as unconditioned is what is affirmed. Now just as there are unities on the side of the object, so there are unities on the side of the subject. Conscious acts are not so many isolated, random atoms of knowing, but many acts coalesce into a single knowing' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]: 349).

<sup>19</sup> Lonergan describes pure desire to know as 'the dynamic orientation manifested in question for intelligence and for reflection. It is not the verbal utterance of questions' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:372).

Objectivity is not an afterthought to Lonergan's conception of the knowing process. Just as the activities performed by the knowing subject are classified into three levels of consciousness – empirical, intelligent and rational – the contents of the acts of the levels of consciousness are experientially, normatively and absolutely objective respectively (1992 [2013]:402-407). It is the absolute objectivity which is properly the characteristic of that which is known, that is characteristic of being, that gives grounding for the objectivity and intentional transcendence of truth. In fact, Lonergan avers that the proximate criterion of truth rests on the absolute objectivity of being. He writes:

The proximate criterion of truth is reflective grasp of the virtually unconditioned. Because it proceeds by rational necessity from such a grasp, the act of judgment is an actuation of rational consciousness, and the content of judgment has the stamp of the absolute. Essentially, then, because the content of judgment is unconditioned, it is independent of the judging subject. Essentially, again, rational consciousness is what issues in a product that is independent of itself. Such is the meaning of absolute objectivity, and from it there follows a public or common terrain through which different subjects can and do communicate and agree (1992 [2013]:573).

A conclusion that can be drawn from the intrinsic relationship between being, absolute objectivity and truth is that truth is intentionally independent. This is the case in support of the position that Lonergan's conception of truth is correspondence. Secondly, if we are to talk in the language of some of the twentieth and twenty-first century theorists of truth in the Anglo-American philosophical tradition, one could say that being is the truth-maker. A clarification that the Lonerganian conception of truth as correspondence brings to the fore is that it is problematic to define truth as a relation of correspondence between propositions and facts. This is because correspondence does not take place between proposition and fact. Rather, correspondence takes place in the act of judging, and a proposition arises of an act of judgement. However, it is possible to define truth as a relation of correspondence between judgment (act of judging) and fact. In this case, fact is not to be understood in a narrow empiricist way but in terms of that which is intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed, that is, in terms of being. Fact so understood does not trade with the "in here" and "out there" dichotomy. In other words, it does not refer to that which is "already out there now real". Blanchette argues for the same understanding of truth that is defended here, that is, correspondence with fact understood broadly in terms of being. Hence, he affirms 'that truth consists in some

adequacy of thought to being in act and not just in some consistency of thought with itself' (Blanchette 2003:73).

A reconsideration of truth as correspondence in terms of Lonergan's definition; that is, relation of knowing to being, is vital in order to avoid the reduction of truth as correspondence to the empirical realm<sup>20</sup>. This is because since, being is trans-categorical, and cannot be reduced to any genus or specific difference, it throws more light on understanding of fact as truth-maker. In fact, Kenneth R. Olson's (1987) analysis of the historical development of the philosophical use of the term "fact" shows that fact cannot be consigned just to the realm of the empirical. Furthermore, the understanding of fact within the broad context of being helps to clarify why it is argued in this thesis that true proposition is not identical with fact. This is because if fact is the truth-maker, then truth is already assumed when a proposition is qualified as true. Consequently, it would be more appropriate to say that a true proposition expresses a fact. In the same manner, it would be absurd to say that true judgment is being, rather, one would say that true judgment expresses being<sup>21</sup>. This is because judgment is an act while being is a content. Arguing that true propositions express facts, rather than the claim that true propositions are facts, enables a truth theorist to desist from a simplistic identification of true propositions with facts which obliterate distinction of domains between propositions and facts. To clearly maintain the difference of domains, Olson (1987) holds that facts have a metaphysical foundation while propositions have a semantics foundation<sup>22</sup>. By acknowledging that propositions and facts belongs to different domains, Olson points out that the tendency to merely reduce facts to propositions is problematic. He writes:

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<sup>20</sup> Hugo Meynell's consideration of Lonergan's conception of being expresses why understanding it from Lonergan's perspective will disperse any residue of empiricism that 'fact' implicitly seems to carry. According to him, being 'includes both all that is known, and all that remains to be known. It is what is to be known by the totality of true judgments, the complete set of answers to the complete set of questions' (Meynell 1991:56).

<sup>21</sup> Lonergan expresses the relation between judgment, truth, being and knowledge thus: 'the reflective act generates in judgment the expression of consciously possessed truth through which reality is both known and known to be known' (Lonergan 1997:61).

<sup>22</sup> Assigning propositions and facts to the semantic and metaphysical domains respectively is similar to the position that in terms of Lonergan's conception of truth, knowing and being belongs to the subjective and objective realms respectively. Nevertheless, it would still be a mistaken view, to think that correspondence takes place between proposition and fact.

Facts, unlike propositions, are made up of the various things, properties, and relations themselves, not concepts of them. To be sure, this would also be true of propositions, as Russell conceived of propositions. On this view, there seems to be no difference between facts and true propositions. But in order to serve as objects of belief and meanings of sentences, propositions must nevertheless be more finely individuated than it is reasonable to suppose that facts are (Olson 1987:v).

The claim that is made here, that fact as truth-maker is best understood in terms of being, following Lonergan's definition of truth is not merely implicit in Lonergan's understanding of fact, it is explicit. I deem it necessary to quote at length from him to show that the understanding of fact in terms of being is not a forced conclusion. He writes:

[F]act is concrete as is sense or consciousness. Again, fact is intelligible: if it is independent of all doubtful theory, it is not independent of the modest insight and formulation necessary to give it its precision and its accuracy. Finally, fact is virtually unconditioned: it might not have been; it might have been other than it is, but as things stand, it possesses conditional necessity, and nothing can possibly alter it now. Fact, then combines the concreteness of experience, the determinateness of accurate intelligence, and the absoluteness of rational judgment. It is the natural objective of human cognitional process. It is the anticipated unity to which sensation, perception, imagination, inquiry, insight, formulation, reflection, grasp of the unconditioned, and judgment make their several, complementary contributions (1992 [2013]:355).

Since according to Lonergan, being is 'the objective of the pure desire to know', and it is stated in the above quotation that fact 'is the natural objective of human cognitional process', it then follows that the broader context for an adequate understanding of fact is that of being. The close relation between being and fact is further portrayed by the contingency of most beings and facts, and so their necessity is a conditional and not an absolute necessity.

A relevant point that should not be forgotten when the relation between fact and being is considered is that there is a clear distinction between fact and sense data. Some epistemologies, especially those that reduce the process of knowing to merely taking a look tend to equate fact with sense datum and hence fact is reduced to that which is observable. However, fact and datum are not identical. That which is observable is datum not fact. Lonergan expresses the difference between fact and datum thus:

what can be observed is merely a datum; significance accrues to data only through the occurrence of insights; correct insights can be reached only at the term of a prolonged investigation that ultimately reaches the point where no further relevant questions arise; and

without the combination of data and correct insights that together form a virtually unconditioned, there are no facts (1992 [2013]:437).

Consequently, ascertainment of fact does not result from perception or some form of comparison between data and propositions but through the grasping of the virtually unconditioned and reasonable affirmation. Hence, to say that truth is a relation of correspondence between judgment and fact is equivalent to saying that truth is a relation of knowing to being.

In summary, regardless of my efforts in showing the similarity between being and fact in Lonergan's thought and the close relationship between truth, being and objectivity, it does not mean that the understanding of fact and objectivity in the analytic tradition is the same as in Lonergan's thought. Whereas in the analytic tradition the mention of fact and objectivity implies an elimination of the subject and the subjective, in Lonergan there cannot be a comprehensive discourse about truth and objectivity without taking into consideration the indispensable role of the subject. Even when Lonergan stresses the intentional independence of truth, it does not imply a neglect of the subject. Rather, intentional independence is possible in the first place because of the subjectivity of the subject. Lonergan articulates the intentional independence as regards the objectivity of truth thus:

Intentionally it [truth] is independent of the subject, but ontologically it resides only in the subject: *veritas formaliter est in solo iudicio*. Intentionally it goes completely beyond the subject, yet it does so only because ontologically the subject is capable of an intentional self-transcendence, of going beyond what he feels, what he imagines, what he thinks, what seems to him, to something utterly different, to what is so (Lonergan 1974:70).

Although Lonergan acknowledges intentional independence of truth, it is not meant as an undermining of the essential part that is played by the subject in the process that leads to the attainment of truth. In arguing that intentional independence does not imply the elimination of the subject, he states:

before the subject can attain the self-transcendence or truth, there is the slow and laborious process of conception, gestation, parturition. But teaching and learning, investigating, coming to understand, marshalling and weighing the evidence, these are not independent of the subject, of times and places, of psychological, social, historical conditions. The fruit must grow and mature on the tree of the subject, before it can be plucked and placed in its absolute realm (1974:70-71).

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, it has been contended that any version of the correspondence theory is influenced by the cognitional theory and the background metaphysical position of its proponent. For that reason, we began by exploring the spectator theory of knowing and representational realism in order to expose their inadequacies and limitations, and their effect on the correspondence theory of truth. Adherence to either spectator theory of knowledge or representationalism subsequently leads to scepticism about knowledge. The consequence of this is the call for the naturalisation of philosophy in general or epistemology in particular. Nevertheless, it is argued that the failures of the spectator theory and representational realism to account for comprehensive human cognitional structure and process is not sufficient reason to write off the correspondence theory of truth altogether, unless one would assume that spectator theory and representationalism are the only possible cognitional theory.

But that is not the case, because it is pointed out that critical realism defends a complex cognitional process that is cyclic and cumulative. This cognitional theory does not consider knowing to be some kind of immediate intuition but a structural and dynamic process that begins with experiencing and proceeds through understanding to the decisive act of judgment. This cognitional theory emphasises the knowledge of being at the end of the knowing process because the role of the agent or subject is indispensable and all the acts of the subject are intentional. Because of the intentionality of the acts of the subject there must be a relation of correspondence between knowing and being.

Lastly, the underlining problem with the rejection of the correspondence theory of truth in the contemporary analytic philosophical tradition is that the theorists assume the spectator theory of knowing or representationalism as the background cognitional theory on which their versions of truth as correspondence rest. By so doing, they neglect the importance of the intentional acts of the knowing subject.

## Chapter 3

# The Analytic Approach to the Correspondence Theory

### 3.1 Introduction

Contrary to the eliminativist and nihilistic attitudes towards the concept of truth by some philosophers like Richard Rorty (Rorty 1979, Rorty & Engel 2007), due to its supposed lack of social utility, the concept of truth cannot easily be written off in philosophy. In fact, it is an essential concept in theoretical philosophy. Hence, irrespective of the controversies about the concept, especially whether the concept has a nature, whether it is a substantial property or whether it is a property at all, truth still remains a principal concept in philosophy. As Engel (2002:7) argues, truth is a central concept in philosophy because the concept of truth enables some important philosophical questions like realism, meaning, semantics etc. to have sense. In this chapter, the analytic approach to the correspondence theory will be explored.

Within the analytic philosophical tradition, the understanding of the correspondence theory of truth is that of the relation of correspondence between a truth-bearer (proposition, belief, statement, sentence) and a truth-maker (fact, reality, thing). The correspondence theory is not primarily interested in the analysis of the uses of truth predicate. Rather, it contends that the correspondence theory is a theory of truth that does not presuppose the notion of truth. This is because it does assume the word true in its definition since it is the relation of a proposition and a fact that gives rise to truth. Propositions and facts are not identical. Hence it is vital not to confuse the nature of propositions and facts with their linguistic expressions. The choice of proposition as the preferred truth-bearer is based on the assumption that the other candidates for truth-bearer can be reduced to propositions (cf. Olson 1987, Alston 1996, Rasmussen 2014). For

instance, when a sentence or a statement is taken to be the truth-bearer, it is the content rather than the act of making the sentence or act of stating that is referred to.

The third chapter summarizes the way that the correspondence theory of truth has been understood in the analytic approach. Russell (1906, 1912) and Austin (1950) are both advocates of this theory. But how exactly do they understand it? Taking into consideration the importance of Bertrand Russell and J.L. Austin in the development of the correspondence theory of truth within the analytic philosophical tradition, and that the most contemporary analytic correspondence theorists align themselves with either Russell or Austin<sup>1</sup>, the first and second sections respectively deal with their version of the correspondence theory. It will be shown that subsequent rejections of this theory assume that this is the definitive way of understanding correspondence. And their criticisms are addressed to this. It will be suggested that a different way of understanding correspondence does not lend itself to these criticisms. Further the challenges that the identification of propositions and facts as truth-bearers and truth-makers pose are examined. In addition, the possibility of negative truths is also considered. The purpose of the consideration of the possibility of the negative truth is because it is an objection that is raised against the correspondence theory since there are no negative facts. It is hoped that by exploring the correspondence theory from the analytic framework, some limitations of truth discourse within that tradition will be discovered.

### **3.2 Bertrand Russell: Correspondence as Congruence**

I am now going to outline the contemporary analytic approach to the correspondence theory using the examples of the pioneers Russell and Austin. I will then examine the prospects and challenges of articulating the correspondence theory within that tradition.

Russell's contribution to the development of the correspondence theory is very significant. He considered truth as identity just like Moore did for some time (Glanzberg 2014). It is probably that he subscribed to the identity theory under the influence of G. E. Moore (1899:176-193). However, he discarded the identity theory because of the question

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, Gerald Vision (2004) works within the Austinian tradition while Joshua Rasmussen ((2014) works within the Russellian tradition.

of the ontological status of false propositions (Preston 2006). Russell's rejection of idealism plays an essential role in his conception of the correspondence theory of truth (1906). Although the common interpretation is that Russell subscribed to the correspondence theory, Thomas Baldwin (1991) argues that the identity theory has a great influence on Russell throughout his philosophical career. He does not even see a big gap between the identity theory and Russell's version of the correspondence theory (Baldwin 1991:37)<sup>2</sup>.

Regardless of Russell's association with the identity theory especially, the Baldwinian claim that the identity theory is the bedrock of Russell's conception of truth, in this section I will examine Russell's conception of truth as correspondence since it would be a more difficult task to undermine his contribution to the development of the correspondence theory in the twentieth century. In the analysis of his postulation of the correspondence theory, I will pay attention to the challenges his version of the correspondence theory poses to the correspondence project.

A study of Russell's conception of truth must – if it wants to do justice to Russell – take into consideration that according to him, the question of truth has two interconnected dimensions or questions. They are: first, whether truth is mind-dependent or mind-independent (1906:77). Second, whether truth is one or many (1906:77). For him the second question, i.e. the oneness of truth or its plurality, is the more fundamental of the questions. (Russel 1906:77<sup>3</sup>). Contrary to idealistic logical monism and its coherence component, Russell argues that truth is not one and that it is not mind-dependent (1906:77). Besides, *On the Nature of Truth*, Russell's principal project is not to outline the correspondence theory but a criticism of monistic idealism especially that of Harold Joachim (1906). He exposes the difficulty and absurdity of an idealistic conception of

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<sup>2</sup> He writes; 'although Russell calls his new position a "correspondence" theory of truth, it is one only in an attenuated sense. For where a belief is true, on this account there is no representative structure which just corresponds to the facts; on the contrary, the terms of the belief (other than the subject of the belief) constitute the fact in which the truth of belief consists. Hence the gap between this position and that advocated under the simple identity theory is minimal'. (Baldwin 1991:47).

<sup>3</sup> Russell's paper *On the Nature of Truth* was first published in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series*, vol.7 (1906 – 1907), pp 28-49. It is reprinted in F. Schmitt, *Theories of Truth*, Malden; Oxford; Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2004 (77-92). The page numbering in the citation follows the 2004 reprint in *Theories of Truth*.

truth as coherence because of the necessity of partial truth in the defence of an idealist conception of truth. The coherence theory will be discussed in chapter four. Russell (1906:78) argues that the entertainment of partial truth within a system is absurd and difficult because it ends up being an absolute truth. If not how would the truth ‘that a certain partial truth is part of the whole truth’, be understood: as a partial truth or full truth?

Nonetheless, while criticising the idealists, Russell lays the foundation of his version of the correspondence theory of truth. For him, the character of variability is essential to the correspondence theory while the idealist coherence theory cannot give an account of that. For instance, with the correspondence theory, it would be possible to ascertain the truth of the following:

(1) ‘Bishop Stubbs used to wear episcopal gaiters’.

(2) ‘Bishop Stubbs was hanged for murder’ (Russell 1906:80),

without recusing to any system of ideas. What makes it possible to know the truth or falsehood of 1 and 2 is the presence of facts. But that is not possible with coherence theory. In fact, the coherence theory presupposes the notion of truth and so cannot be a primary theory of truth. Russell expresses the predicament of the coherence theory by asserting that if ‘the proposition “Bishop Stubbs was hanged for murder” is not coherent with the whole truth or with experience’, then it implies that that which is inconsistent with the proposition is true.

The importance of the acknowledgement of the existence of facts and their clear distinction or otherness from propositions in Russell’s version of the correspondence theory is that it establishes the characteristic feature of variability. Put differently, the change of the fact implies the change in truth value of a proposition. Hence according to him, facts are truth-makers (2010:6). He means by fact, ‘the kind of thing that makes proposition true or false’<sup>4</sup> (Russell 2010:6). Russell explains what he means by fact and its role as the truth-maker thus: ‘If I say “It is raining”, what I say is true in a certain

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<sup>4</sup> Here Russell gives the impression that propositions are truth-bearers for him, but it seems his preference for truth-bearer is belief. He states that beliefs ‘have reference to facts, and by reference to facts are either true or false’ (Russell 2010:6; cf. Russell 1906:89-90).

condition of weather and is false in another condition of weather. The condition of weather that-makes statement true (or false as the case may be), is what I should call a “fact” (2010:67).

Russell’s understanding of facts can be interchanged with states of affairs or worldly circumstances. However, he is cautious against reducing a fact to merely ‘a particular existing thing, such as Socrates or the rain or the sun’ (Russell 2010:7). He goes on to say: ‘What I call a fact is the sort of thing that is expressed by the whole sentence, not by a single name like “Socrates” (2010:7) In making this point Russell is not clear enough. It is confusing whether he implies that a particular existing thing is identical with its name or not, for him to say that a fact should not be confused with ‘a particular existing thing’. If he intends to equate the two, then that is problematic and it would be difficult to agree with him on that point. However, whereas just the name is not a fact, ‘a particular existing thing’ implying its existence is a fact. It is the existence of particular things that makes a proposition about them true or false.

According to Russell, therefore, facts are not identical with propositions, statements or sentences. In other words, facts cannot be reduced to the symbols that are used in expressing them. This is why he emphasises ‘that *propositions are not names for facts*’ (2010:12). Facts cannot be reduced to linguistic medium because they ‘belong to an account of the objective world’. (2010:18). Russell’s understanding of the objective world is within the empiricist paradigm of “the already out there”. This is what is taken to task by Lonergan, since the notion of the objective world as the “already out there” reduces the universe of beings to a world of pictures.

So far, I have given the preliminary consideration that colours Russell’s conception of truth as correspondence. It is clear that the role of facts as truth-maker cannot be overestimated. Besides, facts and propositions are not identical. This is why Russell (2010:13) insists that to every fact, there are two corresponding propositions in which one is true and the other is false. For instance, the propositions:

- (1) Anthony is dead.
- (2) Anthony is not dead.

belong to the same fact but it is only one of them that is true while the other is false. It is within the background of Russell's distinction between facts, propositions and beliefs that his correspondence theory of truth is to be understood.

In developing his correspondence theory, Russell takes into cognisance the polarity between truth and falsehood (1920:120). Unlike things, propositions and beliefs are either true or false. The truth-falsehood duality arises because of the relation of propositions or beliefs with facts. Russell prefers beliefs as truth-bearer because according to him that will eliminate the possibility of trying to establish the ontological status of falsehood (1912:120). In other words, if belief is not taken as the truth-bearer, there would be a necessity to account for objective falsehood. It is important to note that in his correspondence theory, Russell is not concerned with the criterion for truth and falsehood or how 'is true' is used. His primary concern is the constitution of truth and falsehood. Hence, when the questions; 'What is truth?' and 'What beliefs are true?' (Russell 1912:120) are confused, Russell's theory of truth is misunderstood.

In order not to get into irreconcilable confusion while establishing or analysing a theory of truth, Russell argues that there are three requisites. First is that a 'theory of truth must be such as to admit its opposite, falsehood' (1912:120-121). The second requisite emphasizes the centrality of beliefs for there to be falsehood and truth. Third, that the truth or falsehood of a belief is independent of the belief itself. In other words, 'the truth or falsehood of a belief always depends on something which lies outside of the belief itself.' (1912:121) Russell highlights the independence of the truth or falsehood of a belief on the belief itself thus: 'although truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs, they are properties dependent upon the relations of the beliefs to other things, not upon any internal quality of the beliefs.' (1912:121). It is because of the third requisite that Russell calls his theory of truth a correspondence theory, i.e. 'correspondence between belief and fact'. (1912:121).

How then does the relation that is correspondence happen? According to Russell, an appropriate relation of correspondence must take into account the three requisites

(1912:120-121). Hence, it cannot be ‘a relation of the mind to a single object’<sup>5</sup> because such a relation cannot account for falsehood. For instance, when ‘Othello believes falsely that Desdemona loves Cassio’ (Russell 1912:124) a single object relation cannot account for that since a relation of a single object involves only two terms. Hence, Russell argues that in order to account for falsehood the relation must be between more than two terms.

For instance, in Russell’s paradigmatic example: ‘Othello believes that Desdemona loves Cassio’, the relation is between four terms. The terms are Othello, Desdemona, Cassio and the relation of loving. However, the relations of the four terms involved are not the same. The relation that applies to Othello is that of believing while that which applies between Desdemona and Cassio is that of loving. Nonetheless, it is Othello’s belief<sup>6</sup> that knits together the complex relation of the four terms (1912:126). Put differently, Othello’s relation is not to the three other terms taken individually. Rather his relation of believing is to the three taken as a unity. In other words, his relation in believing is to the fact expressed by ‘Desdemona loves Cassio’.

In the complex relation of believing just as in judging, there is both the subject and the object. In our example, Othello is the subject while the remaining terms – Desdemona, loving and Cassio – are the object. The order of the terms gives rise to what Russell calls ‘sense’ or ‘direction’. As such when the order of the terms changes, the sense changes also. It is because of the *sense* or *direction* that ‘Othello’s belief that Desdemona loves Cassio is different from his belief that Cassio loves Desdemona, although both beliefs have the same four terms.’ (Kirkham 1992:120; Russell 1912:126-127). In fact, one can argue that irrespective of having the same four terms, the change in direction can render one belief true and the other false. For instance, if Peter believes that:

- (1) Renata loves John.
- (2) John loves Renata.

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<sup>5</sup> According to Russell a single object relation is that which takes between a thing and a quality. For instance, when one says. “This is white”. Apart from the monadic relations, there are also dyadic, triadic and tetradic relations. (Russell 2010: 26-27).

<sup>6</sup> Russell contends that ‘What is called belief or judgement, is nothing but this relation of believing or judging, which relates a mind to several things other than itself. An act of belief or of judgement is the occurrence between certain terms at some particular time, of the relation of believing or judging.’ Russell (1912:126).

It is possible that 1 is true while 2 is false, if the fact is that Renata loves John; while John loves Vanessa. This is because as Russell's third requisite for a theory of truth states, the truth or falsehood of any belief does not depend on the belief itself.

Furthermore, the relation that brings about Russell's version of the correspondence theory is a complex one as there is a complex unity between four terms. But it is not any of the four terms that brings about the complex unity. Rather it is the relation of believing, i.e. the relation of the subject to the object – the '*object-terms*' and '*object-relation*'. It is the existence of the complex unity that results in true belief while its absence results in false belief. Russell expresses what constitutes true and false beliefs thus:

When the belief is *true*, there is another complex unity, in which the relation which was one of the objects of the belief relates to the other objects. Thus, e.g., if Othello believes *truly* that Desdemona loves Cassio, then there is a complex unity, "Desdemona's love for Cassio" ... On the other hand, when the belief is *false*, there is no such complex unity composed only of the objects of the belief (1912:128).

In summary, the truth and falsehood of a belief is determined by its correspondence 'to a certain associated complex' or lack of such correspondence respectively (Russell 1912:128). Besides, Russell's version of the correspondence theory spells out that mental independence is a fundamental feature of the theory. He affirms categorically that:

[A]lthough truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs, yet they are in a sense extrinsic properties, for the condition of the truth of a belief is something not involving beliefs, or (in general) any mind at all, but only the *objects* of the belief. A mind, which believes, believes truly when there is a *corresponding* complex not involving the mind, but only its objects. This correspondence ensures truth, and its absence entails falsehood (1912:129).

From the investigation of Russell's version of the correspondence theory, it is vital to indicate that his version is different from Lonergan's conception that is defended in this thesis. Russell's understanding that the 'act of belief or of judgement is the occurrence between certain terms at some particular time, of the relation of believing or judging' (1912:126), clearly indicates the neglect of the vital role of the subject in the quest for truth as it is the intentional subject as a critical mind that judges. In fact, it is difficult if not impossible to account for what Russell calls '*corresponding* complex not involving the mind but only its objects' (1912:129). This is a typical example of the emphasis on

intentional signs to the detriment of intentional acts that characterises the analytic approach to the correspondence theory.

Since according to Russell, ‘a belief is true when there is a corresponding fact, and is false when there is no corresponding fact’ (Russell 1912:129), what are the possible problems or difficulties that his version of the correspondence theory raises? According to Richard Kirkham, an unavoidable problem is that of existential necessity of the object-terms (1995:122). In other words, Russell’s theory demands that the object-terms must actually exist and not just the believer’s idea of them. But the problem as Kirkham points out is that there is a possibility of believing truly when one of the object-terms or both do not exist for instance, the children’s belief ‘that Santa Claus has a white beard’ (1995:122-123). Hence, he contends that such belief cannot be said to be false but there is need for Russell’s formulation to account for the belief in non-existing object-terms (1912:129). It is worthy of note that it is exactly the problem of non-existent or fictional entities that led Russell to introduce the theory of descriptions in “On Denoting” (1905:479-493).

There is no doubt that Russell’s choice of belief as the truth-bearer raises difficulty for his version of the correspondence theory. However, in the case of the children’s belief that Santa Claus has a white beard, Russell indirectly took that into account when he acknowledged that there are ‘exceptional cases’ in which facts depend on the mind of the believer (Russell 1912:130). Alternatively, if the children’s belief in Santa Claus is analysed, it could be argued that their belief corresponds to an *indirect existential fact*, since the children’s belief in Santa Claus is based on their acceptance of his existence due to testimony of adults and images that are shown to them. Nonetheless, since adults who as children believed that ‘Santa Claus has a white beard’ abandon that belief in their adulthood, it is not out place to say that it is a false belief.

In this section, I have studied Russell’s version of the correspondence theory of truth. According to him, truth is a relation of complex unity in which believing is the uniting relation or the relation that knits the complex unity together. In that sense, truth is the correspondence between belief and fact but when such correspondence does not yield, the result is falsehood. In addition, I stated clearly that Russell’s choice of belief as the

truth-bearer is motivated by his conviction that any theory of truth that does not take into consideration the truth-falsehood dualism is incomplete. Also an analysis of Russell's correspondence theory shows that the fundamental objective of a theory of truth is about discovering the constitution of truth and falsehood and not the criteria for a true belief or false belief.

Finally, irrespective of the difficulties and challenges of Russell's version of the correspondence theory, it has the fundamental correspondence intuition as it is principally concerned with the constitution of truth (or falsehood as the case may be) of a belief, a statement or a proposition, and not about the mere criteria of true or false belief or the usages of the predicate '*is true*'. Besides, his correspondence theory argues for irreducible distinction between propositions and facts while emphasising that facts are the truth-maker.

### **3.3 J. L. Austin: Correspondence as Correlation**

To Austin, truth just like language is central to human life and activities. So in analysing his conception of truth, the importance of truth in human activities, and the fact that he is considered an ordinary language philosopher ought to be taken into consideration. Austin's conception of truth is generally considered as a correspondence theory (Kirkham 1995:124-130; Vision 2004). However, Longworth (2015) argues that it seems that Austin endorses 'deflationism about truth'. Deflationism contends that truth is not a property (this will be explored in the fourth chapter). Irrespectively of Longworth's view, it would almost be an implausible venture to argue convincingly that Austin is a deflationist of any sort.

Rather than taking Austin's emphasis on '*it is true*' or '*is true*', as an indication of his deflationary tendency, that should be seen against the backdrop of his philosophical methodology which states that the starting point of philosophy 'should be the analysis of the concepts and ways of expression of everyday language, and the reconnaissance of our ordinary language' (Berdini and Bianchi 2013). Hence, because of the importance of the analysis of ordinary language in Austin's philosophical methodology, it is imperative to investigate his version of the correspondence theory of truth against that background.

Due to the context in which Austin's principal work on truth is written, i.e. some form of response to Strawson (1949) in which he rejects that truth or rather 'is true' is merely a performative act which aims at endorsing a statement, in his version of correspondence theory, Austin focuses more on the use of 'is true' (1950 [2001]). Consequently, his correspondence theory does not necessarily tackle directly the principal question of the correspondence theory i.e. what truth is or what constitutes truth (1950 [2001]). Rather than asking; What is truth? He asks: What is the main use of the predicate 'is true'? (1950[2001]). It is because of this that Strawson (1950:447) argues that Austin's version of the correspondence theory is a purified one.

Consequent upon Austin's principal question, he is doubtful of the understanding of correspondence as a relation between belief and fact, especially since such understanding is mainly philosophical and theological (1950 [2001]:26)<sup>7</sup> but according to him not necessarily the dominant understanding in everyday ordinary usage of 'is true'. He rejects correspondence as congruence (that is similarity of form between truth-bearer and truth-maker) because words are incapable of mirroring effect. He writes:

There is no need whatsoever for the words used in making a true statement to 'mirror' in any way, however indirectly, any feature whatsoever of the situation or event; a statement no more needs, in order to be true, to reproduce the 'multiplicity,' say, or the 'structure' or 'form' of reality, than a word needs to be echoic or writing pictographic (1950 [2001]:30).

Since Austin rejects correspondence as congruence because of the difficulty it poses, is correspondence in any form possible in relation to truth? According to Austin, in order to avoid 'the too restricted or too colourful' meaning that is given to 'corresponds' because of congruity, the only form of correspondence that is possible when statements are taken as the truth-bearer is correlation. According to him, such correspondence is '*absolutely and purely* conventional'. (1950 [2001]:30)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Austin's article 'Truth' was first published in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1950 supplement 24: 111- 128. All page references are based on the reprint in Lynch, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> He asserts what his form of correspondence theory is thus: 'The only essential point is this: that the correlation between the words (= sentences) and the type of situation, event, etc. which is to be such that when a statement in those words is made with reference to an historic situation of that type the statement is then true, is *absolutely* and *purely* conventional.' (Austin 1950 [2001]:30).

Austin's point in upholding correspondence as correlation as opposed to congruence is supported by the assumption that no word or sentence or statement (or whatever possible truth-bearer) can representationally correspond with reality, facts or states of affairs (1950 [2001]:27). However, be that as it may, representational relation is not the fundamental intuition of the correspondence theory, not even of Russell's correspondence as congruence (1950 [2001]:27).

To express clearly what he means by correspondence as correlation whereby the term 'correspondence' is used conventionally, Austin (1950 [2001]:27) clearly distinguishes between the meaning of a sentence and that of a statement. In his view, a sentence belongs to a language and so is used, whereas a statement is made by a person and belongs to the one who makes it (1950 [2001]:27). Hence the same sentence could be used to make two statements belong to two different people for instance: when A says: I am tired, and B say: I am tired. In making the distinction, he categorically states his preference for statement as the truth-bearer. According to Austin, a statement 'is the assertion made by, or information conveyed by, a declarative sentence. A sentence is the medium in which a statement is made, much as a block of marble is the medium for a statue.' (Kirkham 1995:125). Austin's aim in differentiating between a sentence and a statement is to show that they belong to two different conventions (1950 [2001]:28). According to him, they belong to descriptive and demonstrative conventions respectively. He writes: 'Descriptive conventions correlating the words (= sentences) with the types of situations, thing, event, etc., to be found in the world. Demonstrative conventions correlating the words (= statements) with historic situations, etc., to be found in the world' (Austin 1950 [2001]:28).

Truth, therefore, arises when there is a correspondence of the two conventions. In other words; 'A statement is said to be true when the historic state of affairs to which it is correlated by the demonstrative conventions (the one to which it 'refers') is of a type with which the sentence used in making it is correlated by the descriptive conventions' (1950 [2001]:28). Although Austin does not explicitly state what falsehood is, or rather when it is that a statement is said to be false, it is implied that it is when the contrary is the case. In other words, if the historic state of affairs which is correlated by demonstrative

convention is not the type of sentence that is correlated by descriptive convention, the statement is said to be false. From Austin's formulation of the truth of a statement, Kirkham infers the falsehood of a statement thus: 'A statement is false when it misdescribes the particular state of affairs to which it is correlated by demonstrative convention.' (Kirkham 1995:125; cf. Austin 1950:40, footnote 23).

It is, therefore, when the demonstrative and descriptive conventions are taken into consideration that the truth of statements can be affirmed. As such, it is only when the conventions are taken into consideration that we can say whether statements like; 'The cat is on the mat', 'The book is on the table', 'The door is open', are true or false. In his analysis of the Austinian correspondence theory, Vision (2004:238) contends that when it comes to ascertaining the truth of a statement, answering of two questions: - 'Is there a token of the type of state of affairs correlated with its sentence?', and whether it is the right token as dictated by 'the references made in the statement and the context' in question – is necessary.

Because the conventions refer to worldly circumstances or what Austin calls 'historic situations, events or things to found in the world', his theory of truth is indubitably a correspondence theory. In other words, his theory preserves or accounts for situations or states of affairs that must obtain for statements to be true. (Put differently, reference to reality which is essential in Austin's formulation of his conception of truth of statements shows that his formulation does not endorse a form of deflationism (1950 [2001]:2728). This is contrary to the opinion that is defended by Longworth (2015)).

Austin's use of conventions may possibly pose a difficulty in understanding his version of correspondence theory. However, when taken within the context of ordinary language as the starting point of philosophical analysis as he argues, the use of conventions in the explanation of correspondence theory falls into place (1950 [2001]:27-30). Since language is essentially a conventional sign, the use of words to refer to things, events, states of affairs is fundamentally conventional. So, when Austin talks of demonstrative and descriptive conventions he seems to imply that there is no natural relation between words, statements or sentences to that which they refer to. It could be argued that such

references are arbitrary. But since they are agreed upon within a linguistic group, they are conventions. Gerald Vision makes a convincing case for Austin's use of conventions thus:

'[C]onvention' is a thoroughly theory-laden term, more controversial than the occasion demands. No doubt, words, and the sentences composed of them, mean what they do as a matter of convention. The facts that that 'dog' means *dog* and 'cat' means *cat* are conventional if anything is. But it doesn't follow that once those conventions are in place the relevant correlation between sentences and types of states of affairs must be established by a further convention (2004:226-227).

It is worth pointing out that Austin does not use the term 'fact' in his formulation of the correspondence theory to refer to worldly circumstance or states of affairs. This is not because he thinks that there are no facts or that facts are co-extensive with true statements. His choice of not using the term 'fact' is dictated by his caution so as to avoid the confusion that the use of fact to refer to historic situations and events might lead to, since 'fact is regularly use in conjunction with 'that' in the sentences' (Austin 1950 [2001]:28-29). But that does not in any way imply that he is against fact or that he takes facts to mean true statements. In fact, he clearly states that he does disagree that true statements are facts. He states: 'When a statement is true, there is, *of course*, a state of affairs which makes it true and which is *toto mundo* distinct from the true statement about it'. (1950 [2001]:29).

Without doubt, Austin is unapologetic about the ontological status of facts even though the term was not vital to his account of truth. He argues emphatically in his paper, "Unfair to Fact" that facts cannot be reduced to true statements (1970:155). He disagrees with the claim of Strawson, 'that 'facts' are pseudo-entities and [that] the notion of 'fitting the facts' [is] a useless notion' (1970:155). Furthermore, he argues that the expression 'fact that' cannot be used as an evidence to discredit the ontological status of fact, especially as 'fact that' is 'comparatively recent linguistic device' in English. Most probably the beginning of its usage in English was after the eighteenth century. (1970:163). Consequently, the ontological status of facts cannot be reduced to a linguistic device like 'fact that'<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Austin reiterates the irreducibility of 'facts' to 'fact that' as follows: "'Fact that' is a phrase designed for use in situations where the distinction between a true statement and the state of affairs about which it is a truth is neglected; as it often is with advantage in ordinary life, though seldom in philosophy – above all in

In the formulation of his correspondence theory, Austin contends that 'is true' is not merely 'logical superfluity' aimed at endorsing, conforming or asserting a statement. He rather insists that 'is true' is descriptive. However, he argues that it is important not to classify utterances that are not statements as being statements. According to him, it is such classification that leads philosophers into descriptive fallacy i.e. the attitude of thinking that every utterance has a descriptive function or value and so must be either true or false. (1950 [2001]:34-35). According to him, performative utterances, value-judgment, sentences from fictions and definitions are not statements and also cannot be true or false (1950 [2001]:34-35). In order to avoid the propensity to descriptive fallacy, he does not take proposition as the truth-bearer and so takes statement as his preferred truth-bearer (1950 [2001]:34-35). But does 'proposition' necessarily lead to the confusion that results in descriptive fallacy as Austin claims? My answer is negative. Though misunderstanding of what a proposition is might lead to that but proposition *per se* does not. I would rather argue that the choice of proposition as the preferred truth-bearer would minimize the propensity to descriptive fallacy since it will eliminate or at least reduce the confusing of a sentence and a statement.

From the analysis of Austin's conception of truth, it is taken for granted that his theory of truth is correspondence theory. Nonetheless, an inevitable question that arises is; 'Are there limitations and difficulties associated with Austin's version of the correspondence theory?' As I have already pointed out, the choice of statement as truth-bearer and introduction of conventions come with their limitations. Besides, Kirkham (1995:128) just like Strawson (1950) argues that Austin's exposition of his version of correspondence is not detailed enough but that it is too concise. Kirkham argues that Austin employs negative arguments which he thinks help in defending his theory but does not necessarily do that. He argues further that stating of the 'necessary and sufficient condition' for the truth of a statement does not imply its '*being true*' (1995:128). Despite Kirkham's criticism, when considered within the context of Austin's paper, his account explains what the truth of a statement consists in.

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discussing truth, where it is precisely our business to prize the words off the world and keep them off it' (1950 [2001]:29).

Again, Kirkham gives the impression that Austin's motivation is to show the incompatibility of his theory with the speech-act theories. Hence, he argues that Austin's theory is logically compatible with such theories. Kirkham maintains that Austin's exposition 'is an answer to the metaphysical project' [that is Austinian theory answers the question concerning the essence or constitution of truth] (1995:128) and is not a cogent rejection or discrediting of the speech-act theories. In the face of this criticism, it is vital to state that Austin's motivation is not to argue for incompatibility between his theory of truth and speech-act theories, he acknowledges that 'is true' sometimes has performative functions (cf. 1950 [2001]:31-37). His argument is that the performative function is not the primary function of 'is true' but that it is property of statements and that it has descriptive function.

The above argument is not in any way meant to imply that Austin's version of correspondence does not have limitations. The major problem that it poses to the correspondence project comes from his insistence on the predicate 'is true' rather than the constitution of truth since he gives the impression that the fundamental intuition of the correspondence theory is to explain the criteria for the truth of a statement (or whatever is considered as the truth-bearer) or the uses of 'is true'<sup>10</sup> rather than the constitution of truth itself. Outlining the criteria for the truth of a statement is not foundational when the issue of truth arises. This is because in giving the criteria of truth it is assumed that one knows what truth is and why the truth predicate is applicable to a statement. In other words, Austin's version seems to turn the constitution of truth into a secondary factor in the pursuit of the correspondence project. Maybe it is because of this that Kirkham (1995:129) avers that Austin's theory is a combination of the theory of meaning and that of 'truth for statements'.

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<sup>10</sup> The earliest and probably the most vigorous criticism of Austin's version of the correspondence theory is that by Peter F. Strawson (1950). I will not go into the details of Strawson's criticism here since I have already made reference to it in the section. But it is worth noting that the force of Strawson's criticism is founded on Austin's emphasis on the use of 'is true' because of his choice of statement as a preferred truth-bearer (Austin 1950 [2001]: 30). It is because of this that Strawson concludes his objection thus: 'The central mistake is to suppose that in using "true" we are asserting such conditions to obtain. That this is a mistake is shown by the detailed examination of the behaviour of such words as "statement," "fact," etc., and of "true" itself, and by the examination of various different types of statement.' (Strawson 1950 [2001]:469).

The analysis of Austin's conception of truth in this section classifies it as a correspondence theory of truth as it clearly distinguishes between the truth-bearer and truth-maker and as such subscribes to the recognition of independence of the truth-maker which according to him is historic situation, event, etc., that is found in the world. It is in this light that his famous saying 'It takes two to make a truth'<sup>11</sup> could be properly understood. It is because statements and facts or states of affairs are not identical but have correlational correspondence that Austin's theory is a version of the correspondence theory despite the fact that it focuses more the use of 'is true' rather than on the constitution of truth.

Further, I argue that though Austin did not employ propositions and fact as the truth-bearer and truth-maker respectively because he wanted to avoid the confusions and difficulties the terms were already entangled in, nonetheless, his choice of truth-bearer did not eliminate the problem that critics were raising against the correspondence project. Besides, his choice of statement as a truth-bearer led him to focus on the use of 'is true' or the criterion for a statement to be true. In so doing he neglects the fundamental question of the correspondence project, i.e., What is truth?

Lastly, Austin's introduction of descriptive and demonstrative conventions in the formulation of his conception of truth, though criticised by Strawson, highlights that words or linguistic devices that we use to refer to reality, phenomenon, situation, etc. are conventional. But as Vision argues it does not follow that when the convention is accepted, that the establishment of further conventions is necessary. Hence, in spite of its limitations, Austin's account of truth is a correspondence theory. Nonetheless, Austin's version of the correspondence theory is plagued by the neglect of the role of the intentional subject in pursuit of truth.

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<sup>11</sup> In his footnote, Austin states categorically: 'It takes two to make a truth. Hence (obviously) there can be no criterion of truth in the sense of some feature detectable in the statement itself which will reveal whether it is true or false. Hence, too, a statement cannot without absurdity refer to itself' (Austin 1950: 39, footnote 13).

### 3.4 Truth as Correspondence within the Analytic Framework: Prospects and Difficulties

In the section, I will rely on different authors like D. M Armstrong (1997, 2004), William Alston (1996), Vision (1987, 2004), David (1994, 2004, 2004) and Rasmussen (2014) among others.

What question does the correspondence theory primarily try to answer about truth? Some of the possible questions are: (1) What is truth? (2) What is the meaning of the truth predicate? (3) What are the criteria of truth? (4) When can one claim that a truth-bearer is true?<sup>12</sup> Though these questions are related, they address different problems. The assumption is made that among the different questions the philosophical investigation of truth examines, at least one of them is fundamental, and that is the question that truth as correspondence answers. The most fundamental of the aforementioned questions is, what is truth?<sup>13</sup>

Within the analytic framework, the correspondence theory is taken to mean that truth refers to there being a correspondence between proposition and fact. This is not the only definition of truth as correspondence. In fact, as already stated, my preferred definition is that of Lonergan, that is, ‘truth is the relation of knowing to being’ (1992 [2001]: 575). My choice for Lonergan’s definition is based on the fact that it properly accounts for the role of the knowing subject and also highlights the place of judgment in the quest for truth. Nonetheless, I began this chapter with a definition that is common among correspondence theorists of the analytic tradition because this chapter examines truth as correspondence from the analytic framework.

As argued by analytic correspondence theorists, propositions and facts belong to different domains (Olson 1987). Proposition is an abstract content while the term fact refers to worldly circumstances or states of affairs by virtue of which a proposition is true (Vision

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<sup>12</sup> Vision (1988:25-50) gives a detailed account of some questions that can be asked while investigating the notion of truth. He gives a list of ten questions and argues that it is the first question, i.e. ‘What are the conditions by *virtue of which* a statement is true?’ is the primary domain of the correspondence theory of truth. Also Engel (2002:13) gives five questions which a philosophical investigation of truth can consider.

<sup>13</sup> This claim is a controversial one. Some philosophers like Lawrence Johnson (1992) are of the opinion that the question, what is truth? has no philosophical import.

2004). Commenting on the analytic approach, we can suggest that the abstractness of propositions can be understood in two ways. Firstly, it could be understood in the same way as Frege's thoughts which are immaterial and belong to the third realm as opposed to objects which are in the world or ideas that are in the mind (Frege 1956:302, McCarthy 1990:44). The Fregean third realm is similar to the Platonic world of forms. The second way in which propositions can be said to be abstract contents or entities is the Aristotelian way in which abstraction is vital for in the process of knowing. In this way concepts and universals are abstracts (Alston 1996:19). For Aristotle, from individual substances of the same kind, a concept is abstracted because they have the same form (*Metaphysics* 1070<sup>a</sup>10-14). For instance, from the individuals John, Mary, Jane, Peter, the concept "human" is abstracted. The abstractness of propositions that is postulated here is Aristotelian not Fregean. A proposition is said to be abstract in the Aristotelian way because it is composed of concepts and properties. Being abstract entities, propositions are not space-time bound. So the change in the linguistic mediums of expression of propositions does not affect propositions and their truth values. Although propositions and facts are different, it is difficult to give clear-cut differences between them since their linguistic media are the same except when prefixed by 'the proposition that' and the fact that. For instance, the "that clause" is sometimes used while referring to both propositions and facts as illustrated below:

1. Martha believes that Pope Francis is a holy man.
2. It is a fact that Jorge Bergoglio is the 266<sup>th</sup> Roman Pontiff.

Though 1 and 2 have 'that clause', 1 is a proposition and 2 is fact since 1 is an abstract content that is capable of being true or false, whereas 2 is an actual situation or state of affairs.

What then are propositions? Propositions are abstract entities that are either true or false, and their expression adequate or less adequate. They are true or false if and only if they agree or disagree with actual situations or circumstances in the world. Highlighting the importance of fact for the truth or falsity of propositions, Wittgenstein (1969:19) writes: 'It is impossible to tell from the picture alone whether it is true or false. There are no

pictures that are true *a priori*'.<sup>14</sup> Saying that propositions are meaningful does not imply that they are the meaning of sentences.

I now turn to a further question of how one identifies a proposition. This issue is essential especially because of the contention among analytic theorists whether it is proposition or sentence that is the legitimate truth-bearer (Quine 1990, David 1994, Alston 1996, Horwich 1998). It also addresses the conception that propositions are content of what is expressed, rather than the linguistic medium of expression.

What are the conditions for identity and individuation of propositions? Propositions are identical if and only if their linguistic mediums express exactly the same content. This happens in two ways. Firstly, this happens in the cases of translation. This is the case because propositions are not the linguistic media that express them, a proposition remains the same even when expressed in various languages, as illustrated below:

1. The queen is dead.
2. A rainha está morta.
3. La regina è morta.
4. Die Königin ist tot.

Although the linguistic media are different, since 1, 2, 3 and 4 are English, Portuguese, Italian and German sentences respectively, they all express one and the same proposition. Secondly, propositions are identical when the tenses of sentences that are their medium of expression change while the content is still the same. Propositions are identical in this case because since they are abstract and so not limited by time and space, the tenses of sentences do not affect them. For instance, the content of the sentences:

Lagos is the capital of Nigeria.

Lagos was the capital Nigeria.

made by Obi and Ada in 1990 and 1994 respectively are exactly the same irrespective of the change of tenses.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> McCarthy replaces Wittgenstein's picture with proposition and so rephrases him thus: 'It is impossible to tell from the proposition alone whether it is true or false (TR 2.224), for no propositions with sense are true *a priori* (TR 2.225)' (1990: 116).

<sup>15</sup> This example is inspired by Frege (1956).

Another contention regarding the identity of propositions is their relationship with co-referential terms. (Co-referential terms are terms that refer to the same object, thing or person). That is, does co-referentiality imply that propositions are identical? Co-referential terms do not imply identity of the two propositions. Co-referential terms can be either 'definite description' or 'a rigid designator'. (de Harven 2003). In the case of two propositions involving a rigid designator and a definite description co-referential terms, it is easier to see they are not identical propositions because of the possibility of different truth values. Take as an example the propositions:

Abor Olung is admitted to the Nigerian Defence Academy.

The shortest man in Idzemland is admitted to the Nigerian Defence Academy.

Let us assume that Abor Olung is the shortest man in Idzemland. In that case, the two propositions are co-referential. But they are not identical propositions because Abor Olung is proper name and so is a 'rigid designator', while the shortest man in Idzemland is a 'definite description' (de Harven 2003).

But what is the case with propositions that have a rigid designator as their co-referential terms? Does it imply that such propositions are identical since they would have the same truth value? A rigid designator co-referential term does not imply that two propositions are identical. Consider the propositions:

Abuja is the capital of Nigeria.

Abuja is a city in Nigeria.

Although Abuja is a rigid designator, the propositions are not identical. This is because they do not express exactly the same content. That they have the same truth value is not because they are identical propositions but because of the facts they correspond to (that is, they correspond to how things actually are).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> A similar case applies to indexical sentences. Indexical sentences are sentences that refers back to the speaker or to specific time and locations. While two indexical statements might have the same truth value, it does not imply that they are identical propositions. Consider the statements by Dlamini and Sibisi when both of them are hungry. Dlamini says: 'I am hungry'. And Sibisi says: 'I am hungry'. Though the two have the same truth value because they express the actual state of Dlamini and Sibisi, the content expressed by the two sentences are not the same and so they are not identical propositions. Since the position of this thesis is that propositions are not the linguistic mediums with which they are expressed, the statements by Dlamini and Sibisi can be reformulated thus respectively: 'Dlamini is hungry', and 'Sibisi is hungry'. These reformations show that the contents expressed by the statements are not identical.

Facts on the other hands are concrete situations, circumstances or features in the world. Some facts, especially empirical facts, are bound by space and time<sup>17</sup> since they have essential relation to objects and events. For instance, it is a fact that my laptop is on the table as I am typing<sup>18</sup>; and it is a fact that the Southern Protectorate, the Northern Protectorate and the Colony of Lagos were amalgamated in 1914 to form Nigeria. Moreover, facts are not capable of being either true or false. Rather they are the truth-makers.<sup>19</sup> So facts just are, and one cannot say that a fact is true or false.<sup>20</sup> Because of their connection with objects and worldly circumstances, facts are mind-transcendent. Mind-transcendence of fact does not imply that facts have nothing to do with minds. Rather, it highlights that facts are objective. In other words, a fact is not restricted to a particular subject, but any fact can be known by any rational being that is capable of experiencing, understanding and judging.

Lastly, an object or a person could be the major component of different facts at the same time. Consider the following examples:

It is a fact that Regina is 1.7 metres tall.

It is a fact that Regina lives in Lagos.

It is a fact that Regina is black.

In the three examples, Regina, the main component of the facts, has relation with quality (height), geographical location and property (pigmentation) respectively.

Consequently, propositions and facts are not identical. The identification of propositions (or true propositions) with facts raises a serious problem for the correspondence theory of truth, because if propositions or true propositions are facts, one cannot seriously argue that there is a relation of correspondence; it would then rather be a relation of identity. Julian Dodd (2008) bases his identity theory of truth on the identification of true propositions with facts. (The identity theory will be explored in chapter four).

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<sup>17</sup> The position that is defended here is contra the position of D.J. O'Connor (1975) who argues that facts are timeless. It is argued here that facts are spatio-temporal because of their special relation to objects, persons and events.

<sup>18</sup> This fact, is a relation between two objects, that is, between a computer and a table. Fact can also be a relation between an object and its property, for example; The door is two metres high.

<sup>19</sup> More is said about fact in the sub-section 3.2.2.

<sup>20</sup> Sometimes, in ordinary conversation, a fact is said to be true. Such situation arises from confusing propositions and facts.

Propositions (or even true propositions) are not identical with facts since facts essentially have relation to concrete or empirical components and so are spatio-temporal, whereas propositions are abstract entities.

Just as there cannot be identity but only correspondence between a concept and an object it refers to, so also it is between propositions and facts. In other words, the relation of correspondence is neither a relation of equality nor identity, but that of agreement. This is probably why Kant (1999:590) defines truth as ‘the agreement of our concepts with their objects’. For instance, some of the following propositions are true while others are false because of the actual worldly situations.

1. Enugu is the capital of Nigeria.
2. Abuja is the capital of Nigeria.
3. São Paulo is the capital of Brazil.
4. Brasilia is the capital of Brazil.
5. Ghana is in Africa.
6. Germany is in the Americas.

A consideration of 1 through 6 shows that 2, 4 and 5 are facts since they are actual situations in the world or actual states of affairs, while 1, 3 and 6 though propositions are not fact since they do not describe any worldly situation. When we consider 1 through 6 solely on their syntactic structure or form, there is nothing that differentiates the facts from propositions. The difference is that facts are actual mind-transcendent worldly situations. Hence, propositions and facts cannot be identical.

At this point, I deem it necessary to reiterate as already mentioned in chapter two that the understanding of fact in the analytic tradition is that of naïve realism as the “already out there” and it makes its defence of correspondence theory almost impossible. Besides the articulation of truth as there being a correspondence between proposition (an intentional sign) and fact will lead to an impasse. It is because of this that this thesis proposes a Lonergan-inspired understanding.

One of the criticisms against the correspondence theory of truth is that its definition of truth is too concise and so does not say much. For instance, it does not clearly differentiate

between propositions and facts. Moreover, it is difficult if not impossible to explicate how the relation of correspondence takes place. Since the premise of this thesis is that truth as correspondence is a definitional theory, one could avoid complications by stating that conciseness is not a limitation, since the correspondence theory is definitional and a definition ought to be concise. Such an approach is not satisfactory particularly as one of the criticisms against the correspondence theory is that propositions and facts are merely artificial inventions aimed at facilitating the arguments of the correspondence theorists. Accounting for the difference between propositions and facts is difficult since some critics of the correspondence theory argue that facts are just projections from true propositions (David 2001:699). Since propositions and facts are essential truth-bearers and truth-makers respectively of the version of the correspondence theory that is defended by contemporary analytic correspondence theorists, it is a requisite that the terms (proposition and fact) be examined and clarified further, especially as some analytic philosophers deny that there are propositions.

### **3.4.1 Proposition**

Scholars pose the following questions regarding propositions. Are propositions simply ‘surrogate truth vehicles’? (Quine 1960:192) Are they mere artificial invention for the defence of the correspondence project? If propositions are abstract entities, are they suitable truth-bearers? Are propositions meanings of eternal sentences? (Quine 1960:200; 1990:77) Are propositions truths and falsehoods? (Armstrong 2004:12)

The term proposition as used here refers to abstract entities or contents. The proposition is not a linguistic medium of expression. Linguistic media of expression change from one language to another whereas the proposition remains the same when the medium of expression varies as I have often said before. In this sense, utterances and sentences are linguistic media of expression. Linguistic media of expression are characterized by symbols and signs, be they oral or written signs and symbols. On the other hand, proposition is the content of what is stated, what is uttered, what is believed rather than the act of stating, the act of uttering and the act of believing. (cf. Alston 1996:14; David

2001:683). Consequently, when statements, beliefs and sentences<sup>21</sup> are said to be truth-bearers, they indirectly point to propositions. ‘For what is asserted or what is believed, the *content* of an assertion or belief, is a proposition’ (Alston 1996:15). As I already indicated in chapter two, I agree with the writers that proposition is a term for the content as that helps to clarify the distinction between intentional acts and contents. Sentences, statements and beliefs are truth-bearers only ‘derivatively’ (King 2014). This is why the proposition is the primary truth-bearer. Proposition has an advantage over statement, belief and sentence as truth-bearer because it (proposition) does not present the ambiguity that the other candidates for truth-bearer tend to present. In his reply to Austin for his choice of statement as the primary truth-bearer, Strawson emphasises that statement is an equivocal term and as such its choice as truth-bearer can result in ambiguity. Strawson’s expresses his points as follows:

The words “assertion” and “statements” have a parallel and convenient duplicity of sense. “My statement” may be either what I say or my saying it. My saying something is certainly an episode. What I say is not. It is the latter, not the former, we declare to be true. (Speaking the truth is not a manner of speaking: it is saying something true) (2001:448).

For instance, in the statement, ‘The economy of Nigeria is in recession’, it is not the act of stating that a truth value would be ascribed to but rather to the content, that is, what is stated. It is because such confusion is possible since there is an ambiguity whether statement refers to the act of stating or what is stated, that proposition is the preferred truth-bearer. For instance, consider, ‘It is true that John believes that the President is sick’. It is not clear whether the truth value is assigned to John’s acts of believing or to the content of his belief. Let us examine some conversation between John and Mary concerning his belief. In doing this, we must bear mind that when belief is mentioned, there are two possible interpretations; the act of believing or the content of one’s belief.

John: I believe that President Buhari is sick.

Mary: That is true.

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<sup>21</sup> William P. Alston (1996:9-23) provides a detailed account of the differences between sentences, statements and propositions. He highlights the advantages and disadvantages of taking any of the three candidates as the preferred truth-bearer. For instance, according to him, one of the problems with considering sentence as the preferred truth-bearer is whether a truth value is attributed a sentence-token or a sentence-type. He points out that some proponents of realistic theories of truth have preference for sentences over statement and propositions as truth-bearers because sentences are concrete objects while statements and propositions are abstract. However, Alston argues that ‘sentence *types*’ are abstract as well.

Mary's response in this conversation refers to the content of John's belief. That is, it is what John believes that Mary affirms to be true. What is affirmed here is not concrete but an abstract content and so it is a proposition that is the truth-bearer. If Mary's response were meant to affirm John's act of believing, the conversation would have gone thus:

John: I believe that President Buhari is sick.

Mary: You are right.<sup>22</sup>

It is because a proposition is not identical with the linguistic medium with which it is expressed that it is held that propositions are abstract entities as opposed to concrete or spatial<sup>23</sup> entities. Though propositions are referred to in this study as the content of what is stated or uttered, it does not imply that they are some mental images or mental objects.

Mental objects are plausibly not *propositions*. Propositions can be true or false, but no mental image can be sensibly said to be true or false. Moreover, I can fully grasp any proposition about a green ball without thereby being aware of any *image* of a green ball: propositions seem to be colourless, whereas images seem to be vibrant with colour. This leads me to doubt that propositions are mental images. (Rasmussen 2014:206).

Since propositions cannot be reduced to linguistic media or mental images, what sort of abstract objects do analytic writers take them to be? Propositions are similar to concepts, since a concept cannot be reduced to an image. For instance, the concept of man cannot be equated with the mental image of a man since the image goes with individuating features like colour, height and so forth. Neither could the concept be identical with any actual man. Unlike the concept which is simple, the proposition is complex, as it is a combination of concepts. In other words, propositions are structured. Structuredness accounts for the nature of propositions. Hence, 'the view that propositions are structured is purely a metaphysical thesis about what propositions are like and entails nothing about the relation between a sentence and the proposition it expresses' (King 2014).

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<sup>22</sup> This analysis is based on Alston (1996:14).

<sup>23</sup> Though I am not offering a detailed argument for propositions as abstract entities, it is worth pointing out that Rasmussen (2014:87-105) gives detailed arguments in favour of abstractness as the ontological status of propositions.

### 3.4.2 Fact

Reference to fact is inescapable for an analytic correspondence theorist. It does not really matter what terms are used. The various terms that correspondence theorists in the analytic framework use to refer to fact include, states of affairs<sup>24</sup>, worldly circumstances, reality, worldly situations, the whole of reality, the whole world<sup>25</sup> and things<sup>26</sup>. Taking into account the importance of facts in the correspondence project, it becomes imperative to examine what facts are. Similar to the notion of proposition, fact raises a number of questions. For instance, an exploration of the correspondence theory leads to the questions like: What is the ontological status of facts? Are facts identical with true propositions or not? How do facts correspond to propositions? Are facts or rather states of affairs a question of supervenience which implies ‘ontological free lunch’? (Armstrong 1997:12-13, 117). Since there are negative truths, are there negative facts also? Some of these questions will be explored in this sub-section. This exploration will not be exhaustive.

A fact is taken to be the truthmaker of a true proposition. A ‘truthmaker for a truth must necessitate that truth.’ (Armstrong 1997:115). In saying that facts are truthmakers, one asserts that without facts, one cannot determine whether any proposition is true or false since it is by virtue of them that propositions are judged to be true or false. As such, facts and propositions are not identical. Put differently, facts are worldly circumstances ‘by virtue of which a proposition is said to be true or false’ (Vision 2004:33). For instance, the following are sentences expressing propositions:

1. Abuja is the capital of Nigeria.
2. Enugu is the capital of Nigeria.

However, to know which of the two propositions is true or false, there is a need for a worldly circumstance; the relation of correspondence with either 1 or 2 establishes their truth. The mind-independent worldly circumstance which constitutes their truth is the

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<sup>24</sup> Though I take facts and states of affairs to be equivalent and so use them interchangeably, I have not assumed the naturalist and physicalist theses of Armstrong (1997). Neither do I subscribe to his thesis that the world is a world of states of affairs. Nevertheless, I am not going to argue against them since the acceptance or the denial of the theses does not affect the version of the correspondence theory that I am reconsidering in this project.

<sup>25</sup> Schaffer (2009) argues that the world is the only truthmaker.

<sup>26</sup> Things could conveniently be classified as facts for the sake of simplicity. A particular case in question is the mediaeval definition of truth as ‘*adequatio rei et intellectus*’.

fact. In this case, the ABUJA FACT<sup>27</sup> is the truthmaker. From the above example, there are two propositions but there is only one fact since there is no Enugu fact when the capital of Nigeria is the issue of consideration. Facts therefore, are fundamentally mind-independent. It is because of the mind-independence of facts that Rasmussen (2014) refers to facts as pieces of reality. Of course, describing the mind-transcendence of facts in terms of pieces of reality is problematic. It gives the impression, that facts are something out there that have no relationship with the mind. However, that would be a distortion what a fact is. On the contrary, linking facts with reality stresses that fact is that which is the objective of any disinterested inquirer as I have explained in my discussion on Lonergan in chapter two.

Since it is not enough to contend that facts or states of affairs are truth-makers, it is important at least to indicate what the ontological status of facts is. Facts are not particulars or individuals or particular existents like the moon, the earth or ‘Socrates’ (Russell 2010:7). Facts are rather complex in nature since they are composed of constituent parts. As I am typing now, it is a fact that my laptop is on the table. The fact is not just the laptop or the table. The LAPTOP FACT is composed of the relation between the laptop and the table which respects a definite direction, that is, that it is the laptop that is resting on the table and not the table that is resting on the laptop. Because facts or states of affairs<sup>28</sup> are not simple individual things, they are said to be a ‘structured whole’ (Vision 2004:270).

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<sup>27</sup> I got the inspiration of writing the ABUJA FACT rather than writing, ‘The fact that Abuja is the capital of Nigeria’ from Rasmussen (2014). The advantage of writing the Abuja Fact is that it eliminates the ambiguity that the ‘that clause’ poses; that is the tendency to think that propositions and facts are identical. Though in most cases the ‘that clause’ precedes both propositions and facts, that does not make them identical. This is because propositions and facts cannot be reduced to the linguistic mediums through which they are expressed. Besides when a fact is preceded by the ‘that clause’, a propositional attitude cannot be a substitute for it. This is because the ‘that cause’ before a fact indicates ‘*factive* context’. For instance, Agatha regretted [the fact] that she failed the exam’ (Parsons 1993:453) expresses *factive* context. Because that is a fact, it cannot be substituted with ‘Agatha believed [\*the fact] that she failed the exam’ (1993:453).

<sup>28</sup> Armstrong (1997:1) states the structure of states of affairs thus: ‘The general structure of states of affairs will be argued to be this. A state of affair exists if and only if a particular (at a later point to be dubbed a thin particular) has a property or, instead, a relation holds between two or more particulars. Each state of affairs, and each component of each state of affairs, meaning by their constituents the particulars, properties, relations, and in the case of higher-order states of affairs, the lower-order states of affairs, is a contingent existence. The properties and relations are universals, not particulars. The relations are external relations.’ It is worthy of note that Armstrong’s exposition of states of affairs is highly influenced by his factualist thesis, in which a state of affair is an instantiation of a universal. For this reason, his paradigmatic example is ‘a is F’ or a’s being F’ (1977:116; 2010:26).

Describing the complex nature of facts, Rasmussen describes them as ‘an *arrangement of things*’<sup>29</sup> since facts are composed of parts (Rasmussen 2014:62). For instance, the fact that *I am Nigerian* is the arrangement of the following things; I (Patrick) and being Nigerian. Rasmussen’s description of fact is interesting because it accounts for concrete facts like *the laptop is on the table*, abstract facts like ‘*yellow is brighter than brown*’ (2014:80) and facts that are a mixture of concrete and abstract things e.g. *Pedro is a Brazilian*. From what has been said thus far about the nature of facts, it may be argued that facts or states of affairs are not only particular instantiations of universals. For instance, the arrangement of concrete objects is not an instantiation of universal.

As stated earlier, propositions and facts are not identical, since propositions are always abstract contents, while facts are primarily mind-transcendent worldly circumstances upon which the truth or falsehood of propositions are dependent. Put differently, propositions are always about some other things rather than the propositions themselves. For instance, the proposition; ‘*The book is on the shelf*’ is about a particular book on a particular shelf in a particular place. In this case, I might be referring to *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* by Bernard Lonergan which is on the shelf in my office. In contrast to the ‘aboutness’ (Rasmussen 2014:109) of the proposition, there is no aboutness with regard to fact.

### **3.4.3 Negative Truths and The Possibility of Negative Facts**

Since in the analytic approach facts or states of affairs are truth-makers, an unavoidable question is about the plausibility of negative facts since there are true negative propositions, for example, ‘*My laptop is not under the table*’ and ‘*Patrick Aleke is not an Egyptian*’. These two propositions are true. What facts are their truth-makers? Are there corresponding facts? The two plausible answers are: (i) to say that there are negative facts and in that case one has the onus of explaining what negative facts are, by stating clearly their ontological status. (ii) The second option is to deny the existence of negative facts. In this case one has to say what exactly negative propositions correspond to. Do they correspond to ‘everything put together’ or the whole of reality? (Rasmussen 2014:30-34)

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<sup>29</sup> Rasmussen’s use of things is very broad and so it encompasses both concrete and abstract entities.

Or do they correspond to the totality of states of affairs (totality facts) or general facts? (Armstrong 1997:196-201)

With regards to the first question, Rasmussen's answer (which I agree with) is that there are no negative facts. According to Rasmussen (2014:41), the 'positing of "negative" facts in addition to "negative" propositions leads to metaphysical "double vision." This is because it is almost impossible to adequately distinguish "negative" facts from "negative" propositions. Hence the account that is necessary, is to state what negative propositions correspond to. However, if they do not correspond to anything at all, then it is necessary to say why negative propositions are true. Although I do not subscribe to the reality of totality fact or totality of states of affairs as the truth-maker of negative propositions, its plausibility will be considered first. The postulation of totality of states of affairs is attractive because it releases the correspondence theorist from the necessity of accounting for the ontological status of negative facts or that of explaining why negative proposition are true. Armstrong articulates the benefit of acknowledging the existence of totality facts thus:

Given totality facts, and in particular the all-embracing states of affairs of totality, then it is easy to see that all negative states of affairs supervene. So we do not need negative states of affairs in the basic ontology in addition to totality states of affairs. We can have, as obviously we must have, negative truths, but their truthmakers are always positive states of affairs plus some states of affairs of totality. (Armstrong 1997:200).

Armstrong's argument is that if there are totality states of affairs, there is no need to ask about the ontological status of negative states of affairs because negative states of affairs are primitive and the existence of totality states of affairs accounts for negative states of affairs (1997:200). Nevertheless, arguing for totality fact is not as promising as it may seem. Although it appears to have eliminated the need for accounting for the ontological status of negative facts, it comes with a cost. Since Armstrong's argument is based on the supervenience of totality fact, it is worth examining whether a totality fact and negative states of affairs can supervene from a conjunction of all states of affairs. Armstrong (1997:200-201) seems to suggest that the totality fact that supervenes from the conjunction of all individual facts does not imply an increase in being. If that is the case, what is that totality fact except description of the conjunction of empirical facts? It seems

that totality fact is nothing more than intentional sign. If there is a totality fact, there should be some object or event that is the major component of that totality fact. This is based on the position already outlined that a fact has an object, an event, a thing or a circumstance in the world that is its major component. The totality fact as postulated by Armstrong lacks a vital element of what a fact consists in, that is, that a fact must be a mind-independent feature of the world. (O'Connor 1975:59-65). Armstrong could argue that the major component is the conjunction of the individual facts or states of affairs. But what supervenes from the conjunction is either the linguistic medium or its content, that proposition. So what seems to supervene from the conjunction is not totality fact but "totality proposition". If this analysis is correct, then it seems that truth of negative propositions cannot supervene. The second problem with the postulation of totality fact on which negative truth supervene is that it seems to suggest that ultimately, all negative truths are one and the same. But the two negative truths; The director is not in the office, and the delivery has not arrived, are not one and the same.

A similar thesis to the totality of state of affairs<sup>30</sup> thesis, is Jonathan Schaffer's *truthmaker monism*. According to him, there is only one truthmaker, which is the world. He writes: 'There is only one truthmaker per world, and it is the world, the whole world, and nothing but the world' (2009:307). At first sight, truthmaker monism seems to be promising in accounting for negative truth without negative facts. But the question still remains whether it does not plunge the correspondence project into difficulties. Schaffer's argument is that the world alone is a sufficient truthmaker as it is the only foundation that can give grounding to truth. Hence, his point is that partial truthmakers or negative truthmakers are better eliminated since '[t]ruths are true because they have a *successful* truthmaker – not because they have a failed candidate.' (2009:317).

Although the theses of totality fact and truthmaker monism sound attractive because of the elimination of negative facts, they do not positively and directly outline how negative

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<sup>30</sup> Though I claim that the totality of states of affairs thesis is similar to truthmaker monism, it is important to point out that Armstrong is not in favour of truthmaker monism. He affirms: 'We may say that truthmakers for a particular truth may be more or less *discerning*. The more embracing the truthmaker, the less discerning it is. For every truth, the least discerning of all truthmakers is the world itself, the totality of being. The world makes every truth true, or, failing that, every truth that has a truthmaker true. But this is an uninteresting truthmaker, mentioned here just for theoretical completeness' (2004:18).

propositions are made true since a totality fact seems to be an abstract content and so a proposition. Besides, the *truthmaker monism* does not account for the most common correspondence intuition that there are particular truthmakers that constitute the truth of propositions. This is an essential motivation for the correspondence project. Rasmussen (2014:135) writes: ‘A principal motivation for the correspondence theory is the feeling that truths should be grounded in (or made true by) the existence of things in the world.’

My conclusion is that negative facts do not exist and neither totality fact nor truthmaker monism adequately accounts for the correspondence of negative propositions with facts. In other words, true negative propositions do not correspond to any fact. The question that arises is, how are negative truths arrived at, since there is no direct correspondence with regard to negative truths? The proposal here is that negative truths are so-called only derivatively. Negative propositions do not strictly correspond to any fact whether negative (since they do not exist) or positive. Rather negative truths are affirmed indirectly. Contrary to my view that negative propositions do not correspond to any fact, Rasmussen argues that negative propositions correspond to arrangements which are essentially positive in nature but the difference is that it is ‘lacking relation’ that characterises what he calls “negative” fact (2014:152). Using “NO UNICORN” to explain what he means by lacking relation says: ‘NO UNICORN’ is equivalent to either ‘<there are unicorns> lacks truth’ or <being a unicorn lacks being had>. He argues: ‘The central idea is that a negative proposition describes arrangement of things connected by the lacking relation: the mark of a “negative” fact is the presence of the lacking relationship.’ (Rasmussen 2014:152). It is difficult to understand how the “lacking relation” constitutes the ontological status of “negative” fact. The correspondence that Rasmussen describes in his two hypotheses is strictly to positive arrangements. My position is that in the final analysis, negative propositions do not correspond to negative facts or positive facts but their truth is derivative. At best, it is an “inferred correspondence”. In fact, if the distinctive mark or central element of negative fact is a lacking relationship as Rasmussen argues, then there are no negative facts since the lack implies privation. The situation is similar to St. Augustine’s consideration about evil, that evil does not exist because it is the privation of good.

In saying that the truth of negative propositions is derivative, I mean that from the truth value of the positive propositions, the truth value of their contrary negative propositions is inferred through the law of logic, especially the principle of non-contradiction. For instance, from the truth value of the proposition <My laptop is on the table> if the proposition corresponds to the fact that my laptop on the table, the truth value of the negative proposition <My laptop is not under table> is inferred. Hence, if <My laptop is on the table> is true, then the truth value of the proposition <My laptop is not under the table> logically follows.

The inference here would be in the form of conditional syllogism:

If my laptop is on the table, then it is not under the table.

My laptop is on the table.

Therefore, my laptop is not under the table.

But can the inference that my laptop is not blue be made from the above stated major premise? It cannot since it is neither the antecedent nor the consequent of the premise. Nonetheless it can follow from another premise. As indicated while examining fact, it is maintained that different facts have the same object as their major component. Another fact that is the relation of my laptop with its property is that my laptop is black. From this fact, an inference could be made that would account for the negative truth of the proposition that my laptop is not blue as follows:

If my laptop is black, then it is not blue.

My laptop is black.

Therefore, my laptop is not blue.

While distinguishing between propositions and facts, it is argued that some facts are bound by space and time. The spatiotemporal dimension is very important when such facts are considered. So when it is argued that it is from the truth value of a positive proposition that the truth value of its contrary negative proposition is inferred, it is assumed that the fact which a positive proposition corresponds to is at a particular place at a particular time. So when the fact that the laptop is on the table is considered, it is assumed that it is on a particular table at a particular place. In this case, it is on the table

in my office, and my office is in Merrivale, South Africa. While taking the place or location into account, one can make an inference as follows:

If my laptop is on the table in my office, then it is not on a table on the moon.

My laptop is on the table in my office.

Therefore, my laptop is not on a table on the moon.

Also, the proposition <Patrick is not an Italian> if it is true, does not directly or strictly correspond to a fact *per se*, but is inferred from the truth of a different proposition which is necessarily a positive proposition, that corresponds to the fact that Patrick is a Nigerian. One might ask how is the truth value of <Patrick is not an Italian> inferred from the truth value of <Patrick is a Nigerian> if there is no concept according to which, to be Nigerian is not to be Italian? Although there is no such concept, the inferring of the truth value of <Patrick is not an Italian> from the truth value of <Patrick is a Nigeria> follows from the fact that unless in the case of dual citizenship, to be a national of a country excludes one from being a national of other countries.

The argument can be summarized as follows:

If Patrick has one nationality and is a Nigerian, then Patrick is not an Italian'

Patrick has one nationality and is a Nigerian.

Therefore, Patrick is not an Italian.

Another question that might arise is; How can the truth value of <Patrick is not a Muslim> to be inferred? Can it be inferred from <Patrick is a Nigerian>? The answer is no because nationality does not necessarily entail religion. Hence, <Patrick is not a Muslim> can only be inferred from a positive proposition which necessarily include Patrick's religious affiliation. For instance, if <Patrick is a Christian> is true then truth of <Patrick is not a Muslim> follows necessarily as a logical consequence. This claim is based on the assumption that one is not an adherent of more than one religion at the same time. It is possible for one to convert from religion to another but that does not mean having an affiliation to two religions, for example being a Christian and a Muslim or a Christian and a Buddhist at the same time. Trying to be an adherent of two religions simultaneous is at best syncretism. Of course, it is possible that a convert might have some influences of the spirituality of the religion that she converted from but that does not make her an adherent

of two religions because as a convert, she adopts doctrines that are incompatible with her former religion. In fact, one can describe oneself as a Muslim Christian or Buddhist Christian but that does not make the person an adherent of two religions because religious affiliation is not a private affair. Consider a person who calls herself a Muslim Christian for instance, how will the question of revelation be reconciled? If she says that Christ is the fullness of revelation, then that would be in conflict with Islamic doctrine. On the other hand, if she says that the last revelation was given to Mohammed, it will conflict with the fundamentals of Christianity. Hence one can say:

If Patrick is a Christian, then Patrick is not a Muslim.

Patrick is a Christian.

Therefore, Patrick is not a Muslim.

From the foregoing, it follows that it is only positive propositions that can correspond to facts whereas the truth of negative propositions results from derivation or logical inference<sup>31</sup>. The logical inference that is argued for here applies only to negative propositions but not to positive propositions. When it comes to positive propositions, their truth values depend on whether they correspond to facts or not. Consider the proposition: <There is Santa Claus>. Assuming that it is false, its falsity is affirmed because of its failure to correspond to any fact.

Thus far the emphasis has been on the fact that the truthmaker constitutes the truth of a proposition if and only if there is a relation of correspondence between the proposition and the fact. Nonetheless, an exposition of the correspondence theory of truth would be found wanting if the term ‘correspondence’ is not examined.

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<sup>31</sup> Arthur Schipper argues that negative truth-bearers are not made true by positive existence. He seems to reject derivation of truth of true negative proposition that I defend. He argues his position thus: ‘What should make these truthbearers true is not the *positive existence* or *reality* of anything at all, and especially not something negative. Instead, the reason they are true, when they are true, is that what they are *in part about* does *not* exist’ (Schipper 2017:23). It is important to acknowledge that Schipper’s argument is not about correspondence theory but about modest truthmaker theory. According to him, objects or relations of objects and properties are truthmakers of truthbearers. However, he distinguishes between actual intentional objects and schematic intentional objects. An example of a schematic intentional object is Pegasus.

### 3.4.4 Relation of Correspondence

The question ‘what exactly is correspondence?’ seems to have no clear-cut answer in the analytic approach. The quandary is: How does such a relation take place between two very different realities – propositions and facts? Martin Heidegger who was not an analytic philosopher states the predicament of the analytic defender for correspondence thus: ‘But wherein are the thing and the statement supposed to be in accordance, considering that the relata are manifestly different in their outward appearance?’<sup>32</sup> (1967:229)<sup>33</sup>. According to analytic correspondence theorists, the relation of correspondence<sup>34</sup> accounts for the ‘aboutness’ of a proposition (Rasmussen 2014:134). Hence, there is correspondence when a proposition adequately accounts for the fact or worldly circumstance that it is about. For instance, the proposition <My laptop is on the table> corresponds to the fact if and only if my laptop computer is on the table.

Rasmussen’s explanation of both propositions and facts as arrangement is handy for an exposition of correspondence. According to him, propositions are ‘arrangement of properties’ while facts are ‘arrangement of things’. For there to be correspondence, then, there must be a ‘matching’ of the respective arrangements. In this sense, a ‘proposition corresponds to an arrangement of things it is about’ (Rasmussen 2014:134).

Various analytic correspondence theorists have attempted to explain what the relation of correspondence exactly means in terms of matching, congruence (Russell 1912), pictorial representation (Wittgenstein 1922 [1969]) and correlation (Austin 1950). The phenomenon that they try to capture with the use of those terms depicts an agreement between two ‘realities’ that belong to two different domains. Nonetheless, the analytic paradigm is not capable of adequately accounting for the relation of correspondence. This is because of the emphasis on the product of the intelligent mind (proposition) by analytic correspondence theorists, rather than focusing on the cognitional operations of the subject

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<sup>32</sup> William McNeil’s 1997 translation reads thus: ‘In what is the agreement of the thing and the proposition supposed to consist, given that they present themselves to us in such manifestly different ways’ (Heidegger 1967 [1997]:180).

<sup>33</sup> The page number is from the reprint in Lynch, M P (ed.) 2001. *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*.

<sup>34</sup> In the Russellian and Austinian versions of the correspondence theory, correspondence is generally understood in terms of congruence and correlation respectively. Their respective versions of the correspondence theory have been explored in this chapter.

(cf. Walmsley 2008:8). Ultimately, it is the knowing subject who after experiencing and intelligently grasping, judges whether there is a relation of knowing to that which is known or not. In other words, matching, congruence, or pictorial representation cannot account for correspondence. It is only the act (reasonable affirmation) of the subject after having and weighing evidence sufficiently that accounts for correspondence.

### **3.4.5 Are Truth Values of Propositions Variable?**

Granted that it is argued earlier that facts are truth-makers and they are space-time bound and so some facts do change, for example facts about people's residence, an inevitable question is, are truth values of proposition variable? Truth values of propositions are invariable. This is because as already stated, propositions and facts belong to different domains. As abstract entities that are not confined to space and time, propositions do not change, hence any change to facts does not affect propositions since the change of facts occur because they are within space and time. The variability of facts could have affected propositions only if facts and propositions are identical. The invariability of truth values of propositions that is argued here is not defended by all correspondence theorists. Gerald Vision, for instance, is a defender of the variability of truth values (2004:33-38).

Vision (2004:33-38) argues that the variability of truth values is one of the non-negotiable intuitions of correspondence theory. He links the variability of truth value with the variability of facts. He writes: 'The truth-value of a proposition would be altered were the world to change in certain definite ways, or, if the truth-value must remain the same, it is because the world cannot change in relevant ways' (2004:33)

To highlight how crucial variability is to the question of truth, Vision argues that deflationist equivalences – whether in the form of redundancy schema (' $\langle p \rangle$  is true iff  $p$ ') or disquotational schema ("S' is true (in L) iff  $p$ ") – cannot undermine the centrality of variability when the truth value of a proposition is the issue in question (2004:33). He avers that deflationists ignore variability because their desired intention undermines 'the implications of worldly changes in one's truth concept' (2004:34). Vision further argues that equivalences do not have primacy over variability; rather, variability has primacy since it is the state of affairs or the fact and not the sentences that determine the truth

value of propositions. Secondly, ‘equivalences are confined to a single attribution of truth’ whereas variability makes possible evaluation of a proposition when situations change. He states his first reason for arguing that variability is not an implication of the equivalences as follows:

‘[I]t is a state (or moment) of the (actual or possible) world, not a sentence or a proposition, that accounts for the difference in truth-value. Thus, if one wishes the right-hand side to prefigure the point of Variability, it is not ‘*p*’ *qua* formula, or as something that is (or could be) equivalent to the left-hand side, that matters; it is a worldly circumstance. Indeed, it is hard to see how someone relying strictly on the formulas can construe this point (2004:34).

Irrespective of Vision’s insistence that the variability of truth values of propositions is possible because it is dictated by the change of worldly circumstance, I suggest that arguing for variability of truth values is incompatible with the analytic approach to the correspondence theory since their assumption of truth as correspondence is that truth-bearers and truthmakers are not identical. In fact, when there is a change of fact, the new fact becomes a truthmaker of a different proposition. Consider the following:

The proposition, <Antônio lives in São Paulo> is made true by the fact that Antônio lives in São Paulo. However, if Antônio changes his residence to Brasília, the fact of his residence changes. Following Vision’s argument, the new fact that Antônio lives in Brasília should also change the truth value of the proposition that Antônio lives in São Paulo. But contrary to Vision’s view the new fact is not the truthmaker of Antônio lives in São Paulo. This is because the change of fact does not affect the proposition. The same proposition could be expressed with a slight change in the linguistic medium as follows: <Antônio used to live in São Paulo>. Thus, the new fact is only the truthmaker of another proposition, that is, <Antônio lives in Brasília>.

Lastly, contrary to Vision’s view, the invariability of the truth values of propositions is not a question of tussle for primacy between facts or worldly circumstance on the one hand, and redundancy schema or disquotational schema on the other. Rather, the argument for the invariability of the truth values of propositions is about the nature of propositions and facts. The foundation of the invariability of the truth values of propositions is the absolute objectivity of single judgments. Hence the change of linguistic expression does not affect its truth. Lonergan (1992 [2013]:403) writes:

‘Because “I am here now” has absolute objectivity, there is an identical truth to be repeated only by employing the different words, “He was there then.”’

### **3.5 Evaluative Critique**

From our exposition of the correspondence theory of truth so far within the framework of the analytic philosophical tradition, there seems to be some perennial difficulties, for instance, it is a cumbersome task to clearly differentiate between propositions and facts. This is the case because of the cognitional theory that is at the background of the analytic understanding of the correspondence theory, that is, the spectator theory of naïve realism which conceives knowing to ‘the analogy of ocular vision’ (Lonergan 1971:8) and thus reduces fact to that which is “already out there now”. In other words, it seems that the correspondence theory within the analytic tradition patronises the ‘in here’ and ‘out there’ dichotomy. Such reduction identifies facts with sense data. The problem with such identification is that the essential difference between data and facts is eroded since ‘data are just a single component of human knowledge [but] facts result from the conjunction of three distinct levels.’ In other words: ‘Facts have the immediacy of what is given, the precision of what is somehow understood, conceived, named, the stubbornness of what is affirmed because of virtually unconditioned has been reached’ (1971:348).

Having identified the limitation of the analytic conception of the correspondence theory of truth because of its background cognitional theory, the question still remains, is true proposition identical with fact, since it seems intuitive? While I acknowledge the inadequacy of any articulation of the correspondence theory with the analytic framework, I agree that propositions and facts are not identical. And so, to identify true propositions with fact is problematic. Such identification is not plausible within Lonergan’s framework. When we take into account Lonergan’s argument that both fact and being are the objective of pure desire to know, the implausibility of identifying true propositions with facts becomes glaring. This is because, if we say that true propositions are fact, we are bound to say that true propositions are being or reality. But it would be absurd to say that a true proposition is being or reality. Rather, a true proposition is the formulation of what is actually the case. Hence, it is better to say that true propositions are intentional contents of facts. A comparison with the empirical sciences might be helpful. The

progression from proposition, through true proposition to fact is similar to the progression in the empirical sciences from hypothesis through theory (since a theory is a true hypothesis) to reality. Nonetheless theory is not identical with reality.

Lastly, there is a great tendency that any attempt to explain truth as correspondence within the analytic philosophical paradigm leads to the understanding of the concept in a limited or thin way in terms of mapping, matching or pictorial representation. The thin view of truth is a consequence of the elimination of the conscious subject in truth discourses that began with Frege's logical turn. However, considering the importance of truth for human existence and its relation to knowledge, there is a need for more elaborate investigation of truth so as to account for the centrality of truth in the human quest for self-transcendence.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter the conception of truth as correspondence within the analytic framework is outlined. Truth so understood is a relation of correspondence between propositions (that is the truth-bearer) and fact or worldly circumstance (the truth-maker). Bearing in mind that there is no agreement among philosophers about the ontological status of both proposition and fact, their ontological status was explored. It is maintained that propositions are abstract entities while facts are mind-independent 'worldly circumstances' that constitute the truth of propositions.

In addition, it was emphasised that propositions and facts are not identical and also that facts are not equivalent to true propositions. In taking proposition as the primary truth-bearer, it was argued that when sentences, judgments, statements and beliefs are said to be the truth-bearers, proposition is indirectly implied since it is the content, that is, what is uttered and not the act of uttering, what is judged and not the act of judging, what is stated and not the act of stating, what is believed and not the act of believing that is meant.

Furthermore, it is argued that variability of facts does not translate into variability of the truth values of propositions because while facts are within space and time, propositions are not governed by space and time.

## **Chapter 4**

# **Alternatives to Truth as Correspondence in the Analytic Tradition**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Truth as correspondence, for a truth theorist of the analytic philosophical tradition, is a conception of truth in which truth is viewed as a relation between propositions and facts. In the previous chapter, I indicated that the articulation of the correspondence theory of truth in the analytic tradition is problematic because of the neglect of the subject, emphasising of the intentional content (proposition) and inadequate cognitional theory on which the articulation of the theory is based. It is therefore expected that it would be rejected and replaced by some analytic truth theorists. I am now going to explain these alternatives and comment on their merits and otherwise. (We have to bear in mind all along that the soundness of the arguments for rejecting the correspondence theory as understood by analytic philosophers does not imply that these would apply to any other way of understanding the correspondence theory, in particular that of Lonergan. Indeed, the Lonergan-inspired arguments against the analytic understanding of the correspondence theory will apply to the alternatives with the tradition).

Truth as correspondence is the oldest conception of truth but expressed (as we have argued) in a misleading way by analytic correspondence theorists. The other conceptions are alternatives to the correspondence understanding of truth. They include both substantive and deflationary conceptions or theories, such as the coherence theory, the pragmatic theory, the identity theory, minimalism, redundancy, disquotationalism, the prosentential theory, minimal realism, alethic pluralism and the functionalist theory.

These are not simply alternatives to the correspondence theory, they are competitors or rival theories. Peter Strawson, for instance, contends that '[t]he correspondence theory of truth requires, not purification, but elimination' (Strawson 1950 [2001]:447)<sup>1</sup>. Lewis (2001:277) argues that the correspondence theory should be ignored because it is vacuous and does not offer us anything that the redundancy theory has not offered. In his view, truth as correspondence does not 'even get as far as the redundancy theory' (2001:277).

The correspondence conception of truth is not only charged with vacuity. Some opponents argue that it is primitive or too concise to qualify as a theory of truth, or that it is uninspiring, trivial or even boring. Other opponents maintain that the notion of correspondence cannot be explained thoroughly without appealing to the concept of truth itself. In this chapter, the alternative theories or conceptions to the correspondence conception of truth will be explored. They are called alternative theories because their proponents intend them as replacements for the correspondence theory. The conceptions are divided into their sub-groups, namely deflationary theories, "third-way" theories and substantive theories. These sub-groups will be examined in the third, fourth and fifth sections respectively. Because the deflationary and "third way" theories do appeal to Tarski's semantic conception of truth, it will be briefly outlined first (1944:341-376). Tarski's conception is not included in any of the sub-groups of the alternative theories because he did not intend his exposition as an alternative to the correspondence theory. Rather, his goal is to espouse a formal definition of truth, that is, the use of the truth predicate in formalised languages. In the following sections, I will describe the theories as closely as possible to the presentation of their exponents, while at the same time critique and comment on them.

## **4.2 Tarski's Semantic Conception of Truth**

Tarski applies his notion of truth to sentences (as opposed to propositions) (1944:341-376). His semantic conception of truth is a truth theory whose principal motive is to give a definition of the notion of truth. According to him, it is not enough to give a definition but such definition must be satisfactory, that is, it must be both 'materially adequate and

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<sup>1</sup> Strawson's paper 'Truth' originally appeared in *Proceedings of Aristotelian Society, Supplementary* vol. XXIV. The page numbering in this work is based on its reprint in Lynch, M P (ed.)2001. *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary perspectives*.

formally correct' (Tarski 2001:332)<sup>2</sup>. Material adequacy and formal correctness are necessary for Tarski's quest for the definition of truth because his aim is to find the conditions for the truth of sentences. Hence his paradigmatic definition of a true sentence is stated in terms of biconditional: 'The sentence "Snow is white" is true if, and only if snow is white.' (2001:334) In the sentence, there is both object-language and meta-language. The object-language is that which is talked about, that is part of the sentence which is on the left of the biconditional. While the meta-language is that with which the object-language is talked about. The object-language and meta-language could be in two different natural languages – Portuguese and English. For instance, one can say, "A rosa é vermelha" is true if, and only if, the rose is red. Distinguishing between the object-language and meta-language is essential in Tarski's conception of truth because the truth predicate only applies to the meta-language. Secondly the distinction is important because the Tarskian conception of truth is applicable solely to formalised languages and not to natural languages since according to him natural languages are semantically closed languages.

Tarski's semantic conception of truth resurrected the interest among Anglo-American philosophers in the philosophical investigation of truth in the mid-twentieth century, hence it is important to briefly examine this conception. As a point of departure, it is important to ask: did Tarski intend his conception of truth as an alternative to the correspondence conception of truth? If so, did he achieve his aim? Can it be argued that the semantic conception of truth has said all that needs to be known about truth? It seems that Tarski did not intend his semantic conception of truth as an alternative to the correspondence theory. He considers his conception of truth as being in line with the correspondence theory and especially the Aristotelian definition of truth (Tarski 1944 [2001]:333). For instance, Frederick Schmitt argues that although Tarski's conception of truth cannot be said to be a correspondence theory in the traditional sense, it can be 'naturally developed into a correspondence theory' (2004:22). Nevertheless, his project aims at giving a clearer definition of truth which is both 'materially adequate and formally

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<sup>2</sup> Tarski's article, "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics", was first published in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 4, pp. 341-376 (1944). But the citation here is based on its reprint in M. P. Lynch (ed.) 2001, *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives* (331-363).

correct' in order to overcome the obscurity that the traditional understanding of truth finds itself.

Moreover, regardless of the symmetry between Tarski's semantic conception and the correspondence theory, it cannot be argued that the semantic conception is an alternative to the correspondence conception. One of the major factors is that Tarski's conception of truth is intended for formal languages, whereas the correspondence theory is not necessarily meant for formal languages. Stressing that his semantic conception of truth is meant for formalized languages, Tarski states:

*The problem of the definition of truth obtains a precise meaning and can be solved in a rigorous way only for those languages whose structure has been exactly specified. For other languages – thus, for all natural, “spoken” languages – the meaning of the problem is more or less vague, and its solution can have only an approximate character (Tarski 2001:338).*

In addition, Tarski's concern does not seem to be necessarily to outline the constitution of truth. He is clear that his semantic conception of truth is neutral to whether the conditions for the truth of a sentence are satisfied or not. Hence, in his paradigmatic example, “‘Snow is white’ is true if, and only if, snow is white’, he does not assume that the condition is satisfied. It rather highlights that the left side of the sentence is the name while the other is the sentence in question. With the distinction between the naming of the sentence and the sentence itself, Tarski indicates the importance of differentiating between the object-language and the meta-language in his semantic conception of truth. The introduction of the notions of object-language and meta-language facilitates an analysis of the convention-T (‘X is true if, and only if, p’) without necessarily knowing what X designates. On the contrary, the object-language and meta-language distinction is not essential in the correspondence conception of truth.

Lastly, if Tarski's motivation is to argue against eliminative physicalist attitudes toward truth (Field 1977) and by extension, the danger that the thesis of the neo-positivists of the Vienna circle poses to the notion of truth, then Tarski's semantic conception of truth is not intended to be an alternative to the correspondence conception.

### 4.3 Alternative Deflationary Theories

Deflationary theories are those theories of truth that categorically state that any discourse about truth in terms of metaphysics, by considering whether truth has a nature or whether it is a property is merely an inflation of the concept and so has no philosophical importance. According to these theories therefore, all that is required of a theory of truth is the analysis of the use of the truth predicate in a sentence. In the view of deflationists, the substantive theories only inflate the concept of truth and hence there is a need to deflate it. The deflationist project is to be understood within the context of the shift from the centrality of metaphysics as the core philosophical discipline as it was with the ancient and mediaeval philosophers to emphasis on logical and linguistic analysis. The basic motivation behind the deflationary theories of truth is the rejection of the substantive theories in general and the correspondence theory in particular. Deflationists claim that truth does not have a nature, and neither is it a property. Although Paul Horwich's minimalism, which is a version of deflationism, acknowledges that truth is a property, he nonetheless argues that it is not a genuine property (Horwich 1998:2001). Hence, deflationists contend that truth talk adds nothing beyond the equivalence schema and disquotational schema<sup>3</sup>. They claim that truth is transparent and so requires no further explanation. In other words, deflationists 'reject the idea that truth can be defined as a "robust" or "substantive" metaphysical notion' (Engel 2002:41). The argument of the deflationist, therefore, is, if truth has no nature and is not a property, then it implies that the substantial theories do inflate the notion of truth and so inflation is of no import to the notion. Hence, there is a need to deflate the notion of truth. The deflationist's motive for deflating truth is aimed at the elimination of the correspondence theory of truth and the coherence theory. David (1994:53) expresses this motivation thus:

One basic motivation for deflationism is the conviction that we are not entitled to the correspondence theory of truth because it is simply a very bad theory. According to this conviction, the correspondence theory in all of its forms is a "metaphysical" doctrine in the pejorative sense of the term: a vacuous pseudoexplanation that trades in mysterious pseudoentities devoid of any explanatory value. Since states of affairs, propositions, and facts are theoretical entities – since there cannot be any direct empirical evidence for them – the assumption that there are such entities is legitimate only if they can be shown to do serious explanatory work: the existence of theoretical entities has to be argued for by their explanatory value.

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<sup>3</sup> These schemas are discussed in the sub-section below. The equivalence schema is also called redundancy theory.

The criticism of a deflationist like Quine that is captured in the citation from David is that to say that truth is correspondence is not an explanation and that theoretical entities like states of affairs, propositions and fact that correspondence theorists employ in their defence of the correspondence are not genuine entities but pseudoentities since they are not empirically observable. At the background of the Quinean criticisms is his project to naturalise philosophy, that is to reduce philosophy to the paradigm of the empirical sciences.

Michael Williams suggests that deflationism is a suitable compromise between the two substantial theories – that is correspondence and coherence – which criticise one another as inadequate theory of truth (1986:226). He argues ‘that a deflationist can share many of the *criticisms* correspondence theorists make of coherence theorists and *vice-versa*’ (1986:226). He continues by pointing out that the vantage point of the deflationist rests on the fact that ‘he is committed neither to fleshing out the idea of truth as correspondence nor showing that truth is at bottom some kind of epistemic notion’ (1986:226).

Nevertheless, the deflationist position regarding truth is not free of serious objections. For instance, Davidson (1990:294-295) rejects the deflationary theories because they do not tell us all that ought to be known about truth. In fact, he is against the deflationists for arguing that Tarski’s conception of truth has said all that needs to be said about truth. He argues that although ‘Tarski has told us much of what we want to know about the concept of truth’, ‘there must be more’ (1990:295) to be known.

The position of the deflationary theorists raises some questions. For example, if truth really does not have a nature and is not a genuine property, why is truth so essential to the use of language? Can truth be reduced to the truth predicate, or does the truth predicate presupposes truth?

#### **4.3.1 Redundancy and Disquotational Theories**

Although the redundancy theory and disquotational theory have their differences, they are grouped together in this sub-section because they have a common characteristic, that

is, that the truth predicate is superfluous in a sentence or statement. This implies that redundancy and disquotational theorists consider any attempt to unveil the nature of truth as totally useless, if not meaningless. F. P. Ramsey, to whom the redundancy theory<sup>4</sup> is credited, reduces the truth predicated to equivalence (2001:440). Hence, in his view, the statement ‘It is true that the earth is round’ is equivalent to ‘The earth is round’ (2001:440). In this same vein, to say; ‘It is true that Caesar was killed’ does not amount to anything more than ‘Caesar was killed’. Ramsey insists that the meaning of “true” and the use of the truth predicate obviously should not present any problem of understanding. He writes: ‘Suppose a man believes that the earth is round; then his belief is true because the earth is round; generalising this, if he believes that *A* is *B* his belief will be true if *A* is *B* and false otherwise’ (2001:437). He further argues that, although his conception of truth could be called ‘a Correspondence Theory of Truth’, it is as simple as that, since ‘the nature of correspondence’ cannot be described prior to ‘the analysis of propositional reference, of “believing that A is B.”’ (2001:39).

Although scholars like Lewis (2001:275-276) argue that the correspondence theory is not rival to the redundancy theory, since ‘the correspondence theory really does not go beyond the redundancy theory’, it is arguable that not only are they rival theories of truth but also, they emphasise different questions regarding the notion of truth. Ramsey’s emphasis is on the meaning of ‘true’, while the correspondence theory’s contention is not ‘about the meaning of ‘true’, but about truth’s constitution’ (Vision 2004:274). In pointing out that it is not the meaning of ‘true’ but the constitution of truth that is the bone of contention, Vision’s point is that in a discourse about truth it is the relation (between judgment and what is actually the case) that is the core element and that is what helps one to understand clearly the meaning of ‘true’. Moreover, although Ramsey reduces the truth predicate to equivalence, the truth predicate presupposes the constitution of truth. For instance, ‘It is true that John Paul II died in 2004’ is equivalent to, John Paul II died in 2004, because it (John Paul II died in 2004) is a reasonable affirmation. It is not the equivalence that comes first but the correspondence.

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<sup>4</sup> Although Ramsey’s view is classified as deflationary in the thesis, Hartry Field (2001) is of the opinion that Ramsey’s view is not deflationary but that he is a correspondence theorist.

A serious objection against the redundancy theory is its inability to account for the use of “true” in generalisation, for instance, ‘Everything that Jesus said is true’. In this case, it does not make sense to say that “Everything Jesus said is true” is equivalent to ‘everything Jesus said’ (Lynch 2001:422; Engel 2002:44). The criticism emphasises the irreducibility of the truth predicate to equivalence in the cases of ‘blind predication’. The examples given by Engel are: “What you said in your lecture was true”, or ““Everything that the Pope says is true”” (Engel 2002:44). The objection does not question whether the individual conjuncts of a generalisation could be reduced to equivalence or not. It rather argues that if the use of truth predicate in the cases of generalisations and blind predications are legitimate, then the redundancy theory cannot account for truth predicates in those cases. Hence the truth predicate cannot be reduced to the principle of equivalence.

A possible counter objection is to argue that one can say: ‘It is true that everything Jesus said is true’. However, such objection is self-defeating for the redundancy theorist since it is only the truth predicate at the beginning of the sentence that is redundant but not the truth predicate at the end. Meanwhile the objective of the equivalent schema is to show that any truth predicate in all cases is superfluous and can be eliminated with changing the meaning of a sentence. Finally, if the redundancy theory of truth is taken to a logical conclusion, it would be asked, what is the use of the truth predicate at all? However, since there are cases in which ‘is true’ cannot be reduced to equivalence, it follows that the redundancy theory does not adequately account for meaning of true and the use of the truth predicate, and so cannot be a legitimate alternative theory to the correspondence theory of truth.

Disquotationalism is a conception of truth that argues that the truth predicate has the sole purpose of cancelling the quotation marks in sentences. According to Quine (1990:83), ‘what the disquotational account of truth says is that the truth predicate disquotes every eternal sentence.’ The disquotational conception of truth<sup>5</sup> is rooted in Quine’s rejection

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<sup>5</sup> Field describes disquotationalism as the notion of truth which is ‘motivated by the point about denying theories that are not finitely axiomatized’ (2001:486). He goes on to state: ‘To attribute disquotational truth to a sentence is cognitively equivalent to uttering the sentence, so if one doesn’t understand (or can’t mean

of propositions and the correspondence theory of truth (1990). Based on this, Quine (1960, 1990) maintains that sentences are truth-bearers. Using the Tarskian paradigmatic example, “‘Snow is white’ is true if and only if snow is white” to highlight the core of disquotationalism, Quine (1990:80) writes: ‘To ascribe truth to the sentence is to ascribe whiteness to snow; such is the correspondence, in this example. Ascription of truth just cancels the quotation mark. Truth is disquotation.’ Hence, he stresses: ‘the truth predicate is superfluous when ascribed to a given sentence; you could just utter the sentence’ (1990:80). Nevertheless, he acknowledges that the truth predicate is important when it comes to ‘sentences that are not given’, that is, in the case of generalisation. For instance, the truth predicate is essential in the sentence: “Everything Pope Francis said is true” because the sentences of the Pope are not specified and so there is no way of just uttering the sentences.

If the principal function of the truth predicate is the cancellation of quotation marks or the descent from ‘a linguistic plane of reference’ to the world as the disquotational theorists claim, then it implies that it is useless to ask; what is the nature of truth? and attempting an answer would be a wasted effort. However, if that is the case, then one would ask if the use of the truth predicate is simply an arbitrary introduction to language to facilitate the Quinean semantic ascent. It would be simplistic to reduce the truth predicate to a disquotational function. As stated above, Quine acknowledges that the disquotational conception of truth is incapable of accounting for generalisation. Hence, it would be problematic to reduce truth to disquotation. For this reason, David (1994:72-73) avers ‘that the truth predicate can be applied (correctly and intelligibly) in the absence of quotation where no *disquotation* can take place.’<sup>6</sup> Even if it is argued that in some cases the truth predicate is used to disquote, an explication is required to account for disquotation in such cases. To explain why the truth predicate is capable of disquotational function in some sentences, one would have to search outside of disquotationalism itself. Therefore, there is more to truth than disquotation can account for. Truth seems to have

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anything by) the sentence, then one doesn’t understand (or can’t mean anything by) the attribution of disquotational truth.’ (2001:487).

<sup>6</sup> David offers these three examples in support of his argument: ‘The sentence favored [sic] by Tarski is a true sentence; ‘Every sentence uttered by Tarski is a true sentence; Some sentence on the blackboard is not a true sentence’ (David 1994:71).

a nature which explains why disquotation is possible. A deflationary theory of truth cannot provide the explanation; thus, a substantial theory is essential.

To show the limitations of what he calls simple disquotationalism David writes:

An account of truth that is designed to show that correspondence theories are not needed because they can be deflated cannot afford to leave major features of truth in the dark; that would give rise to the suspicion that there is something to truth that can be accounted for only in substantive terms (David 1994:73)

From all that has been said thus far, the disquotational theory of truth does not seem to say what truth is. Rather it outlines some of the uses of the truth predicate. Hence it would be difficult to affirm that disquotationalism succeeds in deflating truth if it has not even said precisely what truth is. Assessing the motivation of the disquotational theorist, David (1994:98) writes: ‘All he has offered, so far, is an account of the utility of the truth predicate.’ He goes on to argue that if the disquotationalist claims that the functions of the truth predicate that he proposes has said all that is needed to be known about truth, then his account should at least provide a definition of truth and not merely its functions.

#### 4.3.2 Minimalism<sup>7</sup>

The minimal theory has the equivalence schema (<p> is true if and only if p) as its central element. Horwich, the principal exponent of the minimalist conception of truth argues that minimalism does not contain anything ‘more than what is expressed by uncontroversial instances of the equivalence schema’ (1998:6). It is precisely because a theory of truth is supposed to be restricted to the equivalence schema that Horwich calls his conception of truth minimalist. In addition, he contends that minimalism accounts for the meaning of ‘true’ in a proposition that contains biconditionals. Minimalism is grouped as a deflationist theory because, it holds that questions like, what is truth? or what is the nature of truth? are not philosophically illuminating or important.<sup>8</sup> Unlike the other deflationary theories, minimalism acknowledges that truth is a property. According to

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<sup>7</sup> Unlike other deflationary theories in which truth-bearers are sentences or beliefs (Ramsey 2001), for Horwich’s minimalism, the truth-bearer is proposition (1998:2, 16-17).

<sup>8</sup> Horwich expresses the philosophical insignificance of investigating the nature of truth thus: ‘The recognition that truth plays no role can be vital to achieving the clarity needed for a solution. Thus, to put the matter somewhat paradoxically, the *relevance* of a theory of truth may lie in its import regarding the *irrelevance* of truth’ (1998:7)

Horwich, truth is a property because it is a predicate. But it is not a substantive property. In other words, truth is not a property in the same way as blackness when one says that coal is black. The minimalist theory as defended by Horwich is understood in the light of the equivalence schema. He articulates his minimalist conception of truth as follows:

[M]y minimalist thesis is the product of two prior claims: first, that our underived endorsement of the equivalence schema is explanatorily fundamental with respect to the overall use of the truth predicate; and second, that the meaning of any word is engendered by the fact about it that explains its overall use (2001:150).

From Horwich's description of the minimalist theory, it can be said that the focus of this theory is to account for the meaning of the truth predicate and the use of the word "true", unlike the correspondence project whose principal motive is to account for the constitution of truth. Put differently, the correspondence theory aims at the definition of truth and also accounts for why it is possible to use the truth predicate in sentences and statements. The constitution of truth seems to be no issue for the minimalist theory. Horwich (2001:150-155) is clear that the minimalist theory of truth that he defends does not intend 'to provide an *explicit definition* of the word "true", neither descriptive nor stipulative. Therefore, it does not offer a way of rearticulating the contents of sentences containing the word.' That is why Horwich (2001:149) contends that the biconditionals of the equivalence schema is the foundation of everything that is expected of the truth predicate. Hence, his conception of truth does not go beyond the equivalence schema. Therefore, the formula,

' $\langle p \rangle$  is true iff  $p$ '

accounts for all that is to be known about the use of the word 'true'. In that light, ' $\langle \langle \text{lying is wrong} \rangle \rangle$  is true iff lying is wrong>'. (1998:18).

The equivalence schema, as already argued in this study, presupposes the concept of truth. That is, it assumes that there is truth and that we know or at least understand what it is. Contrary to Horwich's argument that the equivalence schema is the source of the truth predicate, it is the knowledge of the constitution of truth that gives rise to the equivalence schema. Davidson (1996:272-275) raises a similar objection by pointing out that the minimalist theory presupposes a prior understanding of 'that clauses' (Horwich 2001:151). Stated differently, Davidson's objection is that the meaning of sentences is analysed in terms of truth-condition, hence truth is prior to meaning. Horwich (2001:152)

in response to Davidson's objection maintains that meaning is prior to truth. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see how the equivalence schema can stand without presupposing truth. To say that '<snow is white> is true if and only if snow is white', presupposes that the proposition <snow is white> corresponds to the fact that snow is white. Or rather to say that snow is white is true presupposes that a subject has made a reasonable judgment that snow is white. (Making a reasonable judgment we can objectify our understanding of snow, and then examine it).

Although Horwich (1998:104) claims that the minimal theory of truth is not incompatible with the correspondence theory, any compatibility between them would not be very significant since he argues that truth has no nature and that 'the truth predicate exists solely for the sake of a certain logical need' (1998:2) and also because the minimalist emphasis is on the use of the term 'true'. Moreover, Horwich's characterization of the principal difference between the minimalist conception of truth and the traditional understandings thereof indicates that any presumed compatibility between correspondence and minimal theories ultimately is trivial. He argues:

The minimalist account of what it is to know the meaning of the truth predicate does not provide an *analysis* and does not enable us to specify in non-circular terms the *content* of attributions of truth. This is precisely what distinguishes it from traditional approaches. But it may be none the less a perfectly acceptable account of what our understanding the truth predicate consists in, just so long as it is capable of explaining all pertinent linguistic behaviour – all our ways of deploying the term 'true'. (Horwich 1998:36).

Furthermore, the minimalist position about the kind of property which truth is, presents some challenges. Horwich's view is that although truth is a property, it is not a genuine property since it does not square up to what he calls "'complex' or 'naturalistic properties'" (1998:38). Nevertheless, he stresses that although truth is not a genuine property, it is still a useful property. Hence, he rejects redundancy and performative conceptions of truth since they claim that truth is not a property at all (1998:38-39). Horwich's position seems to be a backhanded compliment. If truth is not a genuine property, then is it a property at all? A non-genuine property could be viewed as "cosmetic" property that offers nothing significant. Nonetheless, if the truth predicate plays an indispensable role that renders the redundancy and performative conceptions of truth unsatisfactory, as Horwich argues, then truth ought to be a genuine property.

Horwich (1998:141) in his Postscript claims that whether truth is a property or not is not necessarily of interest to the minimalist because subscribing to different conceptions of truth does not affect the minimalist theory. Horwich's defence is against Boghossian's argument 'that minimalism is incoherent ('unstable') on the grounds that it implies both that truth *is*, and that it *is not*, a property.' (1998:142)<sup>9</sup> If that is the case, then does Paul Boghossian's contention that minimalism is incoherent or "unstable" stand? Can the minimalist conception be defended while the conception takes truth to be a property and not to be a property at the same time? Without taking a position whether truth is a genuine property or that it is not a property at all, it would be difficult for minimalism to be considered as a serious alternative theory to the correspondence theory of truth. In fact, Horwich's admission that it cannot be denied that truth involves some correspondence to reality (cf. 1998:104) is a reason to maintain that minimalism is not a satisfactory alternative to the correspondence theory. Contrary to his claim that it is minimalism that could accommodate the correspondence conception of truth, it is correspondence that makes minimalism possible.

An analysis of Horwich's emphasis on the meaning of 'true' and the use of the truth predicate in his minimal conception of truth show that the foundation of his rejection of substantive theories that ask questions like, what is truth? or what are conditions for the truth of a statement or proposition, ultimately rests on the question bordering the nature of philosophy. It seems that for him, the project of philosophy is conceptual and linguistic analyses.

#### **4.3.3 Prosentential Theory of Truth**

The prosentential theory is a theory of truth that argues the truth predicate has an anaphoric function in a sentence (that is, the truth predicate refers back to what is already stated). In other words, the truth predicate ('is true) is 'a fragment of a prosentence'<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Boghossian did not single out minimalism in his criticism. His objection is against deflationism in general. He argues that for deflationism to make a case for its position presupposes a robust conception of truth and conditions. He maintains that 'a deflationism about truth is an inherently unstable position' (Boghossian 1990:180). This is because according to him, 'any irrealist conception presupposes certain claims about truth and truth conditions, which an irrealism precisely about truth entails the denial of' (1990:182).

<sup>10</sup> Grover et al (1975:82) describe prosentence as follows: 'Roughly, just as a pronoun is sometimes said to stand in for a proper noun, and a proverb (e.g., 'do') for a verb, so prosentences stand in for sentences: that

(Grover *et al* 1975:82), while ‘that is true’ and ‘it is true’ are prosentences’ (1975:83). Hence, prosentential theorists contend that just as the pronoun takes the place of a noun in order to avoid unnecessary repetition, so also the truth predicate takes the place of a sentence to avoid the repetition of an aforementioned sentence (see an example below). In other words, according to prosentential theorists, the easiest way to account for the function of a truth predicate in sentences, is to compare it with the use of pronouns in sentence. While it is admissible that the truth predicate, sometimes have an anaphoric function in a sentence, the prosentential theory is called a deflationist theory because it maintains that all there is for the truth predicate is its role as a prosentence. In other words, in the view of prosententialists, any philosophical investigation of truth that explores issues like, the nature of truth and conditions for the truth of sentences only inflates truth since truth is not property.

The prosentential theory of truth considers itself to be the legitimate alternative to traditional accounts of truth. Since the prosentential conception of truth is deflationary, it is important to begin by asking, what distinguishes it from other deflationary theories? What are its advantages over other deflationary theories? Similar to other deflationary theories, the prosentential theory focuses on the truth predicates in the form of ‘it is true’ or ‘that is true’. They are used ‘for generalizing with respect to nominal position’ and ‘as pronouns of laziness’ respectively (Grover 2001:506).

The example below illustrates the position of the prosententialists:

James: The Roman Pontiff is a compassionate man.

Agnes: That is true.

The prosentential claim is that Agnes’s response is of no other importance apart from avoidance of the repetition of James’ statement. Consequently, according to the prosententialists, any investigation of the concept of truth that begins by asking, what is the nature of truth? is truth a property and if it is, what type of property is it? would be misdirected questions. While at first sight it might seem that the prosentential claim is correct, further analysis would show that it is not as simple as it seems to be. Granted that

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is, with respect to their own grammatical category, prosentences are to be generic in the sense that pronouns and proverbs are.’

Agnes's response is prosentential in character, it is important to state why the truth predicate is able to function as a prosentence. The prosententialists do not seem to find it interesting to explicate that. But if the prosentential theory is supposed to be an alternative to the correspondence theory, then saying what makes the truth predicate a suitable prosentence is necessary. Although Grover (2001:508) contends that the prosentential theory is neutral to questions like the above-stated questions, the neutrality claim is not convincing because for prosententialism to replace the substantive theories, it should show why those theories are less suitable candidates by countering the questions they raise about truth.

Some prosentential theorists might claim that the prosentential theory accounts for all that needs to be known about the truth predicate, but hardly any of them would affirm that the uses of the truth predicate can be reduced to a prosentential role. If that is the case, then it means that the analysis of truth requires more than the prosentential theory can offer. Regardless of the fact that prosententialists deny that the truth predicate ascribes a property of any sort so as to deny that truth has a nature, it seems that the theory presupposes some prior understanding of what truth is. Grover et al. agree that the question, what is truth, is sensible as far as it does not 'presuppose that there is a characteristic "truth" familiar to us all' (1975:121), because such presupposition makes truth incoherent. Nevertheless, if there is no such characteristic truth, how do they claim that prosentential theory 'provides "something more to the point"' (1975:124) regarding the use of the truth predicate in English? To acknowledge that the prosententialism is more apt in accounting for the use of the truth predicate, as the prosententialist admits, subtly endorses that there is a standard for the evaluation and comparison of the usage of truth predicate. Such evaluation or comparison is possible only if there is something characteristic about truth.

Even if it is accepted that the truth predicate has some prosentential role in some cases, both common sense and philosophical understanding of the concept of truth cannot be equated with the prosentential function. Consequently, the prosentential theory is not an alternative for the correspondence theory or any other substantive theory, since

prosententialism just like all other deflationary theories examined in this section only explores the functions or uses of the truth predicate in sentences.

#### 4.4 Third-way Theories

Thus far, the deflationary theories have not succeeded in replacing the correspondence theory by eliminating the quest for the nature of truth. So, is there another group of alternative theories that could eliminate the correspondence theory? In this section, third-way theories will be considered. The third-way theories are those that are neither substantive nor deflationary in nature. These theories acknowledge the positive side of the substantive and deflationary theories and so aim to create a synthesis. According to Engel (2002:65), the “third-way” theories of truth arise from the ‘tension between the fact that there does not seem to be *much* more to say about truth than what the equivalence or disquotational schema tells us, and the fact that these obviously do not tell us *enough* about the concept.’ This is Engel’s (2002:66-80) reason for rejecting both Wright’s minimal anti-realism (1992) and Putnam’s natural realism (1981). Although the third-way theories try to harmonise the extremes of the theories that investigate the nature of truth and deflationary theories, one would ask: Could further analysis show that any third-way theory would align itself either to substantive or deflationary theories? In this section, some answers to the question will be attempted. Some third-way theories under consideration are minimal realism, alethic pluralism and functionalism. I will discuss them each in turn.

##### 4.4.1 Minimal Realism<sup>11</sup>

Engel, the principal proponent of minimal realism, categorically states that it is not supposed to be an ‘intermediary or conciliatory’ between substantial and deflationary theories of truth (2002:65-66). According to him, minimal realism is more aligned with realism than with deflationary tendencies (2002:66). Minimal realism ‘involves a strong commitment in favour of *realism*. But it also grants certain points to the minimalist programme about truth, and in this sense it falls somewhere in between the other views.’

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<sup>11</sup> Engel identifies Alston’s (1996) “alethic realism”, Kraut’s (1993) “robust deflationism” and other such positions as sharing in the spirit of minimal realism irrespective of the differences of these positions (Engel 2002:88).

(Engel 2002:66). How would it be possible to maintain a balance between substantive and deflationary conceptions of truth for minimal realism not to lean towards any of the opposing poles or so that it would not be considered as just a version of the correspondence conception of truth? Engel's point of departure is to distinguish between truth and truth-aptness. Hence, he argues that 'minimalism about truth does not imply minimalism about truth-aptness' (Engel 2002:89). In making this distinction, Engel reserves truth to the concept of truth itself while truth-aptness refers to the property of truth which is applicable to different domains of discourse, for example, scientific, ethical and fictional. In his view, therefore, confusing truth with truth-aptness will lead to the misunderstanding of minimal realism (2002:89). He summarizes the minimalist and realist components of minimal realism as follows:

Minimalism: 1. Minimal realism agrees with minimalism on the fact that truth is a "thin" notion satisfying the discipline of syntax and the associated platitudes about assertion, correspondence, convergence, etc. 2. It rejects, however, the thesis that truth is a mere logical device of assertion or of disquotation; truth registers a distinctive norm. 3. It takes truth-bearers to be propositions, or the contents of beliefs, and assumes that we need to have an independent account of these contents. 4. It is not, however, pluralistic, since it does not take the truth-predicate to be ambiguous with respect to different domains; truth has a uniform core-meaning defined by its role (which is (1)), but which is realized in different ways from domain to domain.

Realism: 5. The uniformity of the truth-predicate does not neutralize the issues about realism and anti-realism that arise from domain to domain; a minimalism about *truth* does not imply a minimalism about truth-*aptness*. 6. In each domain, truth-aptness is to be judged after the realist criterion of the independence of a domain from our responses, and of verification transcendence: our best conceptions might be false. 7. In each domain, realistic truth, in the sense of (6), is the norm of enquiries (2002:89).

From the minimalist and realist components of minimal realism according to Engel, it could be argued that his view about truth is deflationist or minimalist, while the realist component is aimed at stressing his position that in the realist and anti-realist debate, realism is the default and not anti-realism, as Wright argues (Wright 1992, Engel 2002:88). If this interpretation of Engel's position is correct, then for those philosophers who argue that the realism and anti-realism controversies are not central to the notion of truth, Engel's conception of truth would count as deflationism. The question hence is; is minimal realism not modified deflationism? Engel would disagree that minimal realism is a modified version of deflationism; he would argue that although truth is a "thin" notion

which is in line with the position of deflationism, truth cannot be reduced to the equivalence or disquotational schema. Moreover, he would argue that according to minimal realism, ‘truth has normative character’ (Engel 2002:92; 2007). Norm can be understood in a weak or strong sense. In a weak sense, it is a convention since it is merely descriptive; however, in its stronger sense, norm is not only descriptive but “foundational and constitutive”. Hence in Engel’s view, truth is a norm in the stronger sense. He states: ‘when I say that truth is a norm, I intend it in the second stronger sense, that truth is constitutive of the practice of assertion, but also of judgement and of belief’ (2002:92). Therefore, since truth is a norm in a stronger sense, minimal realism cannot be deflationary as deflationism does not acknowledge truth as a norm in a stronger sense.

Unlike Wright’s minimal anti-realism where the normativity of truth is founded in super-assertibility, Engel argues that minimal realism ‘implies that the norm of truth is the norm of realist, recognition-transcendent truth’ (Engel 2002:93). This realist normativity of truth is founded on knowledge because ‘knowledge is stronger than warrant’ as knowledge implies both warrant and truth, but warrant does not imply knowledge. (2002:95). Moreover, Engel argues that it is the derivation of ‘the norm of truth from the norm of knowledge’ that gives minimal realism its privileged position (2002:95). Nevertheless, he acknowledges that the realist commitment of minimal realism ‘is implicit in the talk about truth’ and for this, the commitment is a platitude (2002:96). Yet, according to him, the platitude of realist commitment in minimal realism ‘has more weight than the truistic correspondence platitude, and more weight than the platitude that truth is justification’ (2002:97). Engel’s position that realistic commitment of minimal realism is not just the truistic correspondence platitude<sup>12</sup> or justification platitude, implies that minimal realism has some metaphysical commitment and as such the concept of truth requires substantive explanation (2002:97).

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<sup>12</sup> Platitudes are intuitive principles or statements about truth that do not require further metaphysical explanations. Wright (1992:34) lists the following platitudes: ‘that to assert is to present as true; that any truth-apt content has a significant negation which is likewise truth-apt; that to be true is to correspond to the facts; that a statement may be justified without being true, and vice versa’. Following the lead of Wright, Engel (2002:67) named the following seven truth platitudes: ‘transparency, embedding, correspondence, contrast, absoluteness, timelessness and convergence’.

Engel's argument is that minimal realism is not a deflationary theory since truth is a norm, and minimal realism does not reduce the truth predicate to equivalence or disquotational schema (2002:92). On the other hand, he argues that minimal realism is not a substantive theory but a mid-way between the substantive and deflationary theories of truth. What then makes minimal realism a mid-way theory rather substantive? To answer this question, it is important to recall that according to Engel, the commitment to minimal realism distinguishes between truth and truth-aptness (2002:89). Truth is minimal while realist commitment arises from truth-aptness. The challenge would be to clarify whether it is truth that is a norm or truth-aptness. If it is truth-aptness, then normativity does not necessarily affect the minimalist component of minimal realism but if it is truth that is a norm then one may wonder if Engel can still defend his minimal component of minimal realism, since the normativity of truth is understood in a strong foundational and constitutive sense. Considering that according to Engel, truth is a constitutive norm, it seems that minimal realism is a substantive theory under a minimal veneer whose name is aimed at calming the nerves of the deflationists. In fact, I agree with Lynch (2006:63-84) that it is hard to accept that truth is a constitutive norm and maintain that it is not substantive.

From the examination of Engel's minimal realism so far, one would say that his conception is not deflationary but substantive since it has a 'strong commitment in favour realism' and because of normativity of truth. A question that is necessary then is; is there any relationship between minimal realism and the correspondence theory? Minimal realism seems to be closely related with truth as correspondence. It is not an eliminating alternative to the correspondence theory. In fact, one could say that minimal realism in spirit is a version of the correspondence theory. Some fundamental features of minimal realism, for instance, strong commitment to realism and that truth is recognition-transcendent, are fundamental for the correspondence theory. Another important aspect of minimal realism which supports the position that minimal realism is in essence a form of the correspondence theory is its vital connection with knowledge as Engel avers that 'the norm of truth is derivative from the norm of knowledge' (2002:95). This close relationship between truth and knowledge is an indispensable element of the conception of truth as correspondence that is defended in this thesis since the quest for truth is

founded within the quest for knowledge as truth is attained by subject when there is intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. Nevertheless, even though Engel's minimal realism is a correspondence like, if it remains within analytic framework, then objections raised against the analytic conception of the correspondence theory will be levelled against it because of its neglect of the indispensable role of the intentional subject, and because according minimal realism, truth is a "thin" notion.

Engel's minimal realism can only be on the path towards Lonergan-inspired conception of truth as critical correspondence, if and only if it is reformulated outside the analytic framework (by acknowledging the role of the knowing subject). In that case his theory would be similar to the minimal correspondence theory that is defended by Meynell (1998:20-21). The two theories accentuate that the concept of truth cannot be reduced to equivalence schema, and that truth is recognition-transcendent. Moreover, both theories acknowledge the central place of the process of knowing and the role of the subject. While the role of the subject is explicit in Meynell's minimal correspondence theory of truth, it is implicit in Engel's minimal realism. Meynell characterises the minimal correspondence theory that he defends thus:

(a) that 'p' is true if and only if p; (b) that in typical instances at least one does not make p to be the case by affirming 'p' – in other words, that p is the case prior to and independently of anyone's statement to that effect. [...] (c) that one tends to know what is the case on any matter, and hence to make true judgments about it, to the degree that one follows through the threefold process of attending to relevant evidence, envisaging possibilities to account for the evidence, and judging to be so those possibilities which account best for it (1998:20-21)

Although the third element characteristic of Meynell's minimal correspondence seems to be lacking in Engel's minimal realism, a close look shows that it is implicit in Engel's contention about the derivability of the norm of truth from the norm of knowledge.

#### **4.4.2 Alethic Pluralism and Functionalist Theory**

Alethic Pluralism and functionalism, just like minimal realism, reject the "extreme" positions of both the substantive and deflationary theories of truth. Since there are various domains or regions in which the truth predicate is applicable, these theories argue that truth talk differs from discourse to discourse. They reject the claims of deflationism that the concept of truth can be reduced to the equivalence or disquotational schema. In the

view of Wright (2001:751-781), pluralism is a consequence of minimalism<sup>13</sup>. Pluralism is a rejection of alethic monism which emphasises that the truth predicate is applied in a uniform way in all discourses or domains. To show the connection between minimalism and pluralism and how alethic pluralism is an outright rejection of both deflationism and substantive conceptions of truth, Wright (2001:752) writes:

Minimalism thus incorporates a potential *pluralism* about truth, in the specific sense that what property serves as truth may vary from discourse to discourse. And it is this point which allows it to provide hospitality for the discussion of – realist or antirealist – ideas that have fuelled those other traditional conceptions of truth that deflationists ought to undermine from the start. This potential pluralism is itself in opposition to the more traditional positions, insofar as they claim to uncover *the* universal nature of truth, something common to all truth-apt discourse.

Given that alethic pluralism accounts for the diversity of the domains or regions in which the truth predicate can be applied, one wonders if acceptance of pluralism does not come at a cost. A huge price to be paid, if one is to accept pluralism as a suitable theory of truth, is the danger of ambiguity. So, if there is a cost to be paid, what is its consequence for truth theorists and the notion of truth in theoretical philosophy? Ambiguity renders the term truth non-univocal since the meaning of truth will vary from one domain of discourse to another. Hence, if non-univocality of truth implies equivocation, then a theory of truth that is based on equivocality will not be a suitable alternative for the correspondence theory, since the correspondence conception of truth does not entail equivocation.<sup>14</sup>

Lynch (2001:727) an exponent of functionalism, considers truth to be a “functional concept” which performs a function that is similar to those of mental states. According to him, ‘a functional concept is the concept of a property, state, or object that occupies or plays such a role’ (2001:727). Functionalism shares the spirit of alethic pluralism in that it emphasises that the major problem of both the substantive and deflationary theories of truth is the transfer of a theory of truth that is suitable for a particular domain of truth to other domains. The fundamental thesis of functionalism is that there is coherency in subscribing to semantic and conceptual monism about truth and being alethic pluralist about the nature of truth (2001:727). Can such a position be defended?

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<sup>13</sup> Wright’s minimalism is different from that of Horwich which is deflationary *in toto* (Horwich 1998, Wright 2001 751-781). To differentiate between Horwich’s deflationary minimalism and the minimalism proposed by Wright, Engel calls Wright’s version of minimalism minimal anti-realism (Engel 2002:66-75).

<sup>14</sup> This point was discussed in the previous chapter.

In the view of a functionalist, truth is what it is because of the role or function that it plays in the domains of discourse. In other words, 'to be true is to play the truth role. However, functionalism allows that this role might be realized or occupied by different properties.' (2001:733) It is because the truth role can be realised by different properties that functionalism is grouped with alethic pluralism. The functionalist theory of truth is not deflationary in character because it acknowledges that 'truth is a higher-order functional property' and a cognitive goal (2001:735).

Does the assertion that truth is a functional property and a cognitive goal settle the dispute between substantive and deflationary theories of truth? An affirmative response to the question seems hardly likely. Functionalism does not seem to account for the foundational question concerning truth, that is, what constitutes truth? The functionalist conception still leaves room for the question, what makes the truth functional role possible? *Contra* the functionalist emphasis that having the property which plays alethic functional role is the truth condition of propositions (Lynch 2001, 2006), the first question that must be settled is what makes it possible for a proposition to have a truth functional role property. It is a question about the nature of truth rather than that of the conditions for truth that would make truth functional role possible. Functionalists seem not have an answer to the question of the nature of truth.

#### **4.5 Alternative Substantive Theories**

Substantive theories of truth are those theories that contend that truth has a nature and that the function of a truth theory is to explain the nature of truth. The uniting factor of the substantive theories of truth competing with the correspondence theory is that they contend that it is almost impossible for truth as correspondence to give an adequate explanation of the nature of truth since any attempt to explain the nature of truth tends to presuppose the notion of truth. Brand Blanshard wrote: 'If truth does consist in correspondence, no test can be sufficient. For in order to know that experience corresponds to fact, we must be able to get at that fact, unadulterated with idea, and

compare the two sides with each other' (2001:111)<sup>15</sup>. According to him, such project is impossible since 'such fact is not accessible' (2001:111). The quotation from Blanshard indicates why some versions of the correspondence theories are susceptible to attack. It is because most proponents of correspondence theory still view the theory from the empiricist standpoint and so think of correspondence as comparing or matching of propositions with facts. By so doing, truth as correspondence is trapped into the "in here" and "out there" dichotomy. Such a dichotomy is an obstacle to adequate articulation and exposition of truth as correspondence.

Apart from the common rejection of the correspondence theory of truth, the alternative substantial theories differ greatly. Within their sub-groups, there are various versions and so it is difficult to simply capture the theories in a neat unity. Nevertheless, the common trait that all the substantial theories, the correspondence theory included, share is that truth has a nature and that it is a substantial property. Generally, the fundamental goal of all the substantive theories is to investigate the nature of truth. It is because of this that they differentiate between the nature and the criteria of truth. Prominent among the alternative substantive theories which rival with correspondence are the coherence theory, pragmatism and the identity theory.

In each of the subsections on the alternatives, each of the theories will be outlined. In order to examine whether they are adequate alternative theories to the conception of truth as correspondence, the (in)adequacy of the alternative theories will be commented upon so as to bring out some of the difficulties and challenges that the theories raise.

#### **4.5.1 The Coherence Theory of Truth**

The earliest alternative to truth as correspondence is the coherence theory of truth. It argues that to maintain that a truth-bearer corresponds to the truth-maker does not make much sense (if at all it makes any sense). The conception of truth as coherence, therefore, aims to replace the correspondence theory.

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<sup>15</sup> Blanshard's work "Coherence as the Nature of Truth" was first published in 1939 as chapter XXVI of *The Nature of Thought*, vol 2. (Pp. 260-301) London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd. The page citation here is based on the reprint in Lynch 2001, *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives* (103-121).

The coherence theory is a theory of truth that contends that a belief or proposition (or whatever the truth-bearer might be) is true when it is coherent with a system of beliefs or propositions. Put differently, according to the coherence theory, truth is a relation of coherence between a belief, proposition or statement and a system or other sets of beliefs, propositions or statements. Young (2015) captures the relation of coherence: ‘According to the coherence theory, the truth conditions of propositions consist in other propositions.’ Donald Davidson who argues that belief is the truth-bearer in the case of the coherence conception of truth, summarizes the coherence theory as follows: ‘What distinguishes a coherence theory is simply the claim that nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief’ (2001[1983]:141). The first defenders of the coherence theory in the early part of the twentieth century were idealists<sup>16</sup>, for example, H. H. Joachim, F. H. Bradley and Brand Blanshard.

The formulation of the coherence theory given above is basic. Walker (2001:124) articulates the position of coherentists thus: ‘The coherence theorist holds that for a proposition to be true is for it to cohere with a certain system of beliefs. It is not just that it is true if and only if it coheres with that system; it is that the coherence, and nothing else, is what its truth consists in’. Regardless of the different formations, the theory raises some contentious questions. For instance, since coherence is a rival theory to the correspondence theory, does it imply that the two theories of truth are incompatible? Does the coherence theory ultimately lead to incoherence? Is the coherence theory about the nature of truth or about the conditions or criteria of truth? Just like the correspondence theory that it aims to replace, the coherence theory has different versions. For instance, some exponents, for example, Brand Blanshard (2001:103-121) and Ralph Walker (2001:123-158) argue that the goal of the coherence theory is to ascertain the nature of truth while others like Young (2001:90) argue that the coherence theory ‘accounts for truth conditions’.

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<sup>16</sup> Though the veteran defenders of the coherence theory were idealists, whether it is necessary for coherence theorist to an idealist is debatable. Walker argues that though ‘not every idealist needs to be a coherence theorist, but every coherence theorist must (if he is to be consistent) be an idealist’ (Walker 2001:143). James Young (2001) on the other hand argues that being a coherentist does not commit one to idealism. Alcoff also contends that being a coherence theorist does not commit one to idealism (Alcoff 2001:166).

According to Walker a coherence theory can either be pure or impure. Pure coherence theories maintain ‘that truth consists in coherence with some set of beliefs’ while impure coherence theories ‘hold that there are some truths that consist in coherence, but also there are some that do not’. The impure coherence theories accept that ‘some truths consist in correspondence’ (2001:146). Walker contends that pure coherence theory is indefensible (2001:147-149). His argument is that since the coherence of beliefs in which truth consists does not take place in the abstract ‘but in coherence with some set of beliefs that are held, or perhaps some set of beliefs that would be held, in specifiable circumstances’, any pure version of the coherence theory is incapable of supporting ‘the claim that a particular belief is held’ (2001:147). The situation is the case because for a belief to be true, it must cohere with a system of beliefs and not by the fact that the belief is held apart from the system. The incoherence that arises is that the system of beliefs is composed of individual beliefs and if the pure coherence theory ‘cannot accommodate the factuality of the claim’ of individual beliefs, then there would be no system of belief in the first place (2001:147). Expressing the incoherence that pure coherence theory of truth collapses into, Walker (2001:148) writes: ‘It is a fact that *b* is held, no doubt, but what makes a fact is the coherence of “*b* is held” with the system. That means, in effect, that coherence of “*b* is held” with the various beliefs that determine the system.’ Walker’s argument is that we cannot have a system of beliefs without firstly accounting for the individual beliefs that makes up the system. Hence, to have a system the individual beliefs must be held. And since there could be a system only because the individual beliefs are held, they do not cohere to a system but give rise to a system of beliefs. Consequently, Walker concludes that the pure coherence theories ultimately ‘collapse to incoherence’ (2001:146).

Although the coherence theory of truth may seem appealing, it is still debateable if a system in which a proposition or belief must cohere in order to be true, is a set that is actually believed or that which is believable. These two positions are accepted by exponents of the coherence theory. Both positions raise the question, is a system coherent because it is believed, or is it believed because it is coherent? Implicit in this question is that the coherence theory of truth presupposes truth itself, that is, it assumed that a system

of belief is true prior to establishing what truth is. If that is the case, then it would be difficult to argue coherently that coherence is the nature of truth.

From the exploration of the coherence theory of truth thus far, it would appear that a defence of truth as coherence is not as simple as it might seem. Some of the objections against the coherence theory, like the specification objection and regress objection, suggest that the coherence theory is predisposed to contradiction or incoherence itself. The specification objection argues that coherentists are incapable of identifying the specified set of beliefs or propositions. It goes on to emphasise that any attempt at such identification would lead to a contradiction. The regress objection against the coherence theory is that it does not have the base on which the theory rests in establishing what the truth of a belief that coheres within a system consists. The regress objection argues that the coherence theory of truth presupposes the notion of truth. For instance, if it is said that 'a belief is true if and only if it coheres with a system of beliefs', the truth of the system of beliefs is already assumed. If not, one would ask, what is the truth condition of the system of beliefs itself? (Young 2015). Young (2015) expresses the regress objection against the coherence theory thus: 'If we say that  $p$  is true if and only if it coheres with a specified set of propositions, we may be asked about the truth conditions of ' $p$  coheres with a specified set.'

It is a herculean task for the coherence theorists to successfully defend the regress objection without contradiction or assuming something like the correspondence intuition. Dauer (1974:791-811) claims that the regress objection is inescapable for any theory of truth while Young (2001, 2015) argues that although the coherence theory succumbs to regress objection, it is not a 'vicious regress'. Young claims that the correspondence theory also suffers from 'benign' regress (non-destructive regress). However, it does not seem that the correspondence theory ends in regress, since the argument of the correspondence theorist is that truth is a relation of correspondence and that it is an objective fact that constitutes truth. In other words, unlike the coherence theory, the correspondence does not presuppose truth. Walker (2001:150) argues that the correspondence theory does not result in regress because 'it is correspondence with fact' and nothing else that truth consists in. According to him, what is considered as the regress

that the correspondence theory faces does not affect the basic understanding of truth as the correspondence of a proposition with a fact. He writes:

The correspondence theorist, who treats it as basic that  $p$  correspond with the facts, does not have to deny that the truth of “ $p$  corresponds with the facts” consists in its correspondence with the facts. There would be a problem with that only if some new and different set of facts had to be involved, and some new correspondence. But no new set of facts is involved (2001:150).

The case that Walker makes for the correspondence theory cannot be made for the coherence theory since it would be necessary to ask: what constitutes the truth of the system of beliefs or sets of propositions that a belief or a proposition must cohere to, for it to be true? In acknowledgement of the importance of fact in truth discourse, Davidson (2001[1983]:137) contends that the coherence theory of truth he defends ‘is not in competition with a correspondence theory, but depends for its defence on argument that purports to show that coherence yields correspondence.’<sup>17</sup> To avoid the regress challenge to the coherence theory, one would have to agree with Davidson that mere coherence does not ultimately translate into truth because coherence by itself ‘no matter how strongly coherence is plausibly defined, cannot guarantee that what is believed is so.’ (2001[1984]:138). If coherence merely by itself cannot guarantee the truth of a belief, then this implies that something more foundational is required for the constitution of truth. This is where a proper understanding of truth as correspondence has an advantage over truth as coherence. If this is the case, as it seems that truth as coherence, whether in the forms of ‘pure coherence theories’ or ‘impure coherence theories,’ (Walker 2001:147-155) end up in inescapable regress or falls back onto the correspondence theory respectively, then the coherence theory of truth is not able to achieve its goal of providing a better explanation of the nature of truth than the correspondence theory of truth. For instance, while acknowledging the valuable insight of the coherence theory, MacKinnon (1971:24) contends that the importance of the insight is to the question of knowledge and coherence rather than to that of truth.

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<sup>17</sup> Donald Davidson initially defended the correspondence theory of truth but became a defender of the coherence theory of truth, which he later rejected in favour of his indefinability thesis (1990; 2001:154-157)

#### **4.5.2 The Pragmatic Theory of Truth**

The pragmatic theory of truth is a product of American pragmatism. It emphasises that truth does not depend on a mere theoretical analysis of propositions or beliefs. Truth essentially rests on its “practical bearings”. In other words, truth is measured by its practical import or practical utility. This implies that truth is that ‘which works’. According to Charles Sanders Peirce, one of the founding fathers of pragmatism, truth properly understood falls within the realm of scientific investigation (2001:205-206). Irrespective of the method a scientist uses for his investigation, truth ultimately must be a convergence resulting from exhaustive scientific investigation. That is why Peirce maintains that truth is that which is arrived at, ‘at the end of scientific inquiry’. He expresses the nature of truth thus: ‘The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate, is what we mean by the truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real’ (2001:206). Truth so understood is an alternative to both truth as correspondence and truth as coherence. In other words, the pragmatic conception of truth stresses that truth is neither correspondence with facts nor coherence with a system of beliefs or propositions. It emanates from the agreement of scientists or investigators after an exhaustive investigation.

Peirce’s pragmatic conception of truth raises two questions. First, if truth is some form of agreement at the end of investigation, does that not make truth an arbitrary consensus? Secondly, is an exhaustive investigation attainable, or what is meant by ‘investigation carried sufficiently far’? Peirce contends that truth is not an arbitrary consensus because that which is agreed upon without carrying out an in-depth investigation, would not amount to truth. He writes:

Our perversity and that of others may indefinitely postpone the settlement of opinion; it might even conceivably cause an arbitrary proposition to be universally accepted as long as the human race should last. Yet even that would not change the nature of the belief, which alone could be the result of investigation carried sufficiently far; and if, after the extinction of our race, another should arise with faculties and disposition for investigation, the true opinion must be the one which they would ultimately come to (2001:207)

Even if truth, considered as that which is agreed upon at the end of an inquiry, is not arbitrary or “mere consensus”, the problem still remains whether an exhaustive investigation is possible. How exactly do investigators determine when an investigation

has been sufficient and adequate? The inability to settle this would make truth seem elusive and illusory.

An attentive rereading of the Peircean conception of truth shows that it is not as distant as it might seem at first sight from Lonergan's understanding of truth as relation of knowing to being. Peirce stresses the need for an exhaustive investigation in order for truth to be attained. Exhaustive investigation as used by Peirce is very similar to Lonergan's virtually unconditioned which is essential for there to be reasonable judgment which is the decisive act in the process of knowing and attainment of truth. Hence an investigation that is not exhaustive is that which is still in need of sufficient evidence and is similar to what Lonergan calls prospective judgment (1992[2013]:305-306). Another important element that is common to the Peircean pragmatic conception and Lonergan's correspondence conception of truth is the close connection between truth and the real or being (1992 [2013]:575). Therefore, despite the fact that Peirce intended his pragmatic truth as an alternative to truth as correspondence, a closer analysis reveals that it is complementary to truth as correspondence understood in the right way. In fact, Peirce's articulation of truth accounts for essential elements that contemporary versions of correspondence theories of truth (especially in the analytic philosophical tradition) neglect, that is, the active role and the intentions of the knowing subject.

William James, another proponent of the pragmatic theory of truth, emphasises practical utility as that which defines truth by affirming that the motivation for truth is 'the concrete benefits' that we gain from it (2001:212). Hence, he argues that the mark of truth is usefulness (2001:214). He underscores his position as follows: 'A truth must always be preferred to a falsehood when both relate to the situation; but when neither does, truth is as little of a duty as falsehood' (2001:226). Stated differently, James seems to hold that truth without practical utility is irrelevant. This rather reductionist position seems to want to limit truth to that which is merely useful. As a pragmatist, James would argue that truth is co-extensive with usefulness (2001:214). In distinguishing between the pragmatist conception of truth and that of intellectualists (correspondence and coherence theorists), he asserts:

Pragmatism, on the other hand, asks its usual question. 'Grant an idea or belief to be true,' it says, 'what concrete difference will its being true make in any one's life? How will the truth

be realized? What experiences will be different from those which would be obtain if the belief were false? What, in short, is the truth's cash-value in experiential terms?' The moment pragmatism asks this question, it sees the answer: *True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we can not.* That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that, therefore, is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known-as. (2001:212)

James does not only reduce truth to that which is practically useful, but also insists that truth is constructed. In saying this, he opposes the claim that truth is only discovered. He writes:

This thesis is what I have to defend. The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events. Its verity *is* in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its *veri-fication*. Its validity is the process of its *valid-ation*' (2001:213)

The constructing of truth, according to him results from the "verification-process". Consequently, he argues that it is not enough to say that 'truth is an agreement with reality' for even a pragmatist would not find that problematic; but the problem comes when one has to explain what agreeing means in relation to truth (James 2001:211-212).

Although James contends that practical usefulness is all that it means to be true, this view is hardly convincing. There are things (beliefs or propositions) that are useful but not true. For instance, it might be useful to be dishonest if one wants to take advantage of others. But that does make the proposition, dishonesty is the recipe for success, true. Besides, truth cannot be reduced to practical utility because truth is considered as the epistemic goal of theoretical philosophy. So, to reduce truth to that which is just practically useful is an exaggeration.

Granted that it is already pointed out that James's emphasis of practical utility as the meaning of truth seems to be an exaggeration, it is undeniable that he is underscoring the importance of the intentionality of the agent or knowing subject when truth is the issue in question. A moderate interpretation of James's pragmatic conception of truth shows that underneath the prominence he attaches to practical benefit, is that the pursuit of truth cannot be reduced to analysis of concepts and terms. Rather, the inquiry for truth is to be situated within the human quest for actualization and transcendence.

The classical pragmatists like Peirce and James acknowledge that truth is important, but it is only that which has practical bearing or relevance. Richard Rorty radicalises the pragmatic conception of truth (2001:259-286). Following the proto-pragmatists, he contends that the pragmatists' problem with the concept of truth, especially the correspondence conception of truth, is not that it is meaningless but that it is pointless talking about it because there is no practical usefulness that comes with such understanding of truth (2001:259). Rorty states his and other pragmatists' rejection of the correspondence theory of truth as follows:

The sort of thing philosophers typically have said – that truth is some sort of correspondence to, or accurate representation of, reality – seemed empty and pointless to many nineteenth century idealists and also to Dewey. The early pragmatists agreed with their idealist opponents that doubts about correspondence to reality can be settled only by assessing the coherence of the dubious belief with other beliefs. To both, the difference between true beliefs considered as useful nonrepresentational mental states, and as accurate (and *therefore* useful) representations of reality, seemed a difference that could make no difference in practice (2001:259).

For that reason, he advocates quietism about truth. Rorty thought that the less truth is debated, the better, since talking about truth will never yield any practical relevance or social benefit. In his view, therefore, truth does not offer anything more than justification does. Hence he reduces, truth to justification and maintains that truth only has a “cautionary” use (2001:261). According to him, the reason for the “cautionary” use of “true” is to point out that justification is relative to an audience and that we can never exclude the possibility that some better audience might exist, or come to exist, to whom a belief that is justifiable to us would not be justifiable.’ (Rorty 2001:261). Rorty takes justification to mean “subjectively justified”. This conception is in contrast to Lonergan who understands justification to be “objectively justified” (and so lead to reasonable judgment for all, and not just reasonable to me).

Rorty's pragmatic conception of truth<sup>18</sup> is far more radical than the emphasis of the classical pragmatists, that truth is that which has practical utility, that which is arrived at the end of an inquiry or that which is workable. Although he (2001, 2007) avers that his

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<sup>18</sup> I put Rorty's pragmatic conception of truth with the views of the classical pragmatists because the pragmatic theories of truth are generally considered to be substantive theories. But Rorty's is a radicalised version and for this, he calls his view minimalism or even deflationism (Rorty 2001:260).

attitude towards truth or the word “true” is quietism, because truth has no “practical significance” and no social utility, it seems that the consequence of his position is eliminationist. Rorty’s claims about truth seem to be extreme and contentious. One may ask: are all matters supposed to have social utility or practical significance? Is theoretical relevance pointless? What is the practical usefulness of clamouring for quietism about truth? There seems to be a paradox involved in Rorty’s attempt to convince others that quietism is the correct attitude towards truth. Why is quietism, and not what he calls metaphysical activism, viewed as a superior attitude? It seems that he assumes that his position is the true one. Perhaps the inquiry into truth, or what he prefers to call the realism-antirealism debate, is not as pointless as he thinks.

#### **4.5.3 The Identity Theory of Truth**

The identity theory of truth is an alternative substantial theory which some philosophers like Jennifer Hornsby (1997 [2001] and Justin Dodd (1995, 2008) view as the main challenger to the correspondence theory. The goal of this theory is to eliminate, displace, or at least avoid the conception of truth as correspondence. This theory claims that propositions or “thinkables” as Jennifer Hornsby prefers, are identical with facts. That is, ‘true propositions or thinkables are facts’ (2001:664). Hornsby writes: ‘The identity theory is encapsulated in the simple statement that true thinkables are the same as facts.’ (2001:664)<sup>19</sup>. The identity theorists draw their inspiration from Frege’s rejection of the correspondence theory because ideas cannot correspond with reality (Hornsby 1997 [2001]) or Frege’s affirmation that ‘true thoughts are facts’ (Dodd 2008). The passage from Frege’s article, “Thought: A Logical Inquiry” that identity theorists consider as the Fregean origin of the identity theory is:

A correspondence, moreover, can only be perfect if the corresponding things coincide and are, therefore, not distinct things at all. It is said to be possible to establish the authenticity of a banknote by comparing it stereoscopically with an authentic one. But it would be ridiculous to try to compare a gold piece with a twenty-mark note stereoscopically. It would only be possible to compare an idea with a thing if the thing were an idea too. And then, if the first did correspond perfectly with the second, they would coincide. But this is not at all what is wanted when truth is defined as the correspondence of an idea with something real. For it is absolutely

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<sup>19</sup> Hornsby’s article, “Truth: The Identity Theory” was first published in 1997 in *Proceeding of the Aristotelian Society* 97:1-24. But the citation here is based on its reprint in Lynch 2001.

essential that the reality be distinct from the idea. But then there can be no complete correspondence, no complete truth. So nothing at all would be true; for what is only half true is untrue' (Frege 1956:291).

The identity theorists who trace their conception to Frege's<sup>20</sup> cited passage do have reason for their claim. In my opinion, what Frege describes in the mentioned passage is identity theory and not the correspondence theory. Even the correspondence theorist (to whom Frege addresses his criticism) knows that the relation between a truth-bearer and a truth-maker is not that of identity or equality or sameness. If correspondence is taken as identity as Frege seems to imply, it would be difficult if not impossible to defend truth as correspondence. It is interesting that in his correspondence with Paul F. Linke dated 24 August 1919, while responding to Linke's question, 'whether the mathematical equal sign means equality or identity' Frege argues that it is an 'agreement' and not identity because 'properly speaking different objects cannot be identical at all, though they can agree in some respect' (Frege 1980:96). If this is the case with the mathematical sign of equality, one wonders why Frege would expect truth as correspondence to be a sort of identity between an idea and the object it represents. If his argument for taking the mathematical equal sign as an agreement rather than identity is because different objects are not and cannot be identical, why is it not applicable to the definition of truth as correspondence? Or is it that the concession that is given to mathematics cannot be applicable to philosophy?

Nonetheless, since the conception of correspondence theorists is not identity irrespective of what they take as the truth-bearer (proposition, judgment, statement) and truth-maker (fact, reality, being), the Fregean criticism against truth as correspondence does not trivialize the correspondence project. Gerald Vision (2004:12) puts the core of the truth as correspondence in the analytic framework thus: 'Correspondence then can be stated as the view that what *makes* a proposition true, or *constitutes* its truth, is a particular (more or less general) worldly circumstance to which the content of the proposition is related.'

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<sup>20</sup> Apart from tracing the identity theory to Frege, other philosophers who are proto-identity theorist are G. E. Moore and F. H. Bradley. Moore defended truth as a relation of identity for some time. His defence of the identity theory was based on his criticism and rejection of Bradley's idealism (Moore 1899).

Engel (2002:16-17) holds that Frege's criticism against truth as correspondence sounds absurd on two grounds, that is, correspondence by nature implies difference and also that coinciding admits degrees.

Be that as it may, as I have already stated, the primary understanding of the correspondence theory is not any form of identity. So Frege's argument is based on a misunderstanding of the correspondence project. In fact, just as Frege himself argues that the mathematical equal sign implies 'agreement' and not identity' (1980:96), in the same way, the correspondence theory of truth does not imply identity because there can never be an identity between a proposition and a fact.

If we take the mediaeval formula, *veritas est adequatio rei et intellectus* as the first formulation of truth as correspondence, then it becomes clearer why I argue that Frege's representational identity is a misunderstanding of the correspondence intuition. St Thomas Aquinas who popularised the mediaeval definition in the West is unambiguous in pointing out that truth as correspondence does not imply identity. This is why he talks in terms of the residence of truth and the cause of truth. According to him, 'truth resides primarily in the intellect, and secondarily in things according as they are related to the intellect as their principle' (*Summa Theologiae* Q.16. Art 1). In other words, truth as correspondence does not imply comparing of two things (truth-bearer and truth-maker) by perception. Rather correspondence involves making a reasonable judgment about that which is intelligently grasped (Lonergan 1992 [2013:575, 607]).

The identity theorists consider the correspondence talk as a misuse of language about truth, and also as an obstacle to the identity theory project. That is why the displacement of the correspondence theory is important to the identity theorists. Hornsby (2001:667) contends:

The identity theory, at any rate, is distinguishable from any correspondence theory. And the identity theory is worth considering to the extent to which correspondence theories are worth avoiding. I think that correspondence theories *need* to be avoided. I mean by this not merely that they are incorrect, but that people are apt to believe them.

It is interesting that Hornsby's argument for the necessity of the elimination or neutralisation of the correspondence theory, if the identity theory must have the space it needs, is not principally based on the incorrectness of the correspondence theory. Rather, it is mainly based on people's aptness to believing it. So why are people apt to believing the correspondence theory? One can only say that if people are apt to believing truth as correspondence, it is because it is so natural to people's ordinary conception of truth. In other words, people's aptness to believing the correspondence theory is that the conception of truth as correspondence is obvious. The obviousness of truth as correspondence is sometimes dubbed triviality by the opponents of the correspondence theory.

Irrespective of the obviousness of the correspondence theory, some identity theorists argue that correspondence theory entangles itself in an ontological gap. An ontological gap is meant to be a gap between thought and the world, that is a gap between the mind and world (McDowell 1994). Hence, the identity theory of truth has the responsibility of bridging the ontological gap that seems to be inherent in the correspondence theory (Candlish 1999:200). Dodd (1995:160) calls the ontological gap the "double vision" of the correspondence theorist. In charging the correspondence theorist of "double vision", Dodd contends that it is an error to classify propositions (thoughts) and facts into different categories. According to him, the Fregean thought which belongs to the realm of sense is identical with facts. Frege (1956:289-311) distinguishes three realms. It is the realm of ideas which is in the mind of individuals and so he argues that ideas are personal and private cannot be shared by others. Secondly, there is the realm of reference to which belong objects and things. Lastly there is the realm of sense, that is the realm of existing abstract entities like thoughts and propositions.

In arguing for the identity of thoughts and facts, Dodd places facts in the realm of sense. Senses so understood are not objects and properties but 'modes of representation of objects and properties' (1995:163). In Dodd's view, the problem of the correspondence theorist is that he erroneously places facts in the realm of reference. Consequently, the double vision of the correspondence theorist arises when he considers propositions to be truth-bearers, while at the same claims that facts are truth-makers. In Dodd's neo-Fregean

understanding of thoughts and facts, thoughts are identical with true facts and so facts are not truth-makers but truth-bearers just as propositions or thoughts are truth-bearers. Contrasting the identity theory with the correspondence theory, he writes:

According to an identity theory of truth, a proposition is true if and only if it is *identical* with a fact. Whereas a correspondence theorist holds that facts are extralinguistic items which make propositions true, an identity theorist, by contrast, believes true propositions to *be* facts. From the perspective of the identity theorist, the correspondence theorist is guilty of double vision: she [the correspondence theorist] looks for correspondence where there can only be coincidence (Dodd 1995:160).

Is it possible for a proposition or thought to be identical with a fact? This is one of the problems with the identity theory of truth. Although the identity theorists claim that identification of true propositions with facts removes the gap between the mind and the world that truth as correspondence poses, it does not seem that the identity theory of truth is less problematic. Candlish (1999:199-220) discusses the problematic aspects of the identity theory of truth at length. For instance, Candlish argues that the formulation of the identity theory in terms of propositions and facts or truth-bearers and truth-makers is problematic. This is because when these terminologies are adopted for the identity theory, it becomes paradoxical to claim that a truth-maker is a truth-bearer. He contends that truth-makers and truth-bearers are terms that are appropriate for the correspondence theory of truth (1999:217-220). Besides, one would ask, is there any need to bridge the gap between the mind and the world that the correspondence theory brings about? Does the identity theory succeed in bridging the gap? The position of this thesis is that there is no need for bridging the gap because it is not a critical gap. The ontological gaps between the mind and the world only highlight that they are different but not parallel realms. If the mind is different from the world<sup>21</sup>, then they must necessarily have different natures. This difference of nature would result in an ontological gap or rather an ontological difference. In fact, strictly speaking, propositions and facts can never be identical. The relationship between them is similar to that between concepts and objects. Just as concepts are not identical with objects because the concepts underscore that which is common while objects emphasise the singular, particular and concrete, so also there cannot be identification between propositions and facts. In fact, from Frege's criticism and rejection

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<sup>21</sup> It is assumed that identity theorists do agree that the mind is different from the world, and that their natures are not the same.

of the correspondence theory, one could argue that his criticism of the correspondence theory is more appropriate for the identity theory because it is only two things that are in the same realm that can be identical.

Dodd (1995:161-162) contends that the identity theory could either be a robust or modest identity theory. He claims that John McDowell seems to conflate the two (1995:162). The robust identity theory considers facts as mind-independent worldly objects, while the modest version is not substantial and so facts are not mind-independent. Be that as it may, the identity theory (whether the robust version or modest version) does not really bridge the gap between the mind and the world. The robust version, when taken to a logical conclusion, has an ontological status of fact that is very similar to the understanding of fact by the correspondence theorists. In that case, since its understanding of fact is that which is defended by the correspondence theory of truth, it implies that the robust version of the identity theory does not bridge the “ontological gap”. Just saying that ‘proposition and fact are identical’ does not in any way clear the distinction between propositions and facts. Since the understanding of fact according to the robust identity theorist is the same as the understanding of fact in the view of correspondence theorists, it is arguable that the robust identity theory is a correspondence theory in the garb of an identity theory. While arguing for the clear difference between the robust and modest versions of the identity theory, which include their understanding of facts, Dodd writes;

The metaphysical difference between the robust and modest identity theories should not be underestimated. According to the modest theory, facts are ushered out of the world and into the realm of sense, the occupants of the world remaining as they were. The robust theorist, by contrast, takes facts to be worldly, identifies true proposition with such items, and denies that there is a realm of sense at all’ (1995:162).

On the other hand, the modest version, which emphasises that ‘true thoughts are facts,’ tends to culminate in the deflationary conception of truth (Engel 2001:441-458).

Two controversial issues that the identity theory (in any of its versions) has to grapple with are the questions of the ontological status of the falsehood and the presupposition of truth in the truth predicate. Concerning the status of falsehood, an inevitable question is; if a true proposition or true thought is identical with fact, can there be false propositions

and false thoughts? And if there are false propositions and false thoughts, with what are they identical? They cannot be the same as fact, since facts are true propositions or true thoughts. Alternatively, false propositions or false thoughts cannot be identical with false facts since there are no false facts. This dilemma seems to render the identity theory of truth indefensible.

Although, it will be difficult to defend the identity theory as an alternative to the correspondence theory, one would have to admit that the arguments of the identity theorists challenge the analytic correspondence theorists to adequately articulate their conceptions of truth as correspondence. For instance, the modest version of the identity theory challenges analytic correspondence theorists to be clear in their articulation of propositions and facts so as not to confuse the two. Moreover, the criticism of identity theorists against the truth as correspondence challenges the correspondence theorist to be on his guard so as to avoid giving the slightest impression that his articulation of truth is founded on “in here” and “already out there” dichotomy.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, various possible alternatives to the correspondence theory of truth have been considered. The alternatives are grouped into substantive, deflationary and third-way theories. Although the substantive theories are closer to the correspondence theory, they, like the deflationary and third-way theories, are not suitable alternatives to the correspondence theory. For instance, although the substantive theories, especially the robust identity theory, seem to ask the same question – that is, about the constitution of truth – as the correspondence theory, the major problem with the identity theory is that the identification of facts and true propositions is practically impossible. For instance, if a true proposition is identical with a fact, what is a false proposition identical with? So an investigation of a definitional theory of truth which takes into account the different domains that propositions and facts belong to, but which does not presuppose the concept of truth, is essential.

The case of other alternative substantive theories, that is, coherence and pragmatic theories, is different. At first, they seem to be asking about the constitution of truth.

However, since truth is neither equivalent to coherence nor workability, bearing in mind that all that is coherent is not true, and also that all that is workable is not true, it follows that both coherence and pragmatic theories presuppose a constitution of truth. By presupposing truth, coherence and pragmatic theories find themselves in a similar situation with the deflationary theories. Thus, by reducing the truth predicate to the equivalence schema or disquotational schema, the deflationary theories deal with the uses of the term 'true' without clarifying what the constitution of truth is. Nonetheless, arguing that most of the alternative theories to the correspondence theory presuppose the notion of truth does not imply that they do not have anything important to contribute in explaining the notion of truth. Rather, it emphasises that without clarifying the constitution of truth, just focusing on truth conditions, or the uses of the term 'true' or truth predicate, is akin to putting the cart before the horse. Nonetheless, one cannot underestimate the role of the criticism that the alternative substantive theories raise *contra* the correspondence theory. They are catalysts to help the correspondence theorists to be clear in their exposition of the truth as correspondence in order not to get bogged down within an empiricist framework.

## Chapter 5

### Issue I: Truth and Assertibility

#### 5.1 Introduction

Is there any relation between truth and assertibility? This is a question that has attracted the attention of truth theorists for some time. In fact, the connection between truth and assertibility was at the heart of the controversial debates between realists and anti-realists in the twentieth century. Granted that there is some relation between truth and assertibility, an indispensable question is; what type of relation is that? Is it a connection of co-extensivity, coincidence or what? How these questions are answered depends on one's view about truth. Realists for instance, in general, take truth to be verification-transcendent and so argue that what is held to be true at present could turn out to be false. According to them, therefore, truth is not coextensive or coincidental with assertibility in any of its forms (warranted assertibility, idealized rational acceptability or superassertibility). Antirealists on the hand contend that warranted assertibility puts constraint on truth (Edwards 1999:300; Piazza 2008).

Although anti-realists in general agree that assertibility constrains truth, the answer to the relation between truth and assertibility is dependent on whether they subscribe to full blown deflationism or whether they are minimalists about truth. Hence among anti-realists, there is disagreement about what sort of assertibility can be identified with truth. Crispin Wright, for instance, argues that merely warranted assertibility is not identical with truth. According to him, it is only superassertibility that can be equated with truth since superassertibility cannot be undermined or overturned as a result of further evidence (cf. Wright 1986, 1992, Edwards 1996:103-120). Neil Tennant on the other hand, argues

that warrant assertibility is identical with truth since warrant by definition would not entertain any undermining or overturning of evidence (Tennant, 1995:98-104, 1997:221-228).

In this chapter, the anti-realist proposed relation of identity between truth and assertibility is examined. The shortfall of such a position is illustrated. It is also pointed out why there is preference for the realist conception of truth, that is, why truth cannot be identical with assertibility in any of its forms. An inescapable background question when investigating the connection between truth and assertibility is; Is a proposition (or sentence) true because it is assertible or is it assertible because it is true? In the first section of this chapter, I will examine the anti-realist equation of truth and assertibility by considering Michael Dummett's argument and Hilary Putnam's idealized rational acceptability (Dummett 1978:1-24, Putnam 1981:49-74). The second section will explore Wright's identification of truth with superassertibility. In the third section, I will consider the relationship between justification, truth and knowledge. Lastly, in the conclusion I will argue that the distinction that Lonergan makes between truth and its expression is vital for addressing the relation between truth and assertibility.

## **5.2 Truth as Warranted Assertibility or Idealized Rational Acceptability**

The anti-realist contention that (warranted) assertibility<sup>1</sup> is to the anti-realists what truth is for the realists is better understood within the anti-realist perspective that truth must be evidentially constrained and that truth as correspondence should be discarded (Dummett 1978, 1991). The background dispute, that leads to the anti-realist view, is whether truth is radically non-epistemic, radically epistemic or partially epistemic. Being radically non-epistemic means that truth is mind independent or cognition transcendent. This is a position which Hilary Putnam identifies with metaphysical realism (Putnam 1981:49-54). Claiming that truth is radically epistemic means that truth is totally dependent on humans or rational beings. In other words, truth is a human construction. This is the view that is held by constructivists. What is called a partial epistemic conception of truth here, is a

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<sup>1</sup> All proponents of anti-realist conception of truth agree that mere assertibility is not identical with truth but some qualified assertibility, (that is, warranted assertibility, idealized rational acceptability and superassertibility) is identical with truth.

position like that of Dummett(1978:1-24)<sup>2</sup>, and Putnam’s internalist philosophical perspective (1981:49-74).

Dummett’s identification of truth with (warranted) assertibility is best understood within the context of his search for a theory of meaning that is geared towards the elimination of truth-conditional semantics (1991:165). Hence, he sees assertibility-conditional semantics as the appropriate replacement. For this reason, he argues that ‘the source of the concept [of truth] lies in our general conception of the linguistic practice of assertion’ (1991:165). Because his desideratum is to defend a theory of meaning that is not based on truth-conditions, Dummett’s project was to examine how the knowledge of truth conditions presupposes the meaning of a sentence. Consequently, he finds truth-conditional semantics to be problematic because of its potential circularity(1991:166-170). In other words, knowing the truth conditions of a sentence, according to him, presupposes knowing the meaning of the sentence. Although Dummett considers the realist (and most probably the correspondence theorist) to be his opponent, he seems to be operating from the assumption that disquotationalism or the equivalence schema is the paradigm conception of truth (1991:167-174). But disquotationalism or the equivalence schema is not the understanding of truth that the realist in general and the correspondence theorist in particular defends. As already argued in this thesis, both disquotationalism and equivalence schema presuppose the concept of truth (see chapter four). So to claim that truth is identical with assertibility because of the circularity of truth-conditional semantics seems to miss the point that there is a fundamental difference between asking about the constitution of truth and asking about the truth conditions of a sentence.

Granted that the context of the Dummettian analysis of truth is his theory of meaning; and his desire to avoid what he would regard as two extremes, that is, his purported realist view that truth is out there to be discovered and the perspective of the constructivists that truth is human-made, can Dummett’s position be defended without serious problems?

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<sup>2</sup> In rejecting both the realist conception of truth that contends that truth is evidence and cognition independent and that it is out there to be discovered, and the constructivist view which argues that truth depends wholly on the knower or inquirer, Dummett defends the partial epistemic position thus: “Our investigations bring into existence what was not there before, but what they bring into existence is not of our own making.” (Dummett: 1978:18).

Dummett's supposed solution does not completely dispel the positions of the realists and constructivists. It only apparently does. However, further analysis shows that his view about truth will ultimately align itself with either the realist conception or that of the constructivists. If according to Dummett, it is human investigation that brings truth into existence but that which is brought to existence does not depend on human making, then one would ask of whose making is it? It seems to be a contradiction to say that that which is brought into existence as a result of human investigation is not of human making. So the two possible ways out of the quandary are to affirm that human investigation discovers that which is already in existence or to affirm that human investigation brings into existence that which was previously non-existent, and so, that which is brought into existence is of human making. For what else does human making imply other than bringing that which was not in existence into existence through human investigation? Hence, the position that is defended by Dummett is at best sitting on the fence.

A comparison that Dummett deemed vital in his exposition of truth as the goal of inquiry which led him to equate truth with (warranted) assertion is that of winning a game (1978:20). An inevitable contention that such comparing of truth with winning a game entails is an understanding of truth in terms of assertibility. Inasmuch as the comparison is helpful, the notion of winning does not exhaust the understanding of the notion of truth. Dummett himself realised this point. That is why in his postscript he distinguishes between 'a wider and narrower sense' of game playing and consequently acknowledges that 'truth is an enormously more complicated notion than that of winning' (Dummett 1978:20). Nevertheless, regardless of his acknowledging that comparing the notion of winning with that of truth is not a simple task, Dummett, because of his bias in favour of philosophy of language, still tried to compress the notion of truth within the scope of assertion making. He writes: 'What has to be added to the truth-definition for sentences of language, if the notion of truth is to be explained, is a description of the linguistic activity of making assertions' (1978:20).

Moreover, considering that assertions can either be correct or incorrect, Dummett avers that truth has to be explicated firstly in terms of discrepancy between correct or incorrect assertions (1978:20). The situation is not as simple as he portrays it to be. One would

wonder whether the primacy is in explaining truth in terms of the distinction between correct and incorrect assertions, or explaining correct and incorrect assertions in terms of truth. Dummett's choice is informed by the priority he places on philosophy of language and semantics over metaphysics. The fundamental problem with the view, whether implicit or explicit, that philosophy of language is the first philosophy, is the assumption that we have words/language first and then we apply them to objects, things, events and phenomena. Nevertheless, such a perspective cannot be taken too far without leading to some cul-de-sac. After all, there would not have been the need for words and language, if there are no objects, things and events to be named or discoursed about. On the other hand, it would not be problematic to imagine that there could be things without words and language for them to be named. In debating about the primacy between philosophy of language and metaphysics, it is more prudent to take side with St. Augustine who is emphatic that the signified is to be valued more than the signifier (cf. Augustine 1947:47).

According to Dummett (1978, 1991), his defence of enclosing of truth within the context of assertion is to be understood within the bigger picture of realist-anti-realist controversies. But a closer look tends to show that his principal motive is the reduction of truth to meaning<sup>3</sup> so as to eliminate truth-conditional semantics in favour of assertibility-conditional semantics. Regardless of any argument one would like to put forward, any attempt aimed at understanding truth purely in terms of meaning would be almost impossible to achieve. A statement can be meaningful without one being able to settle whether it is true or not. Consider the statement: God is the most perfect being. The statement is meaningful. The meaning of the statement is possible from the understanding of the meaning of the words that compose the statement. Nevertheless, one cannot just establish its truth value just from knowing the meaning of the sentence.

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<sup>3</sup> In arguing his position that the notion of truth belongs to a meaning theory, Dummett writes: 'There was, nevertheless, something right about the criticism of philosophical theories of truth such as the correspondence theory embodied in the stock of argument against them; only that the claim made was too strong. The criticism of such theories ought to have been, not that they attempted to give a general characterisation of truth, but that they did so without the background of an account of meaning, of the outlines of a meaning-theory, which alone could provide them terms in which it would be possible to state the general condition for a sentence to be true' (1991:158).

Although Dummett's criticism of the realist conception of truth is, for him, a criticism of the correspondence theory, his position is a world apart from the understanding of truth as correspondence from the realist perspective. He is more interested in establishing the conditions for the truth or falsity of sentences from the background of his theory of meaning, whereas the correspondence theorist's fundamental motive is the establishment of the constitution of truth. In other words, while Dummett's priority is the semantics of truth, that of a realist correspondence theory is the ontology of truth. Nonetheless a development of the semantics of truth without prior articulation of the metaphysics of truth is at best an incomplete project. One would ask whether a sentence or statement is true or false, only if the ontological status of truth is at least assumed. The question, 'what are the conditions for a sentence to be true?' presupposes the question, what is truth? An adequate attention to the distinction between the two questions is vital in order to realise that truth is not identical with assertibility.

Putnam's internal realism<sup>4</sup> which he identifies truth with (idealized) rational acceptability is best understood from his philosophical trajectory. Before his advocacy for what he calls internal perspective, he was a proponent of metaphysical realism, where he defended the position that truth is radically non-epistemic. His rejection of metaphysical realism is a rejection of the correspondence theory of truth and of his position that truth is radically non-epistemic. The reason for his rejection is that metaphysical realism, and consequently correspondence theory, is founded on what he calls 'the God's eye view' (1981:49-55). That being the case, neither objectivity nor truth as proposed by the metaphysical realist is attainable. According to Putnam, though the internalist also envisages objectivity, the objectivity he seeks is human through and through or "objectivity for us" as he terms it (Putnam 1981:55). In distinguishing between objectivity and objectivity for us, Putnam's argument is that the talk about verification or cognition independent truth is unintelligible (1981:49-55). Putnam's contention that metaphysical realism rests on the 'God's eye view' is a misrepresentation, in that he reduces metaphysical realism to naïve realism, which understands being pre-critically as that which is "already-out-there-now", that the

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<sup>4</sup> Putnam describes internal realism as the acceptance 'of [the] scientific picture of the relation of speakers to their environment, and of the role language' (Putnam 2010: 123). It is worthy of note to mention that just as Putnam abandoned his defence of metaphysical realism in order to defend internal realism, he also considered the defence of internal realism a mistake in 1990 and so abandoned its defence. (2010).

subject can get to through immediate intuition. However, since naïve realism is not the only version of metaphysical realism as there is also critical realism – whose notion of being is not pre-critical – a rejection of metaphysical realism or the correspondence theory cannot be based on the rejection of “the God’s eye view”.

One of the confusions that Putnam’s analysis trades on is his assumption that every metaphysical realist (or externalist philosopher as he prefers) is a defender of the Brain in the Vat hypothesis (1981:50). Based on this assumption, he opines: ‘the problem that I posed for the externalist philosopher is that the very relation of correspondence on which truth and reference depend (on his view) cannot logically be available to him if he *is* a Brain in a Vat.’ (Putnam 1981:50). This problem would have been a serious one for the correspondence theorist if his conception of truth is fundamentally based on the Brain in the Vat thought experiment. But the Brain in the Vat is not needed even in the least for the defence of the correspondence theory. In fact, the question that the Brain in the Vat hypothesis that Putnam uses in his objection against the correspondence theory of truth and metaphysical realism raises is the question of the possibility of one’s access to the truth, and not necessarily the issue bordering the constitution of truth.

Further Putnam seems to be arguing against his own understanding of metaphysical realism, and not necessarily as it is understood by most metaphysical realists (1981:50). For instance, he exploits the Kantian trap of the phenomenon and noumenon and argues that the world that propositions need to correspond to for there to be truth is a noumenal world and not phenomenal world. He writes: ‘the truth of a theory does not consist in its fitting the world as the world presents itself to some observer or observers (truth is not ‘relational’ in this sense), but in its corresponding to the world as it is in itself.’ (Putnam 1981:50). A criticism of the correspondence theory that is based on the phenomenon-noumenon distinction seems to be a straw man. The argument of the correspondence theorist is that truth is verification or cognition transcendent since it is by virtue of facts that propositions are true. So the distinction between the phenomenon and noumenon world is not vital for the defence of truth as a relation of correspondence. In fact, one would wonder if the world would present itself to us as it is not.

Due to the supposed incoherence of the externalist perspective in general and correspondence theory in particular, Putnam opts for the internalist perspective. He defends his choice thus:

What makes a statement, or a whole system of statements – a theory or conceptual scheme – rationally acceptable is, in large part, its coherence and fit; coherence of ‘theoretical’ or less experiential beliefs with one another and with more experiential beliefs, and also coherence of experiential beliefs with theoretical beliefs (1981:54-55).

In understanding truth in terms of acceptability, Putnam seems to argue that there should not be a talk of truth without justification because acceptability is rational if and only if it is justified. Nonetheless, he is quick to state that truth cannot be reduced to mere rational acceptability since ‘truth is supposed to be a property of a statement that cannot be lost, whereas justification can be lost.’ (Putnam 1981:55). For instance, the following were once rationally acceptable but are no longer rationally acceptable:

- ‘The earth is flat’.
- ‘The white race is superior to the black race’.

If truth were to be identified with rational acceptability, it would mean that the truth value of propositions or statements are variable. In other words, some statement could be true for some generation but false for another generation. That would be a contradiction to the truth value invariability thesis. However, it is not a contradiction to argue that some statements that are rationally acceptable to one generation will not be rationally acceptable to another generation.

To overcome the obstacle posed by the variability of rational acceptability, Putnam postulates idealized rational acceptability as truth. What exactly is idealized rational acceptability? Is it attainable or is it merely a hypothetical postulation? Idealizing rational acceptability is not a reinforced argument. It is merely cosmetic since it is not attainable. Putnam’s argument for the equation of truth with idealized rational acceptability is not convincing enough. He writes:

truth is an *idealization* of rational acceptability. We speak as if there were such things as epistemically ideal conditions, and we call a statement ‘true’ if it would be justified under such conditions. ‘Epistemically ideal conditions’, of course, are like ‘frictionless planes’: we cannot really attain epistemically ideal conditions, or even be absolutely certain we have come sufficiently close to them. But frictionless planes cannot really be attained either, and yet talk

of frictionless planes has 'cash value' because we can approximate them to a very high degree of approximation (1981:55).

If idealized rational acceptability is not attainable as Putnam acknowledges in the citation above, what argumentative import does it have? It does not strengthen the case for conception of truth as rational acceptability. Besides, the comparison of idealization of rational acceptability with frictionless planes does not make the argument more convincing. The 'cash value' of idealized rational acceptability is valueless cash value since the frictionless plane is merely a question of degree of approximation. Any plane that is not a hundred percent frictionless is not frictionless. In the same way, truth is not idealized rational acceptability since such idealization is not attainable and truth cannot be reduced to mere rational acceptability.

The introduction of idealization in order to explain the equation of truth with rational acceptability by Putnam seems to be a pseudo-solution and a return to what he calls the externalist perspective through the back door (1981:54-56). One of his criticisms against metaphysical realism and the correspondence theory of truth is that truth as correspondence is hinged on the God's eye view (1981:49-50). Nonetheless, underneath Putnam's comparison of idealized rational acceptability with frictionless plain is a disguised God's eye view. According to him, one of the main ideas of the idealization is 'that truth is independent of justification here and now, but not independent of *all* justification' (1981:56). So which other justification does *all* justification that truth is not independent mean? Is it a possibility of justification by future generations? Or is it justification from God's eye view? If it is a possible justification, then there is confusion between the possible and the actual. And so it would be problematic to reduce truth to possible justification. On the other hand, if it is justification from God's eye view, then truth is independent of human justification.

Another issue that the identification of truth with idealized rational acceptability does not clarify is, what rational acceptability is supposed mean apart from invoking coherence and fitness within a conceptual scheme. For instance, does rational acceptability imply that which is accepted by the greatest number or by the dominant class? In other words, is rational acceptability some kind of consensus? Moreover, how is rationality in this case

measured? Is it to be understood from the point of view of the dominant in school of thought? Since the understanding of rationality is not clear-cut in different disciplines and perspectives, the identification of truth with idealized rational acceptability is at best a postponement of the question of truth.

Lastly, idealized rational acceptability that is proposed by Putnam seems to have great affinity with the coherence theory of truth. Putnam's argument hinges on his rejection of cognition-transcendent reality when it comes to truth discourse. He writes:

'Truth', in an internalist view, is some sort of (idealized) rational acceptability – some sort of ideal coherence of our beliefs with each other and our experiences as *those experiences are themselves represented in our belief systems* – and not correspondence with mind-independent or discourse-independent 'states of affairs' (1981:49-50).

The conception of truth that is highlighted in the citation from Putnam suffers the same deficiencies that coherence theories of truth suffer. Hence, truth cannot be equated with idealized rational acceptability, since an essential component of truth, that is realism, is neglected just as the acts of the intentional subject are truncated in Putnam's defence of truth as idealized rational acceptability.

### **5.3 Truth as Superassertibility**

Superassertibility is introduced by Wright to rectify the hurdle of the identification of truth with warrant assertibility (1992:33-68). He claims that the anti-realist's identification of truth with warranted assertibility using the disquotational schema is faulty. This is because, according to him, although the ground for the truth of a sentence is the ground for its warranted assertibility, it does not imply an identification of truth and warranted assertibility but coincidental relation<sup>5</sup> in that the relation between truth and warranted assertibility does not entail identification since the disquotational schema does not guarantee the convergence in extension between truth and warranted assertibility.

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<sup>5</sup> In arguing that the relation between truth and warranted assertibility is not that of identity but coincidence, Wright avers: 'what we may conclude is that "T" and "warrantedly assertible" so coincide in (positive) normative force. For reason to regard a sentence as warrantably assertible is, naturally, reason to endorse the assertion which it may be used to effect, and conversely; and the reason to endorse an assertion is by the DS [disquotational schema], reason to regard the sentence express it as T, and conversely. So reason to regard a sentence as T is reason to regard it as warrantably assertible, and conversely' (1992:18)

Wright supports his claim that the disquotational schema does not guard against the divergence in extension between truth and warranted assertibility thus:

Suppose F and G are so related that, while the only kind of reason we can have for supposing that something is G is that it be F, the reason supplied is a defeasible reason. Then having reason to think that an item is G will involve having a reason to think it is F; and having reason to think it is F will amount, when so far undefeated, to reason to think it is G. Hence, if either predicate is normative with respect to some practice, the two predicates will be normatively coincident with respect to it. But, precisely because an item's being F supplies only a defeasible reason for its being G, space is left for divergence in extension between the two predicates. And not merely is this space exploited in the case of truth and assertoric warrant; it is the DS [disquotational schema] itself which enforces the split (1992:19).

Wright's rejection of the identification of the truth predicate with warranted assertibility does not necessarily mean that he has given up the pursuit to account for the relation between truth and assertibility. Rather his first conclusion is that classical deflationism about truth as reflected by the disquotational schema is not the right path if the anti-realist intends to defend a relation between truth and assertibility that is not just coincidental. What then is the right path, according to Wright? For him, minimalism about truth is the right path. Minimalism is within the deflationist tradition but not restrictive as classical deflationism which argues that truth is not a property. Hence the advantage that minimalism accrues over classical deflationism in Wright's view is that it is a sort of inflated deflationism and is open to pluralism about truth (1992:25)<sup>6</sup>.

In Wright's view, any form of assertibility that is to be identified with truth must secure the stability and absoluteness of truth. He claims that neither warranted assertibility nor Putnam's idealized rational acceptability does that since according to him, '[w]arranted assertibility is assertibility relative to a state of information' (1992:47) while Putnam's idealized rational acceptability 'incorporates a mistaken a priori claim about the concept of truth, and is hence mistaken as an informal elucidation' (1992:40). Consequently, Wright argues that it is superassertibility that can be identified with truth. He describes superassertibility thus: 'A statement is superassertible, then, if and only if it is, or can be, warranted and some warrant for it would survive arbitrary close scrutiny of its pedigree

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<sup>6</sup> The consequences of adopting minimalism or alethic pluralism is not discussed since it has been examined in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

and arbitrarily extensive increments to or other forms of improvement of our information.’ (1992:48).

From the description of superassertibility, it is clear that Wright’s postulation rests on inability to challenge or overturn the warrant for believing a statement to be true. But a defence of superassertibility is not as simple as it might seem. For instance, since warrant or justification is not by itself stable, is it possible to know whether that which is considered as a reliable warrant at a particular time will not be denied or improved on in the future? Superassertibility seems to be some form of anti-realist philosophical faith about minimalism. Wright is aware that arguing that superassertibility is identical with the truth predicate is not easy since such an argument requires an *a priori* guarantee that the Equivalence Schema is co-extensive with superassertibility. Nevertheless an *a priori* guarantee is not feasible. Tennant contends that if warranted assertibility is incapable of performing the role of truth predicate, then superassertibility would not be identical with truth. However, to identify truth with superassertibility as Wright claims is to identify it with warranted assertibility since according to Tennant, ‘superassertibility cannot play the role of truth (in a way different from assertibility) in an account of truth-conditions, grasp of which must be manifested in the exercise of one’s recognitional capacities’ (Tennant 1998:227).

Despite Wright’s position that superassertibility has advantages that Putnam’s idealized rational acceptability does not have regarding their identification with truth, superassertibility seems to suffer the same fate with idealized rational acceptability, because ultimately, superassertibility relies on the possibility that warrant would not be improved on or overturned. But this possibility by itself is not an assurance. Hence, superassertibility is open to evidence-transcendence. If that is the case, then Wright’s anti-realist argument indirectly leads to the realist argument that truth is evidence or recognition-transcendent. In that case, therefore, Wright’s argument becomes superfluous. In fact, superassertibility does not seem to be anything more than superlative projection of warranted assertibility. So arguing that superassertibility is a model of truth is not convincing. Firstly, the minimalist understanding of truth on which the argument is based assumes that truth is fundamentally a semantic or logical device and so does not

even attempt to clarify the ontological status of truth. From this perspective, the anti-realist contention that the role of truth arises within the context of assertion does not consider the possibility that assertions (that which is asserted and not the act of asserting) are secondary truth-bearers in the same way that statements, sentences, judgements and beliefs are truth-bearers since their contents express propositions. There is nothing tautological about saying that an assertion is true or that it is a true assertion. Hence, a superlative projection of assertion is not identical with truth.

Secondly, inasmuch as it is permissible to interchange: 'It is superassertible that P' and 'it is true that P' for some linguistic purposes, that does not imply identification. It is still possible to ask; why is it superassertible that P? It would not be adequate, to answer that it is superassertible that P because it is superassertible. Such an answer would sound ridiculous. However, one can respond to the question by saying: It is superassertible that P because it is true. An inquirer can still ask: But why is it true? It is appropriate to answer then: It is true because the proposition corresponds with the fact. Or better still, one can respond, it is true because the subject's affirmation is reasonable since there is sufficient evidence to show that all the conditions are fulfilled. This analysis shows that assertibility (or even superassertibility) does not go beyond the realm of semantics or language whereas truth has its foundation in the realm of metaphysics.

Wright's claim that superassertibility is a model of truth is a kind of emergency landing. His identification of truth and superassertibility does not originate from a direct relation between the two. He exploits the connection between truth and knowledge. That is why in order to defend his thesis he affirms:

'P is knowable  $\rightarrow$  P is superassertible' (Wright 1992:58).

Nevertheless, granted that the knowability of P implies the superassertibility of P, a relationship of entailment is not to be taken for granted. In this case, it is the knowledge of P that guarantees its superassertibility and there is no assurance that the superassertibility of P will ever guarantee its knowledge. Hence, irrespective of Wright's desideratum to defend the anti-realist view that truth is epistemically constrained, the implicative relationship between knowledge and superassertibility does not collapse the realist thesis that truth is cognition-transcendent. It is permissible to say: If I know

anything then it is superassertible. But it would be an *ignoratio elenchi*, to say that for anything to be true, it must be known.

#### **5.4 Justification, Truth and Knowledge.**

An inescapable question that a theoretical philosopher or a truth theorist must attend to ‘whether directly or indirectly’ are the relations between justification, truth and knowledge. Not even the sceptical argument eliminates the importance of such consideration. For instance, it is not out of point to challenge the radical sceptical thesis about the impossibility of human knowledge by asking, Is the sceptic justified in saying that humans cannot know? One can still ask, is the sceptical position true? So in one way or another, an investigation of the connection between justification, truth and knowledge is vital. Moreover, the relation between the three is at the core of the realist-anti-realist debates. As indicated in the previous section, Wright seals his argument that superassertibility is a model of truth (at least for the anti-realist) by assuming the relation between truth and knowledge (1992:50).

Some important questions when analysing justification, truth and knowledge are whether the notions can be reduced to one or whether justification and truth can be used interchangeably. In loose terms, the anti-realist position is that justification and truth are interchangeable as anti-realists argue that warranted assertibility or superassertibility is identifiable with truth. The realists on the other hand argue that truth can neither be reduced to justification nor to knowledge. That is why they maintain that truth is both verification-transcendent and cognition-transcendent. In arguing that anti-realists do reduce truth to justification, it is taken for granted that they generally agree that truth cannot be reduced to mere assertibility but to warranted assertibility or superassertibility. Hence, since what differentiates mere assertions from warranted assertions or super-assertions is their justification, it means that the claim that warranted assertions are identical with truth can be simplified to justification is identical with truth.

Furthermore, there is an intrinsic relation between truth and knowledge. Truth, it is said, is the goal of inquiry or at least the primary epistemic goal<sup>7</sup>. Besides, it is only that which is true that can be known (David 2005:296-312). In that light, it cannot be known that Jesus died in India, simply because it is not true that Jesus died in India. Nonetheless the overlap between truth and knowledge does not imply the identification of truth and knowledge because it is not the knowing of a proposition that makes it to be true. Rather for a proposition to be known, it must be true. In his defence of truth as the primary epistemic goal, David argues that the vital relation between justification, truth and knowledge does not amount to identification of the three as follows:

The goal of having knowledge and the goal of having true beliefs are both truth goals. What about the goal of having justified beliefs? Is it also a truth goal? No: having justified belief is not a way of possessing truth. This is because, unlike true belief and knowledge, justification does not entail truth: a belief can be justified even though it is false. This does not mean that there aren't some forms of justification that do entail truth – justification by mathematical proof might be one. Such forms of justification are called “infallible” justification. But most forms of justification are fallible: they don't entail (guarantee) truth; e.g. justification by induction, or by the evidence of our senses. So, in general, having justified belief does not entail that the justified belief is true (David 2005:302).

In order to defend the position that there is a vital connection between justification, truth and knowledge but that they cannot be reduced to one another, it is important to examine the definition of knowledge. The classical definition of knowledge characterises it as ‘justified true belief’. In other words, there are three necessary conditions (belief, truth and justification) for there to be knowledge<sup>8</sup>. If it is taken for granted that the three conditions are necessary for knowledge, then any attempt to reduce any of the two conditions to one will make one of the conditions superfluous. This is the problem that the anti-realist conception of truth as warranted assertibility or superassertibility poses. Analysing knowledge from the perspective of the anti-realist, the classical definition would then either consider knowledge as justified belief or true belief; since if according to the anti-realist, warranted (justified) assertibility is truth, then a justified belief should

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<sup>7</sup> It is still a controversial issue among philosophers whether truth is the goal of inquiry or even the primary epistemic goal. Jonathan Kvanvig (2005:285-296) is categorical that truth is not the primary epistemic goal. Despite the controversial debate, it is assumed here that truth is the goal of inquiry.

<sup>8</sup> In the face of ‘the Gettier Problem’, it is debateable whether the classical definition of truth is still credible. However, ‘the Gettier Problem’ does not apply to the argument here because ‘the Gettier Problem’ is not about the necessity of the three conditions. It is rather about the sufficiency of the conditions. So since the point in question is not about the sufficiency of the conditions, ‘the Gettier Problem’ is not examined here.

be equivalent to a true belief. Nonetheless, such a conclusion is problematic since it is possible for a belief to be justified without it being true. Colonialism and transatlantic slavery are cases that exemplified that justified beliefs are not necessarily true beliefs.

To further make a case for the overlapping of justification, truth and knowledge while being unequivocal about the irreducibility of truth to justification (understood as warranted assertibility or superassertibility), an examination of Kant's distinction between opinion, belief and knowledge is deemed necessary. His distinction is influenced by his conception of truth which is truth as correspondence, contrary to Putnam's (1981) position that the Kantian conception is an internalist perspective. In fact, Kant's understanding of truth as correspondence is similar to the mediaeval conception of truth. Hence, he considers judgement as the truth-bearer and object as the truth-maker (1999:685). It is from his conception of truth as agreement between judgments and objects that he differentiates between opinion, belief and knowledge. The common feature for there to be an opinion, belief or knowledge, is the presence conviction. Conviction according to him should rest on some objective ground. But the degree of conviction varies among the three concepts. Kant expresses the difference thus:

**Having an opinion** is taking something to be true with the consciousness that it is subjectively **as well as** objectively insufficient. If taking something to be true is only subjectively sufficient and is at the same time held to be objectively insufficient, then it is called **believing**. Finally, when taking something to be true is both subjectively and objectively sufficient it is called **knowing**. Subjective sufficiency is called **conviction** (for myself), objective sufficiency, **certainty** (for everyone) (1999:686).

How then does Kant's distinction help in clarifying the relation between justification, truth and knowledge while maintaining their irreducibility to one another? The distinction can be interpreted in terms of the anti-realist context of assertion. In such interpretation, opinion is equivalent to mere assertion, since there is neither subjective nor objective sufficiency. In other words, opinion per se is not justified or warranted. Belief, since it is subjectively sufficient (that is, it is justified) is equivalent to warranted assertion. Nevertheless, it cannot be identified with truth since it lacks objective sufficiency and truth 'rests upon agreement with the object, with regard to which, consequently, the judgments of every understanding must agree' (1999: 685). Furthermore, the Kantian emphasis on the role of agreement with the object for there to be truth highlights the mind-

independence of truth. The consequence of this is that truth is not identical with anti-realist warranted assertibility or even superassertibility. Moreover, truth and knowledge are not identical, although there is overlapping between them since truth like knowledge requires objective sufficiency.

What would be the possible objections of an anti-realist to the argument against irreducibility of truth to warranted assertibility from the view point of the Kantian distinction? The most plausible objection is to counter that belief is not equivalent to what he understands warranted assertibility to be. The most probable reason for such a claim would be that belief by itself is not warranted since it is possible that some beliefs are unjustified or even unjustifiable. However, such an objection does not satisfy Kant's definition of belief since believing entails having subjective sufficiency, that is having some reasons for believing what one believes. Having reasons for believing is nothing more than being warranted in one's belief. In fact, it is the case whether the belief in question is theoretical, pragmatic or religious.

Another possible objection which the anti-realist could use to defend his position that warranted assertibility and truth are co-extensive is for him to contend that the reasons for subjective sufficiency that mark beliefs are not sufficiently warrant for beliefs to be equivalent with warranted assertibility. In that case, the burden of establishing the amount of reasons or evidences that would be sufficient for there to be a warrant would be the responsibility of the anti-realist. Nonetheless, that would be an arduous task which will culminate in endless controversies, as the anti-realist would hardly invoke objective sufficiency as a criterion for a belief to be a warranted assertion. Invoking objective sufficiency would lead the anti-realist to a route he would like to avoid, that is, that of equating warranted assertibility with knowledge. Since if he equates warranted assertibility with knowledge, he will not have the resources to differentiate belief from knowledge. In addition, an attempt to equate warranted assertibility with knowledge will result in absurdity because knowledge would be a necessary condition for itself, since belief is one of the necessary conditions for knowledge.

## 5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the relation between truth and assertibility is examined, and it is concluded that truth is not identical with any form of assertibility (warranted assertibility, super assertibility or even Putnam's idealised rational acceptability). The anti-realist identification of truth with warranted assertibility or superassertibility is rooted in the anti-realist view that truth is essentially a semantic notion and has its origin in the context of assertion. However, the anti-realist assertion-conditional semantics does not account for the ontology of truth but just assumes truth. Moreover, contrary to the deflationary or minimalist conception of truth that is favoured by the anti-realists, and the foundation on which their identification of truth with warranted assertibility is based, it is argued that in order to account for the ontology of truth, that is, the metaphysical basis of truth, it is a substantial conception, and in this case truth as correspondence which gives an adequate foundation.

It is also argued that the classical definition of knowledge is a privileged locus for accounting for the non-identity between truth and assertibility, since the overlap between the three conditions of knowledge does not entail identity. Of course, there is a tendency to equate truth with warranted assertibility, but this arises because truth is an intersection point for metaphysics, epistemology and the philosophy of language. This is because *that which is known is that which is true and that which is true is that which is; and that which is known is that which is asserted or linguistically expressed*. Bernard Lonergan expresses the relation thus: 'knowing is true by its relation to being, and truth is a relation of knowing to being.' (1992 [2013]:575). Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to confuse the relation as an identity since a proposition is not true just because it is warrantably asserted, rather it is warrantably asserted because it is true. Lonergan underscores the irreducibility of truth to any form of assertibility by distinguishing between truth and its expression. Although, any truth can be expressed by the knowing subject, after that which is intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed, it is not the expression per se that accounts for its truth. In other words, while truth and expression relate to the act of judging and asserting respectively, they are not identical *überhaupt* (at all). Lonergan expresses himself thus:

It follows, then, that properly speaking expression is not true or false. Truth pertains to the judgment inasmuch as it proceeds from the grasp of the virtually unconditioned, inasmuch as it conforms to the being it affirms, and inasmuch as it demands an intrinsic intelligibility in being as a condition of the possibility of knowing. Expressions are instrumental. They are related to the truth of knowledge. Similarly, they are related to the moral truth of the will that communicates knowledge. But in themselves expressions are merely adequate or inadequate (1992 [2013]:579-580).

So to insist that truth and assertibility are reducible to one another is to obliterate the distinction between judging and asserting. It is always the case that when there is an error of judgment, it arises because of a mistake or inadequate grasp (a misunderstanding). On the other hand, the human subject is capable of consciously and intentionally asserting that which is not the case even when there is an adequate understanding. The latter is the phenomenon called lying. To dispel any attempt of identifying truth with assertions or any form of assertibility, Lonergan insists that ‘the relation between truth and expression rests on the position that truth resides in the internal act of judgment, of assenting and dissenting’ (1992 [2013]:580). Asserting or expression is consequential on judgment. Nonetheless, one can choose to assert or express something else other than what is judged.

Referring to the judgement as an “internal” act could lead to misunderstanding of what Lonergan intends. By saying that judgment is an internal act, he does not mean that it is a form of introspection (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:344-347). Rather it emphasises the subject’s capacity for reflective understanding in general and reflective self-understanding in particular. That is the ability of the subject to turn back on itself and reflect on its own ideas to affirm whether they are about what is actually the case.

Lastly, the tendency to equate truth and assertibility arises from the common fallacy that the meanings of words and expressions are ‘simple and obvious’ in need of no further explanation or reference to that which is objectively the case, that is, without reference to being. And so, to assert is to say that something is true. However, the claim about the obviousness of meaning of words and expressions can only be made when there is prior adequate understanding (intelligent grasp) and reasonable affirmation (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:581).

## Chapter 6

### Issue II: The Question of Inconsistency (Alethic Paradoxes)

#### 6.1 Introduction

The question of truth could be framed metaphysically, that is the investigation of nature of truth, or formally, that is logical and semantic analysis of the truth predicate. Framing of the question of truth formally gives rise to issues concerning truth that do not arise when the question of truth is primarily metaphysical. The first of such issues is whether truth is a consistent, paraconsistent or inconsistent concept and thus giving rise to alethic paradoxes. Acknowledging the type of concept that truth is, is important in addressing the issue of alethic paradoxes, which arises when the question of truth is approached as logical and semantic analysis of the truth predicate, for example, the paradox of the liar. A paraconsistent view about truth argues that the paradox of the liar is both true and false. However, the acceptance of the paradox of the liar as true and false does not imply that truth is an inconsistent concept. The foundation of the paraconsistent view of truth is not classical logic but nonclassical logic. This is a position that is defended by Graham Priest (2002) and J. C. Beall (cf. Beall & Glanzberg 2008). The paraconsistent view is neither defended nor opposed here since it is not central to the philosophical investigation of truth that is carried out in this thesis.

Thus far, in this thesis the question of truth paradoxes has not been raised. Up till now, it is assumed that the paradox of the liar affects neither the correspondence theory of truth within the analytic framework nor the conception of truth as critical correspondence that is defended in this thesis. However, since the alethic paradoxes seem to be a haunting

problem while investigating the concept of truth, especially when logical, semantic and “unified” theories (that is the theories that combine both philosophical and logical approaches to the question of truth, cf. Scharp 2013:30-34) are concerned, it is essential to examine the consistency or inconsistency of truth and the resulting paradoxes in order to determine how they affect (if at all they do) the correspondence theory.

In this chapter, therefore, it is examined whether truth is a consistent concept, or an inconsistent concept as Kevin Scharp (2007, 2013) argues. This chapter will be based mainly on the article titled “Replacing Truth” (2007), and chapter two, three and four of the book *Replacing Truth* (2013). Contrary to Scharp’s argument that truth is an inconsistent concept, it is argued that while the challenge of alethic paradoxes in the formal (logical and semantic) investigation of truth is used as the basis for considering truth as an inconsistent concept, from the correspondence standpoint, truth is not an inconsistent concept. Further, it is investigated whether the replacement of truth which Scharp advocates in order to address the paradoxes is feasible. The inevitable question is, does the introduction of ‘ascending truth’ and ‘descending truth’ (Scharp 2007: 606-621, 2013:146-149) imply a replacement of truth? It is contested that such introduction is not a replacement of the concept truth. At best, it is a qualification of truth so as to facilitate formal usage of the concept. Put differently, ascending and descending are adjectives which qualify but the substantive still remains the same. Replacing truth would involve the elimination of the noun and an introduction of a new concept, for instance, “bruth” which is totally different both conceptually and semantically from the concept which is being replaced. Finally, the slingshot argument is considered. It is argued that the slingshot argument is not a threat to the correspondence conception of truth, since the principal question of the correspondence theorist is first and foremost an issue in metaphysics and not logico-semantic.

## **6.2 Truth: A Consistent or Inconsistent Concept?**

Considering whether truth is a consistent or an inconsistent concept is not an appendage to the problematic of truth theories. How a truth theorist approaches his investigation of truth would depend on whether the theorist takes truth to be a consistent concept or not. A concept is considered to be consistent if there is no remotest possibility that its primary

understanding would lead to a conflicting situation. In other words, a consistent concept would hardly lead to a contradiction or paradox. The claim of this thesis is that the alethic paradoxes do not affect truth as correspondence. That is, when truth is considered from its constitution as correspondence of propositions with facts, (which I have argued should be interpreted as the relation of knowing to being), it does not lead to any contradiction or alethic paradox. It is important to state this because those who argue that truth is an inconsistent concept base their argument on the existence of paradoxes. Scharp (2013:119) writes: ‘The inconsistency theorists think that the inconsistency of truth explains why the alethic paradoxes and revenge paradoxes occur’.

As the above citation shows, asking whether truth is a consistent concept or not would be to ask whether it leads to paradoxes or not. Inconsistent theorists, for instance, Yablo (1993b) and Scharp (2007, 2013) argue that the inconsistency of truth arises from its definition or constitutive principles. Yablo (1993b:147) argues that the inconsistency of definition means either ‘that the demands the definition places on objects are unsatisfiable, as when a *glub* is defined as a round square’ or that the definition imposes ‘irreconcilable obligations of *speakers*’. Unlike Yablo who argues that it is a definition which gives rise to inconsistency, Matti Eklund (2002:256) defends the inconsistency of natural language. According to him, a language is inconsistent when its constitutive principles, that is ‘sentences and inferences’ are inconsistent.

In arguing that truth is an inconsistent concept, Scharp takes his inspiration from physics in which the concept of mass, as it is understood in Newtonian mechanics, is said to be inconsistent as the result from the theory of relativity shows. The inconsistency of mass is that *relativistic mass* does not satisfy the demands of the traditional Newtonian definition of mass. According to him, the consequence of the realisation of the inconsistency of mass led to the replacement of mass with proper mass and relativistic mass (2007:609-610, 2013:37). However, it is arguable whether what Scharp calls a replacement of mass is actually a replacement or modification, since it is only adjectives that are introduced in order to qualify mass.

Since knowing the constitutive principles of a concept is necessary in order to ascertain whether it is consistent or inconsistent, it is imperative to ask, what are the constitutive principles of truth on the analysis of which Scharp defends his position that truth is an inconsistent concept? Scharp's view is that the essential use of the truth predicate which is responsible for the inconsistency of truth is that it is a device of endorsement and rejection. Hence, if the use of the truth predicate in endorsing and rejecting is capable of leading to a contradictory situation, then truth is inconsistent. Scharp writes:

The most intuitive argument for the claim that truth is an inconsistent concept is that (T-In) and (T-Out) are constitutive of truth, and that the liar paradox shows them to be inconsistent as long as we can reason classically and formulate liar sentences (which requires only arithmetic). That is exactly the kind of argument used to show that 'rable' [sic], 'mass', and 'up above' are inconsistent (2013:57).

T-In and T-Out take the following form respectively: "If  $p$  then ' $p$ ' is true", "If ' $p$ ' is true then  $p$ ". (Bacon 2016:6). Beall & Glanzberg (2008:177-178) refer to T-In and T-Out as classical Capture and Release. This means that T-In and T-Out takes the form of the equivalence schema of the redundancy theorist. However, Scharp's emphasis is a logical use of truth predicate, for instance, in the case when one says: The fifth sentence on page 20 is false. This will be examined below while examining the paradox of the liar.

From the above citation, it could be argued that the defence of the consistency or inconsistency of truth rests on whether a truth theorist accepts (T-In) and (T-Out) as constitutive of truth. If one takes them to be the constitutive principles of truth, then one is bound to accept that truth is an inconsistent concept. However, if one is able to deny coherently that (T-In) and T-out) are not constitutive of truth, then one can arguably maintain that truth is a consistent concept. The possibility of denying that (T-In) and (T-Out) are the constitutive principles of truth is ruled out by Scharp because of their role as endorsement and rejection devices (2013:62-63). How is a correspondence theorist to tackle this supposed quandary? Can he still maintain that truth is a consistent concept? A move that a correspondence theorist could make, though a controversial one, is to question whether the concept truth could be reduced to the logical uses of the truth predicate. It is already stated in this thesis that philosophical investigation of truth can focus on diverse questions which are not reducible to another, for instance, what is truth? what are the uses of the truth predicate? So since, Scharp's emphasis is on the uses of the

truth predicate in order to endorse and reject, it seems that (T-In) and (T-Out) are constitutive of the logical use of the truth predicate. But they are not constitutive principles of truth when what truth is, is the issue for investigation. (T-In) and (T-Out) presuppose the concept of truth since they are used in sentences which already contain the truth predicate. But to be sufficiently exhaustive, the constitutive principles of truth should not already include the notion of truth.

Considering the point that the questions; what is truth? and what are the uses of the truth predicate? are not reducible to one another (since conceptual analysis of the truth predicate does not explain how truth is attained and its relationship with knowing and objectivity), a correspondence theorist could argue that (T-In) and (T-Out) are not the constitutive principles of truth. This is the position that is defended in this thesis, that is, that truth as correspondence is the paradigmatic definition of truth, and so the constitutive principle of truth is the relation of knowing that what is known. Such a relation would not lead to a contradiction; hence truth is a consistent concept. Arguing that the concept of truth is not reducible to the truth predicate neither undermines the importance of the truth predicate nor denies the possibility of an inconsistent use of the truth predicate. Rather, the point that is being made here is that even if it is admissible that the truth predicate can be used inconsistently, that is not a strong basis for claiming that truth is an inconsistent concept. The view that is held here is therefore similar to that of Emil Badici and Kirk Ludwig who argue that the concept of truth is consistent while the truth predicate exhibits inconsistency in its uses (2007:630). They write: ‘The concept of truth, we suggest, is not problematic, but it is rather the truth predicate, which we intend to express the concept of truth, which is problematic – and which fails to play the role intended for it.’ (Badici & Ludwig 2007:630). Anil Gupta also defends the position that the concept of truth in itself is not inconsistent (1982:15). He avers that, although inconsistency may arise with the use of the truth predicate, the concept of truth is consistent (1982:15). He writes: ‘The liar paradox teaches us this basic lesson: the combination of classical logic + the truth concept + sufficiently rich syntax leads to inconsistency; when all three ingredients are present, the T-biconditionals imply a contradiction (Gupta 1982:15).

Considering, therefore, that this thesis investigates the constitution of truth, rather than the uses of the truth predicate, it is assumed that whether the uses of truth predicate result in inconsistency or not does not affect the conception of truth that is reconsidered here. So whether the logical and semantic uses of the truth predicate are inconsistent or not does not inhibit the paradigmatic position of truth as correspondence. Since as already stated, the position of a truth theorist regarding the consistency or inconsistency of truth is influenced by his take about the alethic paradoxes, it is important to investigate how truth as correspondence is affected by the paradoxes especially the paradox of the liar and the revenge paradox. From the outset, it is taken for granted that if the inconsistency of the truth predicate does not inhibit the consistency of truth as correspondence, then the alethic paradoxes would not be an obstacle to the correspondence theory of truth. Nevertheless, the paradox of the liar and revenge paradox are examined since these paradoxes have contributed immensely to the philosophical discourse on truth.

### **6.3 Alethic Paradoxes**

The alethic paradoxes, especially the paradox of the liar, have been a challenging question to philosophical investigation of truth specially for those who have logical or semantic orientations. It is because of the paradoxes that some philosophers argue that truth is an inconsistent concept (Kripke 1975, Chihara 1979, Scharp 2007, 2013), and that natural language is inconsistent (Tarski 1944). On the other hand, R. C. Skinner (1959:322) thinks that the paradox of the liar amounts to a fraud in that what is considered to be a paradox is nothing more than a mistake of sentential analysis. In this section, another supposed solution to the alethic paradoxes is not envisaged. Rather the goal of this section is to outline that truth as correspondence that is defended here is not affected by the paradoxes. It is important to state that a philosophical investigation of truth that is concerned with the nature of truth is legitimate and so does not necessarily concerns itself with the alethic paradoxes. Beall and Glanzberg (2008:169) consider investigation of truth that focuses on the nature of truth as philosophical while that which concerns itself with the alethic paradoxes as logical<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Scharp (2013) also acknowledges that the investigation of truth is principally carried out by using a philosophical or logical approach. However, the difference of approaches does not mean that they are completely parallel. In fact, Scharp's goal in his *Replacing Truth* is a unified theory of truth, that is, a theory that incorporates both the philosophical and logical approaches in one.

### 6.3.1 The Paradox of the Liar

The paradox of the liar is one of the most popular alethic paradoxes. Its foundation lies on the principle of bivalence. That is, there are two possible truth values that any truth-bearer can have and no truth-bearer can have the two truth values at the same time since that would result in a contradiction. Most exponents of the alethic paradoxes consider a sentence to be the truth-bearer. However, in this thesis, the primary truth-bearer is a proposition. Although it might seem that the choice of a truth-bearer does not affect an analysis of a liar sentence, the position that is defended here is that the choice a truth-bearer makes much difference on the influences that alethic paradoxes have on philosophical investigation of truth.

The consequence of accepting the principle of bivalence is that the analysis of sentences seems to suggest that there are some sentences that have two truth values at the same time and so are contradictory. Such sentences include self-referring sentences for instance:

(1). This sentence is false.

It is not only self-referring sentences that are said to be paradoxical. Hence elimination of self-referencing does not necessarily solve the paradox of the liar (cf. Yablo 1993a:251-252; Kirkham 1995:272; Feferman & Feferman 2004:112) since there are sentences that are considered to be a paradox of the liar but are not self-referential, for example: The first sentence on page 20 is false. Gupta argues that self-referencing does not imply paradox since there are some self-referential sentences that are not paradoxical (1982:16).

“This sentence is false” is considered as a paradigmatic example of paradoxical sentences. The proponents of the paradox of the liar argue that (1) is a paradox because if it is false then what it says of itself is the case, and thus it is true. Hence, it is both false and true.

*Prima facie*, the argument of the proponents of the liar paradox seems to be incontestable. However, there seems to be more to the paradox than the analysis of the proponent of the liar paradox does account for. For instance, the debate among substantial theorists, deflationists and pluralists has a role to play in deciding how to approach the analysis of This sentence is false. The first question that comes to mind is; when a truth value is

attribute to a sentence or statement, is anything said about the sentence or is the sentence just endorsed? Whatever answer that is given to the question does not ease the problematic of the proponent of the paradox of the liar. Consider the predicament of the deflationist proponent of the liar paradox: Arguing that ‘This sentence is false’ is paradoxical, one would ask; which sentence is endorsed: ‘This sentence’ or ‘This sentence is false’? If he answers: ‘This sentence’, then it would be obvious that ‘This sentence’ is not meaningful but nonsensical. Hence a truth value cannot be assigned to it. On the other hand, he chooses to answer: ‘This sentence is false’ is what is endorsed, then it would be: ‘This sentence is false is false’. The problem here is that there is no way of knowing whether it is false since it does not have any reference (Patterson 2015). The argument against the so-called self-referential sentences is applicable to other paradoxical sentences since they contain truth values and so presuppose the concept of truth. It is because of the presupposition of truth or falsity in the sentences that are considered paradoxes that it is claimed in this thesis that the alethic paradoxes do not affect the correspondence theory of truth. How is this possible? Let us examine more closely how a correspondence theorist from the metaphysical realist perspective would approach the paradox of the liar.

Consider, ‘The first sentence on page 20 is false’. An inconsistent theorist will argue that it is a paradox since is if ‘The first sentence on page 20 is false’, then it is true. Nevertheless, a correspondence theorist who takes proposition to be the primary truth-bearer would analyse the sentence in question in a different way. His first question would be, what proposition does the sentence express? By itself, ‘The first sentence on page 20 is false’ does not express any proposition. But that does not necessarily mean that it is meaningless. Hence, since it does not express a proposition, then it can be neither true nor false (cf. Parsons 1974: 387-389). To know why there is a truth value of the sentence one would have to ask: What is the content of the first sentence on page 20? In order to know the truth value, ‘the first sentence on page 20’ would have to be examined to know if it corresponds with a fact or not, that is, if it is virtually unconditioned. There are two possibilities when considering ‘the first sentence on page 20’. First, it is possible that it is a sentence that does not express a proposition – for instance ‘This sentence is false’ – and in that case, there is an incorrect use of the truth or falsity predicate. The second possibility is that the sentence on page 20 expresses a proposition. Let us assume that the first

sentence on page 20 is, South Africa is in South America. In that case the proposition expressed, that is, <South Africa is in South America> does not correspond to the fact, that is, it is not the case that South Africa is in South America, and so it is false. Note that the attribution of a truth value to a proposition is the consequence of knowing whether it corresponds to fact or not. In other words, one cannot ascribe a truth value just by analysing any sentences. There must be an intelligent grasp and a reasonable affirmation before the question of truth or falsity arises. Therefore, the truth value of a proposition will not lead to paradox from the point of view of the correspondence theorist.

### **6.3.2 Revenge Paradox**

The revenge paradox (Scharp 2014:614-617) or the strengthened liar as it is also called (Kirkham 1995:293) is a consequence of the attempts to resolve the alethic paradoxes, especially the paradox of the liar. Scharp (2014:615-616) contends that most approaches (for instance, Kripke's (1975) solution, revision, contextual, paracomplete and paraconsistent approaches) to the alethic paradoxes lead to revenge paradox. It is for this reason that he argues that there is a necessity for the replacement of truth (Scharp 2014:635). This happens because, those who attempt to resolve the paradox of the liar accept that some sentences are neither true nor false and that some sentences are both true and false. For this reason, the revenge paradox is sometimes expressed thus: 'This sentence is false or neither true nor false' (Kirkham 1995:293)

Since the revenge paradox results from the attempts to solve the paradox of the liar, it can be argued that if a theorist considers liar sentences as defective reasoning (Simmons 2015:121-131), the revenge paradox would not be an issue. (Since it is argued in the previous sub-section that truth as correspondence that is defended here is paradox-immune, it is assumed that revenge paradox too is not a problem for the correspondence theorist. Therefore, the goal of this sub-section is not to resolve the revenge paradox.) Given that the position of this thesis is that paradoxes are not an issue or an obstacle to the correspondence theory that it defends as the liar paradox arises when truth value is ascribed to sentences without propositional contents, in the same vein, the revenge paradox is not an issue for a correspondence theorist (especially a theorist of critical metaphysical realist orientation). Nevertheless, what the revenge paradox is like will be

examined here. The revenge paradox comes into action in theories of truth that do not take bivalence strictly. That is, any theory of truth that in its resolution of the paradox of the liar entertains truth gap or glut (that is, that a proposition or sentence can be true and false at the same time) is most likely calling for the visit of the revenge paradox. Consider: The sentence on the whiteboard in the auditorium is either false or gappy. Gappy means that it has no truth value.<sup>2</sup> The revenge here is similar to the paradox of the liar described in the previous subsection. That is, if the sentence is false, then what it says of itself is the case and as such is true. On the other hand, if it is gappy then what it says of itself is the case and as such it means that the sentence on the whiteboard in the auditorium is neither true or false, and so what it says of itself is true. So either way, it leads to contradiction.

How then would a correspondence theorist tackle the seeming contradiction? The first point to raise is that for the correspondence theorist, the revenge paradox does not arise as already indicated since truth is not just a vehicle for endorsement and rejection and so (T-In) and (T-Out) are not its constitutive principles. Besides, as already shown while addressing the paradox of the liar, the correspondence theorist while examining the truth value of any truth-bearer, must ask whether that to which a truth value is ascribed is a primary truth-bearer or not, and secondly whether it corresponds to a fact or not.

The position of a correspondence theorist regarding the revenge paradox that is presented here would not sit well with inconsistent theorists, since the inconsistent theorists would insist that the prominent role of (T-In) and (T-Out) in logic is undeniable. An inconsistent theorist like Scharp (2007:608-609; 2013:36-42; 2014:642) contends that the only way out of the paradox of the liar and revenge paradox is the acknowledgment that truth is an inconsistent concept and needs to be replaced. From the outset, it seems clear that a correspondence theorist and an inconsistent theorist will not agree when it comes to their positions about truth since unlike the inconsistent theorist, a correspondence theorist contends that truth is a consistent concept and so it is not in the need of replacement. The two positions seem to be irreconcilable because in general a correspondence theorist has a substantive view of truth while an inconsistent theorist has a deflationary view. Hence their respective understandings of the nature of truth determine their approach to the

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<sup>2</sup> I adopted gappy from Scharp (2014).

investigation of truth. Put differently, the correspondence and inconsistent theorists are engaged with totally different questions. While the correspondence theorist is concerned with the nature question, that is, attempting to ascertain the constitution of truth, the inconsistent theorist examines the logical and semantic uses of the truth predicate. A closer examination would show that the question that the correspondence theorist investigates has primacy over that of the inconsistent theorist. This is because the investigation of the logical and semantic uses of the truth predicate and the possible paradox that the uses might lead to rest on the assumption that we know what truth is. In fact, given that logical and semantic use of the truth predicate can lead to a paradox, it does not necessarily translate to inconsistency of truth. So the replacement of truth that Scharp advocates is not called for, since it is a mistaken analysis of the use of the truth predicate that leads to the paradoxes (Skinner 1959:332). If the concept of truth itself is the problem, then mere replacement or rather qualifying of truth would not resolve the situation. There would have been a need for an eliminative replacement. Scharp is clear that he is not advocating eliminative replacement even though he insists that truth is an inconsistent concept. He writes:

The theory [inconsistent theory] is *not* eliminativist; we should continue using the truth predicates of natural languages in most situations because the concept of truth they express, though inconsistent, is useful and its inconsistency rarely inhibits its utility. Instead, we need to replace truth only for certain purposes with a team of concepts that will do its work without generating paradoxes (2014:635).

One would wonder why the concept of truth would be left at all, if its inconsistency is the problem. In fact, since the concept does not show any defect in most of its uses as Scharp suggests, then why should it be considered inconsistent? The desideratum of Scharp in arguing for his inconsistency theory of truth is the elimination of truth paradoxes. But does introduction of ascending truth and descending truth succeed in replacing truth? Although Scharp's answer would be affirmative, it is far from the case that introduction of ascending truth and descending truth in order to preserve (T-In) and (T-Out) respectively is indeed a replacement of truth. At best, the introduction of the adjectives, ascending and descending, is qualification of truth and not replacement since the basic meaning that is preserved is that of truth and not that of the adjectives. Moreover, the acknowledgement of what Scharp calls safe cases, that is, sentences that do not even require to be said to be either ascending true or descending true but just true shows that

the so-called replacement is in essence no replacement (Scharp 2013:152-153). A genuine replacement of truth results when the meaning of truth is not preserved at all even implicitly.

### **6.3.3 Evaluative Critique**

From the brief exposition of the paradox of the liar and the revenge paradox, that rises from the attempts to resolve the paradox of the liar, one could say that the two alethic paradoxes have the same defect. Although at first sight, it might seem that the paradoxes can pose a great problem to philosophical investigation truth, a careful analysis shows that both paradoxes seem to result because of misapplication of the truth predicate. In other words, in all the instances in which the exponents of the alethic paradox argue that there is a paradox, there is an incorrect attribution of truth predicate since the sentences in question have no propositional content. A sentence, per se, is correct or incorrect. When a sentence is said to be true or false, it is said to be so because of its propositional content. However, all paradigmatic paradoxical sentences are either not sentences or lack propositional content. A self-referential sentence, for example; This sentence is false, is not a sentence unless, the truth predicate is taken as part of the sentence. But in that case, the truth predicate does not function as a real truth predicate but as complement of the subject, "this sentence". The situation of the self-referring paradoxical sentence is applicable to the paradigmatic revenge paradoxical sentence: This sentence is false or neither true nor false. When it comes to sentences that point to other sentences, for instance: The sentence on the white board is false, or The sixth sentence on page 25 is false, the ascription of the truth predicate is a misuse of the truth predicate since both sentences lack propositional content. Before affirming that those sentences are false or not, one needs to know exactly what the sentence on the white board and the sixth sentence on page 25 say.

The absurdity or the meaninglessness of the so-called paradoxes becomes more evident when one takes judgment instead of a sentence to be the truth-bearer. In that case, one would say: This judgment (of mine) is false. If we are to follow the procedure of the defenders of the paradox of the liar, then we would say, if this judgment (of mine) is false then it is true. This sounds absurd because if the judgment I made is false then it is false

since it is a judgment that is made without having sufficiency of evidence. Put differently, a judgment is false when there is an unreasonable affirmation, that is when one makes a hasty judgment without establishing that all the necessary conditions for such affirmation are fulfilled. To say that if my judgment is false then it is true, is tantamount to saying that, if one says that his act of judging which is unreasonable is unreasonable, then it becomes reasonable. Such a conclusion is nothing other than faulty analysis. So the paradox of the liar and revenge paradox ultimately result from faulty analysis.

#### **6.4 The Slingshot Argument**

It is an open controversial problem what the relationship between the slingshot argument (if it is accepted) and the correspondence theory is. The slingshot argument contends that if correspondence theory is accepted, then ultimately, all propositions must correspond to the same fact. The main problem is whether the slingshot argument has a devastating consequence for the correspondence theory since facts plays a big role in the formulation of some versions of the correspondence theory. The devastating consequence in question is that, granted the principles of equivalence and substitutivity (that is substituting a name with a description, e.g. Bernard Lonergan with the author of *Insight*), all true propositions would correspond to one and the same fact (Rodriguez-Pereyra 1950, Wallace 2015), or what Davidson calls the Great Fact (Davidson 1984:42; Mulligan & Correia 2013). Meg Wallace expresses the consequence of the slingshot to the correspondence theory thus:

That an alleged non extensional sentential connective would turn out to be extensional is devastating for it would lead to such radical conclusions as: (i) if sentences or propositions refer to fact, then all facts collapse into one big fact; (ii) if sentences or propositions refer to anything, then they refer to their truth value (which means there is just one thing to which all true sentences refer (e.g., the True), and just one thing that all false sentences refer (e.g., the False))' (2015:283).

If there is such a Great Fact, then the slingshot argument poses a great threat to the correspondence theory. However, it will be argued that there is no such Great Fact. How then do the proponents of slingshot argument contend that the acknowledgement of the slingshot argument collapses the correspondence theories especially those versions in which facts play essential role? The kernel of the argument is that given that the rule of inference is applicable, in the cases of co-referring terms or single terms, true

propositions, statements or sentences all correspond to the same fact. For instance, according to the Davidsonian slingshot argument, the following correspond to the same fact:

- Calabar is the capital of Cross River State.
- Calabar is in the Southern part of Nigeria.
- Calabar is mainly inhabited by the Efik.

But do the three propositions correspond to the same fact? As it is already argued in this thesis, they do not correspond to the same fact, considering that facts have components or constituent parts and various facts may have the same major component. In the case in question, though Calabar is the major constituent part of the facts to which the propositions correspond to in order to be true, it does not mean that they correspond to the same fact, since that Calabar is the capital of Cross River State is a different fact from Calabar is in the Southern part of Nigeria. Facts are not reducible to their major component.

Another issue that is at the heart of the slingshot argument is how definite descriptions are to be understood. Are they referential or not? Stephen Neale, for instance, argues that any fact or correspondence theorist who takes definite descriptions to be referential would not escape the consequence of the Gödelian slingshot<sup>3</sup> (Gödel 1944). So the only way to avoid the consequence of Gödel's slingshot is to adopt 'Russell's Theory of Description', since it is categorical that definite descriptions are not referential (Neale 1995:764). Neale writes: 'According to Gödel, any theory that posits facts to which true sentences correspond must either give up an intuitive principle of compositionality or else presuppose Russell's Theory of Descriptions – or a similar non-referential theory – in order to avoid the "Eleatic" conclusion that all true sentences stand for the same fact' (1995:764) According to Neale, the dilemma of a fact or correspondence theorist who wants to hold that definite descriptions are referential and should be treated as co-referring singular terms while at the same time defending that propositions (or rather sentences as Neale prefers) correspond to different facts can be illustrated as follows:

- <Bernard Lonergan was a Jesuit priest>.

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<sup>3</sup> The philosophical significance or insignificance of Gödel's slingshot argument (1944) is neither defended nor opposed here. For such discussion, see (Neale 1995; Neale & Dever 1997; Oppy 1997).

- <The author of *Method in Theology* was a Jesuit priest>.

Given that two propositions are true, and that Bernard Lonergan is the author of *Method in Theology*, an inevitable question is, do the two propositions, if they are true correspond to the same fact or different fact? Neale's view is that unless one accepts that a definite description is not referential, the two propositions refer to the same fact as result of Gödel's slingshot since the author of *Method in Theology* can be substituted with Bernard Lonergan. Nevertheless, even if the definite description (*the author of Method in Theology*) is taken to be referential or a singular term, Neale's argument is not convincing. The two propositions do not correspond to the same fact. It is only when a fact is reduced to its principal component (and in this case the person referred to) that one can claim in the slightest that the two propositions correspond to the same fact. But such affirmation only results from equating reference with fact. Without attending to the ontology of facts, the confusing of facts with references will continue to be the case.

Taking into consideration that the goal of this section is to show that the slingshot argument has no adverse consequence for the correspondence theory of truth, the source of confusion when it comes to the relationship between the correspondence theory and the slingshot argument will be examined. So what makes the exponents of slingshot argument think that it is a stumbling block to the correspondence and fact theorists? The major reason for the slingshot proponents is that they assume that truth is a logico-semantic issue with philosophy of language as its foundation (Neale & Dever 1997). Hence, they expect any discussion on truth in general, and the correspondence theory of truth in particular, to be carried out within the framework of logic, semantics and philosophy of language. Michael Dummett, for instance, contends that truth belongs to the domain of semantics and not of metaphysics (Dummett 2006:17)<sup>4</sup>. Contrary to the view that truth belongs primarily to the logico-semantic domain, it is primarily an issue in metaphysics, at least to the correspondence theorist. This is because the question that a correspondence theorist raises is about the constitution of truth and such question belongs to metaphysics. In fact, one wonders why Dummett assigns truth to semantics when he contends that proposition and fact belong to metaphysics. That seems strange to

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<sup>4</sup> The view that truth belongs to the realm of language or semantics could be traced to the later Wittgenstein who reduced philosophical problems to the problem of language (Cf. Wittgenstein 2009 [1953] §38).

a correspondence theorist since within the analytic framework, as we have explored above, truth is a relation of correspondence between proposition and fact. If proposition and fact belong to the domain of metaphysics, so also should truth.

The second reason why slingshot argument theorists think that the slingshot argument is a hurdle that correspondence theorists should cross for their conception of truth to be credible and to give an adequate account of particular facts that propositions do correspond to, is the assumption that true propositions are identical with facts. However, a correspondence theorist does not subscribe to this view. According to the correspondence theorist, truth is a relational property and within the analytic framework, it is the correspondence of propositions and facts that constitutes truth. Hence to claim that true propositions are identical with facts is tantamount to assuming that which is yet to be established. The presupposition of truth by equating true proposition with fact results in neglecting a more foundational question, that is, what makes a proposition true? Or why are some propositions true while others are false? An exhaustive investigation of truth would attend to such questions. To address the questions, a theorist needs to get to the underlying metaphysical issue rather than just remaining on the logico-semantic level. It is the neglect or the denial of the metaphysical foundation of truth that prompts defenders of slingshot argument to contend that truth as correspondence would lead to the acceptance of one Great Fact.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

The problems (alethic paradoxes and slingshot argument) which some philosophers consider as the downfall of the correspondence theory of truth result from faulty diagnosis. This is because such problems arise when truth as correspondence is not examined within the metaphysical framework of the critical realist in which cognitional analysis rather than conceptual analysis is vital because of the centrality of the role of the conscious intentional subject. Hence the concept of truth is reduced to the logico-semantic uses of the truth predicate and because some logical uses of the truth predicate lead to paradoxes, truth is said to be inconsistent and incapable of resisting the paradoxes especially the paradox of the liar. Contrary to the position that truth is an inconsistent concept, it is argued that truth is a consistent concept. In other words, any seeming

contradiction that might arise because of the uses of the truth predicate does not affect the concept of truth *per se*. Maintaining that truth yields paradox whether in the form of paradox of the liar or revenge paradox comes about because of flaws in analysis. Consequently, the concept truth is not in need of replacement.

Similarly, it is argued in this chapter the slingshot argument is not a threat to the correspondence theory of truth because the objection against the conception of truth as correspondence, claiming that it irredeemably reduces all facts to one, does not take into serious consideration the metaphysical foundation of truth as correspondence. As such, those who claim that the slingshot argument has devastating consequence for the correspondence theory do not adequately investigate the ontological status of propositions and facts. Nevertheless, when the metaphysical foundation is explored, and the principal question of the correspondence theory is analysed, it becomes clear that to contend that the slingshot argument is an obstacle to the correspondence conception of truth is similar to aiming at the wrong target with a good weapon.

In fact, if the similarity between being and fact in Lonerganian thinking (as already argued in chapter two), since both are ‘the objective of pure desire to know’, is taken into account, it becomes evident that the claim of the defenders of the slingshot argument (that ultimately all truths correspond to one big fact) is mistaken (Davidson 1984:42). As Lonergan argues, the question of objectivity arises in the first place because there is more than one being in the universe of being. So, since there are distinct beings, both those that are capable of knowing themselves and others (for instance, human beings) and those beings that are incapable of knowing, it would be erroneous to claim that the distinct beings in the universe of being can be reduced to one single being. Although, ‘being is divided from within; [since] apart from being there is nothing’ (Lonergan 1992 [2013:401]), it does not follow that the multiple beings in the universe of being are reducible to one being. Therefore, as beings are irreducible to one being, from Lonergan’s perspective, all fact are irreducible to one Big Fact considering the close relationship between being and fact in Lonergan’s thought.

## Chapter 7

### Issue III: Concerning the Relevance of Investigation of the Nature of Truth

#### 7.1 Introduction

In the chapters 5 and 6, some issues that the philosophical investigations of truth raise were discussed. In this chapter I will examine some others that advocate for the abandonment of the quest for the investigation of the nature of truth. Two prominent issues that clamour for the abandonment of the traditional investigation of the nature of truth are Donald Davidson's indefinability thesis (that is, the position that truth cannot be defined because it is primitive concept) (1996:264) and Richard Rorty's quest for the elimination of truth because the truth predicate serves for commendation or cautionary use since it lacks practical relevance (1995 [2001]:259). Nevertheless, from the discussion in this thesis (which reconsiders the conception of truth as correspondence), it is assumed that truth is neither indefinable nor a commendation. If truth, or the truth predicate, is not just 'an exclamation or a functional term of commendation' but 'a *bona fide*' (Sosa 2001:649) then it is important to examine the positions of Davidson and Rorty

In the first section of this chapter, Davidson's indefinability thesis will be considered. The investigation will assess the Davidsonian position, that it is folly to attempt to define truth (Davidson 1996). It will be argued that it is not folly to seek the definition of truth, but a necessity, especially when the correspondence theory of truth is reconsidered. In the second section, Rorty's thesis that the notion of truth is to be eliminated since it has no practical utility but is rather a term for commendation, will be analysed (1995[2001]).

Contrary to Rorty's argument that truth should be eliminated because it is identical with justification, it will be argued that truth and justification are not identical. In critiquing Davidson's and Rorty's positions, an understanding of truth inspired by the works of Lonergan will be used – especially his tripartite cognitional structure and his understanding of the notion of objectivity (1967, 1992 [2013]). Furthermore, despite the inadequacy of the common-sense conception of truth, its close connection with the conception of truth as correspondence will be considered in the third section. That the common sense understanding of truth tends to be a version of the correspondence theory is an indication that Davidson's and Rorty's theses are counterintuitive. In other words, the connection between the correspondence theory and common-sense intuition is rooted in the fact that truth as correspondence is the default position regarding truth and in most cases the default positions are true (Searle 1999:9-12).

## **7.2 Indefinability of Truth**

The thesis that truth cannot be defined was common among the proponents of the correspondence theory in the early twentieth century (Moore 1901, Russell 1906). It could be contended that the argument for the indefinability of truth was influenced by Frege who in his criticism of the correspondence theory of truth maintained that probably, 'the content of the word "true" is unique and undefinable' (1956:291). Based on the claim for the uniqueness of truth, the indefinability of truth is attributed to the primitivity of the concept of truth. In this section, I will examine Davidson's indefinability thesis. Since it would be impossible to examine all that he has written on truth as he defended the correspondence theory and later the coherence theory before his defence of the indefinability thesis, this section is based on his two articles "The Folly of Trying to Define Truth" and "Epistemology and Truth". Also, the works of some Davidson commentators, e.g. Ernest Lepore & Kirk Ludwig (2005), William Lycan (2013) and Michael Glanzberg (2013), are crucial for this section.

Davidson (1996, 2001d), one of the main exponents of the indefinability of truth argues that truth cannot be defined because it is a 'primitive concept that cannot be reduced to a more basic concept' whatsoever (1996:264). Davidson states his position as follows:

For most part, the concepts philosophers single out for attention, truth, knowledge, belief, action, cause, the good and the right, are the most elementary concepts we have, concepts without which (I am inclined to say) we would not have concepts at all. Why then should we expect to be able to reduce these concepts definitionally to other concepts which are simpler, clearer, and more basic? We should accept the fact that what makes these concepts so important must also foreclose on the possibility of finding a foundation for them which reaches deeper into bedrock (1996:264).

Consequently, he avers that defining truth in terms of ‘correspondence, coherence, warranted assertability, ideally justified assertability’ (2001d:190) is futile if not meaningless.

Does the primitivity of truth necessarily imply indefinability? If it is assumed that truth cannot ‘be reduced to a more basic concept’, that claim by itself does not rule out the possibility of defining truth. The claim that truth is not reducible to a more basic concept is one thing while the claim that truth is indefinable is another. To link the two claims would imply assuming that definition is the capacity to reduce a concept to a more basic concept. The consequence of holding the position that indefinability of truth is traced to its primitiveness is that it makes definition or definability unrealistic, since most concepts and terms cannot be reduced to more basic ones. Take for instance, the following definitions of the human being by Aristotle, Boethius and Aquinas respectively:

1. ‘The human being ‘is a rational animal’.
2. ‘The human person is an individual substance of a rational nature’.
3. ‘The human person is a rational subsistent.’

One would ask; if the above are definitions, does it imply that we have reduced the concept human being or human person to more basic concepts? Reduction to basic concepts does not seem to be the case in the above definitions. Nevertheless, that by itself does not mean that the afore-mentioned are not definitions. The assumption of this thesis is that definition does not necessarily imply the reduction of concepts to more basic ones. Definition is the delimitation of concepts and terms in order to have a conceptual framework. That is, stating what a term is used to express or what it refers to. Hence, saying that ‘truth is a relation of correspondence between propositions and facts’ or ‘the relation of knowing to being’ is a definition.

Why then does Davidson attach the definition of any concept or term to whether it can be reduced to a more basic concept? Davidson seems to be operating from a philosophical viewpoint that reduces philosophy to conceptual analysis or *conceptual engineering*, a philosophical perspective which some philosophers of the analytic tradition value much. The understanding of philosophy as conceptual analysis does carry some residue of twentieth century logical positivism and the scientific philosophical project. The problem with the reduction of philosophy to conceptualism is that adequate attention is not paid to the fact that philosophy as a discipline is sub-divided into other legitimate sub-theoretical and practical disciplines like metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, philosophical anthropology and so forth. Another problem that arises when philosophy is understood just as a form of conceptual analysis is that the quest for truth does not take into serious consideration that the locus of truth is the human quest for knowledge and self-transcendence (Lonergan 1972:35). In other words, when a philosophical investigation of truth takes into account the centrality of the human cognitive structure and the function of intentional analysis of the subject, then it becomes easier to acknowledge that truth is definable.

Contesting the Davidsonian indefinability thesis because of his equation of definition with the reduction of a concept to a more basic concept does not imply that concepts and terms are not necessary for definitions. A subject's quest for understanding and definition when a question for intelligence is raised demands that other terms or concepts are invoked. In other words, for there to be a definition, other concepts or terms are necessary. 'Every definition presupposes other terms. If these can be defined, their definitions will presuppose still other terms' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:36). However, arguing that any definition presupposes other terms or concepts is not meant as a defence of definition as a reduction of a concept to a more basic concept. Rather, it aims at highlighting that proper definitions cannot be isolated from the human cognitional structure, since they 'do not occur in a private vacuum of their own' (1992 [2013]:36). Moreover, definitions are of different kinds. Lonergan identifies two kinds. They are nominal and explanatory (1992 [2013]:35). Although, the two kinds of definitions suppose insight, nominal definitions are solely concerned with 'the correct usage of name', that is, they give us 'insight into the proper use of language', whereas explanatory definitions go beyond the correct use

of language by supposing a further insight into object to which language refers' (1992 [2013]:35-36). From the distinction between the kinds of definitions, it is not out of place to say that Davidson's understanding of the definition of truth is nominal and not explanatory. This is why he is against the definition of truth in terms of correspondence.

Notwithstanding Davidson's claim that truth is indefinable, his truth talk is based on the assumption that he understands what constitutes the concept of truth. As William Lycan points out, notwithstanding that Davidson does not define the concept of truth, he seems to "assume a partial understanding of truth, and use the theory to throw light on meaning, interpretation, and translation" (2013:144). It is arguable that what Lycan calls an assumed 'partial understanding of truth' is an implicit definition. Therefore, it seems that a radical indefinability of truth is not feasible.

Although in his philosophical career Davidson defended and later rejected the correspondence and coherence theories of truth, some elements of his thinking on truth remain. Michael Glanzberg articulates the constant elements of Davidson's conception of truth thus: 'Tarski's work on truth is fundamental to understanding the concept, as is the relation of truth to meaning, and we fail to understand the connection adequately unless we take into account the constraints of radical interpretation' (2013:156).

Radical interpretation takes place when a speaker and his or her interpreter do not speak the same language. Davidson argues that such interpretation is possible because of reliance on the two principles that comprise the principle of charity, that is the Principle of Coherence and the Principle of Correspondence (2001b:211). In other words, when interpreting a speaker whose language he does not understand, an interpreter assumes that the speaker is logically consistent in his speech. Also, he 'takes the speaker to be responding to the same features of the world that he (the interpreter) would be responding to under similar circumstance' (Davidson 2001b: 211). It is worth pointing out that the Principle of Correspondence that is essential for radical interpretation involves an implicit acknowledgement of truth as correspondence (at least as it is understood in the analytic framework). So a critical analysis of Davidson's works show that his truth discourse is not founded on his indefinability thesis.

Considering the assumptions and arguments of this thesis thus far, it seems that Davidson's defence of the indefinability of truth does not only rest on the primitivism of truth, since he acknowledges that truth has a nature and categorically rejects deflationism (1996:273) about truth. It seems that his philosophical project and honouring his own part of the agreement with Rorty in 1983 (Davidson 2001c:154) have a significant part to play. Regarding his philosophical project, it is noteworthy to point out that Davidson's project of applying the semantic conception of truth to natural languages, is central to his understanding of the concept truth. We can further understand his project if we bring in the Tarskian equivalence formula which he terms Conventions T. This idea is captured with the formula, "X is true if, and only if, p". For instance, Grass is green is true if, and only if grass is green. It seems that for Davidson, the satisfaction of the Tarskian Convention T seems to be equated with the concept of meaning. Davidson writes: 'a theory of meaning for a language *L* shows "how the meanings of sentences depend upon the meanings of words" if it contains a (recursive) definition of truth-in-*L*. And, so far at least, we have no other idea how to turn the trick' (2001a:23). In equating the theory of truth and meaning, the principal Davidsonian project is 'not to pursue meaning theory through the vehicle of a truth theory, but to replace the former with the latter, in much the same spirit in which Quine suggests replacing traditional epistemology with naturalized epistemology' (Lepore & Ludwig 2005:66)<sup>1</sup>. (Quine's naturalized epistemology is a view that contends that traditional epistemology should be eliminated because its tendency to lead to epistemological scepticism (Quine 1969:60-90). He advocates that epistemology should be considered as an empirical science by depending solely on the method of the empirical sciences).

Davidson states the indispensability of truth in determining the meaning of meaning thus:

What appears to the right of the biconditional in sentences of the form '*s* is true if and only if *p*' when such sentences are consequences of a theory of truth plays its role in determining the meaning of *s* not by pretending synonymy but by adding one more brush-stroke to the picture which, taken as a whole, tells what there is to know of the meaning of *s*; this stroke is added by virtue of the fact that the sentence that replaces '*p*' is true if and only if *s* is (2001a:26).

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<sup>1</sup> This position is controversial. Whether Davidson's project is the replacement of the theory of meaning with the theory of truth will be revisited.

The consequence of replacing meaning with truth is that the concept of truth should account for all the possible uses of the concept of meaning. But, is it possible for the truth predicate or the concept of truth to take the place of meaning or the concept of meaning? It is obvious that truth cannot take the place of meaning in all domains. For instance, while meaning is applicable to individual words, truth is not applicable to individual words. It would therefore, be hardly defensible that Davidson aims at replacing meaning with truth. Arguing against their earlier position, Lepore and Ludwig aver that Davidson's project is not the replacement of meaning with truth. They write: 'Davidson's project is not to reduce meaning to truth conditions or replace the theory of meaning with a successor project more suitable to scientific progress, but a pursuit of a theory of meaning by a bit of clever indirection' (Lepore & Ludwig 2013:189).

Although it is arguable that Davidson's project is not that of replacement, nonetheless that there is a relationship between truth and meaning, and an essential role that radical interpretation plays in that relationship is undeniable (Glanzberg 2013:165). Davidson (2000:72) avers that the concept of objective truth is the *conditio sine qua non* for the understanding of sentences. In other words, his argument is that the concept of meaning cannot be divorced completely from that of truth. Glanzberg (2013:165) highlights the connection between truth and meaning in Davidsonian thought thus: 'Truth is fundamentally connected to meaning, and the facts about how truth connects to meaning are limited by what is available in radical interpretation'. Granted that there is an indispensable relationship between truth, meaning and radical interpretation according to Davidson, as he argues in his compositional theory of meaning, one wonders if the connection between those concepts would not serve as an element that would facilitate the definition of truth, at least indirectly. Davidson's insistence on the role of the satisfaction of Tarski's Convention T (that is, the fulfilments of the conditions for the truth of a proposition) in understanding the empiricist's conception of meaning, seems to suggest that truth is analysable and definable (1996:268). So is Davidson merely withholding an attempt at defining truth?

How then is Davidson's indefinability thesis to be understood since, against the deflationists' position, he holds that truth is a substantial concept (Davidson, 1996:264), Glanzberg 2013:166) while at the same time he rejects all the substantial theories of truth? It seems that the attitude of holding truth in esteem as Davidson does, while claiming that any attempt at definition results in folly, could best be understood as an attempt to avoid making any metaphysical commitment regarding truth in terms of realist or anti-realist conceptions (Davidson 2001d:191). Davidson's rejection of both the realist and anti-realist view about truth and his sceptical attitude regarding substantial metaphysical content of truth is pointed out by Glanzberg (2013:169). He summarizes Davidson's attitude towards truth as follows:

Davidson takes a different approach to truth than many in the traditional and current debates. Against deflationists, he holds that truth is a substantial concept. Against many traditional metaphysical theories, he holds that we are not going to be able to define or directly analyze [sic] truth, while against many contemporary metaphysical views, he holds that what more there is to truth than deflationists admit will not be found in metaphysics of realism, objectivity, or epistemic notions. He rejects most of the standard positions on truth – both traditional and contemporary – in favor [sic] of the view that truth is a basic concept, which we explore through its connections with other concepts (2013:169).

It is hardly convincing to defend the substantiality of the concept of truth and its essential connection with other concepts while insisting that truth is indefinable. Maybe acknowledging the substantiality of truth and at the same time maintaining its indefinability is the consequence of his deliberate avoidance of metaphysical commitment regarding truth. Irrespective of Davidson's lack of metaphysical commitment regarding truth, he acknowledges the central role that satisfaction plays (1996:276-277). He writes:

We are interested in the concept of truth only because there are actual objects and states of the world to which to apply it: utterances, states of belief, inscriptions. If we did not understand what it was for such entities to be true, we would not be able to characterize the contents of these states, objects, and events. So in addition to the formal theory of truth, we must indicate how truth is to be predicated of these empirical phenomena. (1996:276-277).

From the above citation, it seems Davidson's starting point in his consideration of truth is the logical and semantic standpoint, and so the definition of truth would not be essential to him. However, beginning from a metaphysical standpoint, especial metaphysical realism, highlights the importance of definition in the investigation of the concept of truth. Therefore, contrary to the Davidsonian thesis of indefinability, truth can be defined, since

ultimately, the question of truth arises because it is in our nature to confirm whether what we claim to know is what is actually the case. Consequently, truth as correspondence is not definitionally empty as Davidson (2000:73) argues, since he acknowledges that correspondence ‘does capture the thought that truth depends on how the world is’ and this is sufficient for the preference of correspondence rather than epistemic and pragmatic theories.

### **7.3 Rorty: Truth’s lack of Social Utility and its Irrelevance**

A project that seeks to reconsider truth as correspondence needs to engage at least briefly with the positions that contend for not only the abandoning of the quest for the nature of truth but also clamour for the elimination of truth outrightly. Hence in this section, I will engage with Rorty’s view that truth discourse should be eliminated from philosophy. Rorty’s position is based on his conviction that truth can be equated with justification, since according to him there is no significant difference between truth and justification (1995 [2001]:278). Also, he maintains that truth should be eliminated because it is irrelevant since it lacks social utility (2007:44-45). According to him, truth is a commendation that has only cautionary usage. If Rorty’s position is incontestable, then it would be pointless to reconsider truth as correspondence. Hence it is important to engage with Rorty. Since this is not a thesis on Rorty and so we cannot examine all that he has to say about truth, this section is based on the following articles by Rorty: “Solidarity or Objectivity” (1991), “Is Truth a Goal of Inquiry? Donald Davidson versus Crispin Wright” (1995), “Universality and Truth” (2000) and his debate with Paul Engel published as *What’s the Use of Truth?* (2007).

Rorty in his neo-pragmatic polemics against truth did not only maintain that truth is not the goal of inquiry, but emphasised that truth talk is irrelevant, since truth is neither recognizable nor has social utility (1995). He argues that since truth has no relevant practical utility, continuing the investigation of the nature of truth is a waste of one’s time. Therefore, the best option is to eliminate ‘truth’ or the word ‘true’ from philosophical endeavours (2000:4). It is worth noting that when Rorty emphasises the need for the

elimination of truth, his major culprit is truth as correspondence<sup>2</sup>. He outlines his philosophical project regarding truth as follows:

I take the appropriate pragmatist attitude toward truth to be: it is no more necessary to have a philosophical theory about the nature of truth, or the meaning of the word 'true,' than it is to have one about the nature of danger, or the meaning of the word 'danger.' The principal reason we have a word like 'danger' in the language is to caution people: to warn them that they may not have envisaged all the consequences of their proposed action. We pragmatists, who think that beliefs are habits of action rather than attempts to correspond to reality, see the cautionary use of the word 'true' as flagging a special sort of danger (2000:4).

There is no doubt that Rorty's conception of truth is radical. However, one wonders if truth is no more than mere caution. Besides, it is worth asking if truth really lacks some social utility. These issues will be explored in this section.

If the cited passage from Rorty serves as the pragmatist manifesto about truth, the first challenge it raises is whether he expects the non-pragmatist to accept the thesis. If he does, on what grounds does his expectation rest? Is the 'pragmatist manifesto' to be accepted because it is true? To affirm that it is to be accepted because it is true renders Rorty's pragmatist thesis contradictory. In other words, to accept Rorty's position implies that the concept of truth is more than what he claims truth is, since to accept his position because it is true is not just a 'cautionary use of the word "true"' (1995 [2001]:261). Jurgen Habermas (2000:40) takes issue with the cautionary use of the word 'truth' as proposed by Rorty. In his view, the "cautionary" use of truth makes a claim that goes beyond the neo-pragmatic conception of truth, since truth cannot be reduced to or be equated with either coherence or justified assertibility. Habermas articulates his objection thus: 'The "cautionary" use of the truth predicates shows that, with the truth of propositions, we connect an unconditional claim that points beyond all the evidence available to us; on the other hand, the evidence that we bring to bear in our contexts of justification has to be sufficient to entitle us to raise truth claims' (Habermas 2000:40).

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<sup>2</sup> Rorty's emphasis on the fact-stating as that which leads one to think that truth is the aim of inquiry shows that his criticism is firstly against the correspondence theory of truth. He writes: 'only over-attention to fact-stating would make one think that there was an aim of inquiry called "truth" in addition to that of justification. More generally, only over-attention to fact-stating would make one think that a claim to universal validity is important for democratic politics' (2000:3).

What then is the argumentative import of Rorty's postulation that the word "true" has only cautionary use? Rorty's insistence on the cautionary use of the truth predicate is a buttress to his point that truth is irrelevant since it has no social utility. In other words, since, according to Rorty, all that matters to social community or 'democratic politics' is that that which is believed is justified, justification takes the place which the concept of truth occupied in the representational epistemology. Rorty emphasises: "The difference between justification and truth makes no difference, except for the reminder that justification to one audience is not justification to another" (Rorty 1995[2001]:278). The implication of Rorty's position that is captured in the citation is that truth is relative. In other words, *the truth for us* is not necessarily *the truth for them*. This position would be a very difficult one to defend. In fact, there is difference between justification and truth. Justification is a necessary condition for truth but it not a sufficient condition. Justification leads to truth when it is reasonable. This is achieved through reflective understanding. Justification *per se* cannot be identical with truth because a justification can be unreasonable

This means that the elimination of the truth talk is the consequence of the rejection of the metaphysical foundation of philosophy and the acceptance of neo-pragmatism. The practical value which is the condition which Rorty uses to assess the relevance of the concept of truth is evaluated in relation to democracy. Rorty's seeming canonisation of democracy and his supposed desire to propagate it suggest that his context-bound argument which – according to him, is the foundation of neo-pragmatism – is not as context-bound as he seems to claim. For instance, what is the basis for choosing to favour democracy over other forms of governance? Rorty would definitely answer that it is because of the practical and social utilities it offers. However, one would still ask, on what criteria are those practical utilities premised? To whom are they useful? Why is there any need to propagate that which is useful to some American public within the American culture and context in other contexts and cultures even when those cultures have modes of governance that are useful to them? Is there any latent concept of truth operative in trying to convince other audiences to adopt democracy?

It seems to be a contradiction to emphasise preference for Rorty's context and culture-bound narrative, which implies the elimination of truth talk, objectivity and universality; while at the same time one engages in an attempt to go beyond one's culture in search of more audiences. As Habermas argues: 'As soon as the concept of truth is eliminated in favour of a context-dependent epistemic validity-for-us, the normative reference point necessary to explain why a proponent should endeavour to seek agreement for *'p' beyond the boundaries of her group* is missing' (2000:51).

Rorty is categorical that his advocating for the elimination of the concept of truth is connected with his quest for the elimination of metaphysical and epistemological questions so as to favour political and social ones (1991:22). Rorty expresses the pragmatists' disdain for metaphysics and epistemology in his article *Solidarity or Objectivity* where he argues that unlike the realists who, because of the reduction of solidarity to objectivity, need metaphysics and epistemology to support their conception of truth, pragmatists who are only interested in solidarity 'do not require either a metaphysics or an epistemology.' This is because truth for the pragmatist amounts only to 'what is good for *us* to believe' (1991:22). (Nonetheless, if truth is reduced to 'what is good for *us* to believe' as Rorty argues, then one wonders if truth is not merely arbitrary. However, neither common-sense understanding nor various conceptions of truth view truth as an arbitrary notion).

From his analysis, it seems that Rorty does not acknowledge that there is a difference between theoretical philosophy and practical philosophy, especially with respect to their goals. In fact, it is not sufficient to say that democracy and politics have practical usefulness without specifying what sort of practical benefit. After all, it is not out of place to ask: Does democracy *per se* put food on anyone's table? Does it pay anyone's electricity and water bills? Hence it would be important to indicate the type of social utility that pragmatism offers, which Rorty claims that truth is not able to proffer. In addition, in emphasising that truth to the pragmatists is that which is good for them to believe, Rorty seems to be prescribing what philosophy should be, that is, that pragmatism as he understands it is the default philosophy and so any branch of philosophy that does not comply with the pragmatists' claim would not be good enough to be considered as

philosophy. But on what ground is the claim that pragmatism is a sort of “first philosophy” based? Is it because of its purported relevance to democracy?

Moreover, it seems that the assumption made by Rorty is that solidarity and objectivity are mutually exclusive and so a choice for solidarity automatically excludes the possibility of objectivity and *vice versa*. Nevertheless, there is nothing in the search of objectivity that makes a philosopher who has metaphysical and epistemological commitments incapable of solidarity. A metaphysician or an epistemologist can be as solidarity-conscious as a pragmatist. To argue that pragmatists have a “natural aptitude” towards solidarity while metaphysicians and epistemologists lack such aptitude is at best idolizing pragmatism.

Why then would Rorty think that objectivity and solidarity are mutually exclusive? It is most probable because the quest for objectivity makes the metaphysician dogmatic and so does not seem to acknowledge that tolerance is an important human value. If that is the case, then it arises from an inadequate conception of objectivity which contraposes subjectivity and objectivity. The inadequate understanding of objectivity arises from confusing the partial aspects of objectivity with an absolute objectivity. For instance, common sense or naïve realism reduces objectivity to experiential objectivity of the given of the sense data. But objectivity properly understood is not to be contrasted with subjectivity for they are not mutually exclusive. Rather objectivity is founded in the authentic subjectivity of the knowing subject. When the role of the conscious and intentional subject in ascertaining that which is objective is taken into account, it becomes clear that subjectivity and objectivity are complementary. Lonergan (1967:227-228, 1992 [2013]:399-409) emphasises that objectivity is a complex notion that cannot be reduced to a single act within the process of human knowing. It is ‘a structured manifold of operations, is not a single property of human knowing but a compound of quite different properties’ (1967:229). In other words, when objectivity is properly understood, it accounts for the three levels of consciousness. When objectivity is reduced to any of its three components, objectivity is totally distorted. (The notion of objectivity and the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity is treated in detail in chapter 8). Lonergan expresses the problematic of the understanding of the notion of objectivity thus:

Empiricists have tried to find the ground of objectivity in experience, rationalists have tried to place it in necessity, idealists have had recourse to coherence. All are partly right and partly wrong, right in their affirmation, but mistaken in their exclusion. For the objectivity of human knowing is a triple cord; there is an experiential component that resides in the givenness of relevant data; there is a normative component that resides in the exigences of intelligence and rationality guiding the process of knowing from data to judging; there finally is an absolute component that is reached when reflective understanding combines the normative and the experiential elements into a virtually unconditioned, i.e., a conditioned whose conditions are fulfilled (1967:229-230)

The point that Lonergan emphasises in the quoted passage is that objectivity is properly understood when the threefold structured human cognitional process is made explicit. Without such explicit exposition, there is the danger of reducing objectivity to that which is empirical given or even just to the exigences of human intelligence and rationality. Another vital point that Lonergan's characterisation of objectivity brings out is that we cannot attain objectivity without the indispensable acts of the human subject. In other words, objectivity is an authentic subjective achievement.

It could be argued that Rorty's exclusion of objectivity in order to highlight the importance of solidarity in a democratic political space arises from the distortion of the notion. Nonetheless, the criticism that Lonergan raises against the empiricists, naïve realists, rationalists and idealist can be extended to the pragmatism of Rorty. Although he is right in his affirmation of the importance of solidarity as a human value, he is wrong in his total exclusion of objectivity.

Following Rorty's argument that truth is to be restricted to "cautionary use" or should be eliminated altogether because of its democratic irrelevance, it is expedient to ask if the concept of truth is socially inept? Does truth really lack practical utility? The practical social utility of truth is made manifest when truth is considered within the context of human yearning for self-transcendence. It is in this light that moral truthfulness comes into play as an inevitable value for an authentic interpersonal relationship. Put differently, the socio-practical utility of truth is founded on the vital role it places on the subject's ascent towards ethical conversion because it is hardly possible for a moral agent to decide and act morally without first making a reasonable judgment (Lonergan 1974:80). That is, the attainment of truth challenges one to live in accordance with the known truth. In

Lonergan's terms, the reason why the human agent should be attentive, intelligent and rational is for him or her to be responsible.

So contrary to Rorty's opinion, truth as correspondence is socially and democratically relevant. For instance, in some countries like Nigeria, East Timor, Liberia, Morocco, Peru, South Africa and so forth, the constitution of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was considered to be an important phenomenon after military and apartheid regimes. The truth component of the commission is not envisaged as having a cautionary, minimal, disquotational or prosentential use. Neither is truth as it is understood in the establishment of the commissions aimed at justification or assertibility. Rather, the Commissions are geared at establishing the facts or states of affairs. In other words, the objective of any "Truth Commission" or "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" is to establish the relationship between what is said and what has actually happened at a particular time in the country's history. To achieve its goal, it is the conception of truth as correspondence that is considered. It is pertinent to emphasise that truth and reconciliation commissions are established during democratic governments. Therefore, it follows that truth as correspondence has practical utility as opposed to Rorty's claim. Elimination of the concept of truth which Rorty campaigns for would jeopardize a democratic society in which difficult historical situations need to be addressed in order for the country to progress. Furthermore, while solidarity would be important when any truth commission is carrying out its mandate, objectivity is also necessary, especially when the stories of those involved in a particular incident appear to be contradictory. This implies that solidarity does not entail elimination of objectivity and *vice versa*. In fact, since objectivity is grounded on the subject's attentiveness, intelligence and reasonableness, it is not out of place to state that objectivity is vital for an authentic solidarity.

#### **7.4 Truth as Correspondence and Common-Sense Intuition: An Evaluative Critique**

Although the common-sense conception of truth is defective or inadequate because of its understanding of knowing, knowledge, being and objectivity, it is worth exploring the common-sense understanding as a starting point in the critique of the quest for the

abandoning of the investigation of the nature of truth as exemplified by Davidson's and Rorty's theses. One of the reasons for exploring the common-sense understanding of truth in this section is not to defend the common-sense understanding but rather to argue that, although it is a defective conception of truth as correspondence, it highlights the counterintuitiveness of the indefinability thesis and quest for the elimination of truth because of its lack of practical utility or consigning of truth to mere cautionary use. Another reason is that Davidson's conception of truth assumes the common-sense understanding of truth (1999:106).

I was inspired about the assumed common-sense conception of truth in Davidson's understanding of truth by Vision (2004). While analysing the relations between causes and events in Davidson, Vision argues that if the correspondence theory is simplified to 'A sentence's truth is constituted by its correspondence to an aspect of reality' (2004:276) then Davidson's conception of truth could be considered to be correspondence. Taking the stated simplified version of correspondence as the case in point, Vision states: 'It would be difficult for Davidson to deny that this was a version of correspondence on the grounds that it fails to mention facts or states of affairs. ("The notion of correspondence would be a help if we were able [to] say, in an *instructive* way, which fact or slice of reality it is that makes a particular sentence true" (Davidson 1999:106). If it is not correspondence, what else can it reasonably be?' (Vision 2004:276). As already indicated, the common sense understanding of truth as correspondence is not defended here. Hence all the criticism levelled against the common-sense conception of truth applies to Davidson's conception of truth.

If the relevance of the concept of truth is to be measured by its practical utility, as Rorty argues in his neo-pragmatic paradigm, then it would be necessary to ask whose interest the social usefulness should serve. Rorty (1991:22) in the context of liberalism seems to argue that the displacement of truth with justification or solidarity serves the interest of western liberals. However, one would ask, is the satisfaction of the interest of Western liberals (or any group at all) sufficient for determining the relevance or the irrelevance of truth? To limit the significance of the concept of truth to the satisfaction of what is good to Western liberals or any group would be an unfortunate move, since such limitation

would bring the objectivity of truth into question. Consequently, to comprehensively evaluate the relevance of the concept of truth, especially as regarding its usefulness, it is imperative to begin by examining the common sense understanding of the concept.

The common-sense conception of truth is a kind of correspondence. In fact, the famous Aristotelian definition, ‘To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true’ (*Metaphysics* 1011<sup>b</sup>25), can be considered as the common-sense intuition of truth. To ignore the common-sense intuition in favour of semantic or logical (that is, formal) understanding of truth while exploring the concept would be a disservice to the concept since truth does not primarily play a logical or semantic function. (The priority of the logical and semantic theories is an analysis of the uses of the truth predicate in propositions or sentences. However, even in such instances, at least the understanding of truth as minimal correspondence, or even common-sense correspondence is assumed).

The common-sense conception of truth acknowledges that truth is some form of relation between knowing and reality. The fundamental problem with the common-sense understanding of truth is its defective understanding of knowing and reality as looking and “the already out there now real” respectively. Regardless of the inadequacy of the common-sense understanding, a point that must be made is that truth in its common-sense understanding is definable. Moore (1970), who acknowledges the connection between truth as correspondence and common-sense, maintains that the correspondence theory of truth is the foundation of common-sense realism, since physical facts are neither *logically* nor *causally* dependent on mental facts. It could be argued that the close link between truth as correspondence and common-sense intuition is responsible for the inability to eliminate the truth talk even when professional philosophers attempt to sideline the correspondence theory of truth or even to eliminate the concept of truth altogether.

In the above paragraph, it is stated that common-sense understanding of truth is a kind of correspondence. In saying that it is a kind of correspondence, it is meant that the rethinking of truth as correspondence that is envisaged in this thesis is not reducible to nor identical with the common-sense conception of truth. This is because the common-

sense view of truth is fundamentally founded on naïve realism and so shares in the limitation of naïve realism. An example of the common-sense approach to reality that manifests its limitation in the human quest for truth is shown by popular common-sense discussion that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. For the common-sense realist therefore, it is true that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. However, that judgment does not enjoy the status of virtually unconditioned since what appears to be the rising and setting of the sun is due to rotation of the earth.

The primary limitation of naïve realism is the “in here” and “already out there” dichotomy. This dichotomy jeopardises the quest for truth and distorts the understanding of the notion of objectivity because the conscious activities of the subject are referred to as the “*in here*” while content to be known (being or reality) is referred as *the “already out there”*. The consequence of this is that the process of knowing is viewed as just taking a look or immediate intuition. In other words, the naïve realist ‘mistakenly attributes the objectivity of human knowing, not to human knowing, but to some component in human knowing’. This reduction of the process of human knowing to a single act, that is seeing, limits the act of knowing to any activity ‘that sufficiently resembles ocular vision’ (Lonergan 1967:232). It is not difficult to realise that the naïve realist perspective of knowledge and truth is operative in Moore’s common-sense conception of truth (1970). The “in here” – “already out there” dichotomy is exemplified in his mental facts and physical facts distinction respectively.

It is because of the “in here” and “already out there” in the common-sense understanding of truth as exemplified by Moore that the common-sense conception cannot be taken as a prototype of truth as correspondence. Lonergan points out how the misunderstanding of knowing as taking a look is a stumbling block to the pursuit of authentic human knowledge and truth thus:

Knowing, if objective, is like seeing. We know that we know, so, in some analogous sense of the word, “see,” we see our knowing. We know the truth of knowing; but truth is the correspondence of the knowing to the known; therefore, in some analogous sense of the word, “see,” we see the correspondence of our knowing to the known. Finally, science is of the universal; but scientific knowledge is at least possible; therefore, in some analogous sense of the word, “see,” we see universals. (1967:233).

The above quotation from Lonergan shows clearly that common-sense understanding of truth cannot be an authentic conception of truth as correspondence because of reductive understanding of knowing, objectivity and being.

Why then does the naïve or common-sense realist irredeemably reduce human cognitional activities to just looking, irrespective of the quandary of such reduction? Lonergan argues that the reason rests on the naïve realists' (and also the idealists') vision of the world (1967:236). According to him, 'their world is a picture' and not 'the universe of being' as it is for the critical realists (1967:236). And since the world of the naïve realists is a world of picture, they have to look and see in order to know. However, '[i]f their world were the universe of being, they would agree that the original relationship of cognitional activity to the universe of being must lie in the intention of being' (1967:236). From the clarification that Lonergan makes about the worlds of naïve realists and critical realists, two comments are worthy of note. Firstly, the "in-here" and "out there" mentality that is rampant in the current philosophical investigation of truth, especially in the analytic philosophical tradition, is founded in the picture world of the naïve realists and idealists. Secondly, Rorty's (1980) criticism of representational epistemology can be considered as the aftermath of picture world mentality.

Furthermore, a critical analysis would show that the common-sense understanding of truth, which is embedded in the conception of truth as correspondence, is assumed in most conceptions of truth. For instance, irrespective of Davidson's argument for the indefinability of truth and his rejection of both substantial and deflationary theories, the common-sense conception of truth is assumed in his understanding of truth in connection with meaning. Davidson acknowledges that there is some link between language and the world, as he states that 'what ultimately ties language to the world is that the conditions that typically cause us to hold sentences true *constitute* the truth conditions, and hence the meanings, of our sentences' (Davidson 1996:275). Although he does not proceed to name facts or states of affairs as that which is responsible for the connections between language and the world, since the terms 'facts and states of affairs' are repugnant to him, it is arguable that what Davidson refers to as that which constitutes the truth of sentences, is mind-transcendent reality. If this interpretation is correct then what Davidson refers to

is what correspondence theorists refer to as facts. In that case, even though Davidson has no commitment to truth as correspondence, the common-sense understanding of truth is presupposed.

Moreover, it is not only Davidson's conception of truth that presupposes common-sense understanding of truth or even correspondence. As it is argued already in chapter four above, while considering the alternatives to the correspondence theory, most of the alternative theories of truth, both substantive and deflationary theories, presuppose the correspondence theory. It is because of the presupposition of truth as correspondence that this thesis maintains that other theories of truth are not adequate alternatives for the correspondence theory. Thus, it is an advantage to truth as correspondence that it does not presuppose any other theory of truth, but other theories presuppose it. In fact, even in cases where it would seem that no assumption of truth as correspondence is necessary, like the prosentential and speech acts understandings of truth, a further analysis shows that a second or deeper level of questioning is required. While analysing the claims of absolutists and relativists about truth, Simon Blackburn states the dispute between them arises when the truth of a simple proposition like; <There is a hike in food prices in Nigeria> is raised, because there seems to be 'a conviction that there are two issues, when in fact there is only one' (2006:58). Nevertheless, the situation is not as easy to resolve as it seems. For instance, when the statement, 'It is true that there is a hike in food prices in Nigeria', is made, a defender of the speech act theory would say that the statement means nothing more than, 'There is a hike in food prices in Nigeria'. However, when it is considered that 'It is false that there is a hike in food prices in Nigeria' is a possibility, then it becomes obvious that there is not just one issue, since it has to be clarified as to why only one of the two options is correct. To provide this answer, one will directly or indirectly revert to the correspondence theory of truth. In other words, the correspondence theory of truth has the advantage of distinguishing between truth and falsehood of the prospective judgment – There is a hike in food prices in Nigeria. To know whether the statement is true or false, a knowing subject through the act of reflective understanding will consider the conditions that need to be fulfilled for the prospective judgment to transform to the status of virtually unconditioned. Put differently, a reasonable judgment

of an agent engaged in a cognitional process is necessary to ascertain its truth or falsehood.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the issues concerning the relevance of the philosophical investigation of the nature of truth are investigated. Davidson's indefinability thesis is the first issue that was examined. Contrary to the Davidsonian thesis that truth is indefinable and that the attempt to define truth is nothing more than folly, it is argued that it is essential to define truth. This is because the definition of truth provides the framework in which the various controversies against the concept of truth are examined. In defending the definability of truth, the assumption of this thesis is that definition does not necessarily imply the reduction of a concept to a more basic one as Davidson holds. Moreover, it is stressed that the connection between truth and meaning which is central to Davidson's discussion of the concept of truth, is a privileged medium for the definition of truth. Hence, the claim of this thesis is that the withholding of the definition of truth by Davidson serves his need of avoiding any metaphysical commitment about truth.

Furthermore, while exploring Rorty's calls for the elimination of truth or cautionary use of truth, it is emphasised that Rorty's claim, that truth does not add anything more which justification does not express, does not fully account for the truth predicate. In addition, his reduction of truth to 'that which is good for a closed group', for instance, Western liberals, seems to turn truth to be an arbitrary concept. Besides, truth as understood in theoretical philosophy is not equivalent to what is good for a particular group to believe. Moreover, while the goal of theoretical philosophy is not practical utility, viewed from the role of truth and reconciliation commissions in some countries, it is arguable that truth has social and practical utility. Also, it is pointed out that there is no intrinsic exclusivity between solidarity and the pursuit of objectivity, if the pursuit of objectivity is supposed to be a reason for the elimination of the concept of truth as Rorty claims, then it is not a sufficient reason. Hence, it is argued that rather than being an obstacle to the important human value of solidarity, objectivity because of its component elements – attentiveness, intelligence and reasonableness – is vital for good solidarity.

Lastly, it is emphasised that the closed connection between the correspondence theory and common-sense intuition about truth, irrespective of the inadequacy of the common-sense conception, show that Davidson's indefinability thesis and Rorty's clamour for elimination of truth or for cautionary use of truth are counterintuitive. Be that as it may, it is highlighted that truth as correspondence is irreducible to common-sense intuition because the common-sense intuition is rooted in naïve realism and so suffers from the limitations of naïve realism as exemplified its partial understanding of objectivity and picture world mentality of the naïve realist.

## Chapter 8

### Truth as Reflective Correspondence

#### 8.1 Introduction

I have pointed out that the common versions of the correspondence theory found within analytic philosophy, are trapped by what we have called, following McCarthy, the crisis of philosophy (1990:1). By this is meant, as we saw, the inability of contemporary philosophy to account for the intentional subject, leaving the logicist project of Frege (1956) and Russell (1906) and the empiricist theories of truth (advanced by logical positivists and linguistic philosophers) ungrounded.

Since it is claimed that truth as correspondence is assumed at least in the minimum by the various theories of truth, the question that arises is, is it possible to reconsider that conception of truth as correspondence without falling into the pitfalls that limit the analytic versions of the correspondence theory? In the second chapter, Lonergan-inspired understanding was proposed as a new way of understanding truth as correspondence. The mark of this version is the role of the conscious intentional subject and the place of cognitional theory in the quest for truth. In fact, every theory or conception of truth is influenced explicitly or at least implicitly by the theorist's cognitional theory. Due to the centrality of the acts of the subject and inevitability of cognitional process in the exposition of this version of the correspondence theory, it is called the conception of truth as reflective or critical correspondence.

A fundamental characteristic of the Lonerganian conception of truth as correspondence is that truth properly understood can be adequately investigated in the context of ascent to knowledge and self-transcendence. Truth, therefore, is the connecting link of

epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and one as well might say, of religious consciousness. Truth discourse within this framework cannot neglect the conscious and intentional subject. Since empirical consciousness or experiencing is the initial step of the knowing process, it becomes imperative that the nature of human acts of experiencing is investigated. This chapter, therefore, begins by briefly examining the human subject and its act of experiencing. The importance of the interest in and the purpose of examining the different patterns of experience is to account for the role of the intentionality of the subject in the quest for truth. Further, the subject's process of knowing which culminates with judgment will be examined. In order to show that the authentic subjectivity of the subject does not exclude objectivity of human knowledge but rather guarantees it, the notion of objectivity and its connection with truth is explored. Moreover, it is not sufficient for the subject to attain truth through his attentive experiencing, intelligent understanding and reasonableness of his affirmation. Rather since, truth is a human value, it is vital that the truth reached guides the subject in his way of living. In other words, it is imperative for the subject to make the attained truth his own. Hence the last section of this chapter will examine the appropriation of truth.

This chapter will mainly be based on Lonergan's *Insight* (1992 [2013]), especially chapters ten, eleven, thirteen and seventeen. This is because these are chapters in which Lonergan clearly articulates his cognitional theory which is the prerequisite for the understanding of the conception of truth as reflective correspondence. Besides it is in these chapters that Lonergan articulates the interrelatedness between cognitional theory, epistemology and metaphysics, and the connection among them is important for an adequate investigation of truth. Nevertheless, section 8.2 is based on the second section of chapter six of Lonergan's *Insight*. It is worth noting that although the Lonergan-inspired understanding is used to address the deficiency in the investigation of truth within the analytic tradition, Lonergan himself did not treat the question of truth in the light of contemporary analytic writers.

Another work that has a great influence in this chapter is chapter eight of McCarthy's *The Crisis of Philosophy* (1990). Notwithstanding that McCarthy's work is not principally on the question of truth but on the lacuna in the analytic philosophical framework because

of its neglect of the subject and rejection of tradition, his engagement with analytic philosophers is very helpful for the understanding of the traps that philosophical investigation of truth in the analytic tradition finds itself; and why it is not possible to elaborate a robust substantial conception of truth as correspondence within that framework.

## **8.2 The Human Subject and its Act of Experiencing**

Frege's quest for the objective, and the modelling of modern philosophy on the natural sciences creates a problem for the understanding of the relation between subjectivity and objectivity (1956:289-311). Taking the natural sciences as the paradigm for all inquiry, or the standard for knowing and knowledge results from the idolisation of science and its inevitable consequence is the oblivion of the knowing and acting subject (Shutte 1993:41). Because the paradigm of the empirical sciences understands the objective in terms of extroversion, there is a tendency to think that the emphasis on the subject that Descartes championed at the inception of the modern philosophical era is detrimental to the quest for objective knowledge and truth (1997:77-84, 134-146). The consequence of such a tendency is the juxtaposition of the subject and the object as parallel or rather contrasting opposites. Within such a framework, the subject is equated with the particular, the private, the "personal" and the non-objective.

A typical example of positing the objective as an antithesis of the subjective is seen in Thomas Nagel (1979:196-214) who contends that objective has no intercepting point with the subjective since, according to him, to be objective means 'not referring to anything we come to know primarily through our experience of being aware.' (Giddy 2009:369). Nagel's conception of objectivity is extroverted in character because according to him, the basic feature of objectivity 'is externality or detachment'. Consequently, he argues that the publicness of the subjective dimension because of its intersubjective availability does not entail objectivity (Nagel 1979:208). Nonetheless, such understanding of the subject is the reduction of the subject without taking into consideration the defining characteristic of the subject qua subject – that is, that which performs conscious acts. The minimum requirement to be a subject is the capacity for dreaming. Lonergan captures the defining feature of the subject thus:

To be a subject, one at least must dream. But the dreamer is only the minimal subject: one is more a subject when one is awake, still more when one is actively intelligent, still more when one actively is reasonable, still more in one's deliberations and decisions when one actively is responsible and free (1967:241).

It is, therefore, a misunderstanding to think that the subject, or rather the subjective, is an impediment for the attainment of objectivity. An authentic objectivity cannot exclude the importance of subjectivity. To mention the subject is to refer to that which is capable of conscious experiential acts, intelligent acts, rational acts and deliberating acts. It is not enough to perform various activities for one to be a subject, but it is essential that the one who performs the activities is conscious of one's performing of the activities that are intended.

A question that might arise is; do the mentioned acts – experiential, intelligent, rational and deliberating acts – cover all the acts that the subject is capable of performing since, he or she also runs, talks, dances, plays, has sex, prays and so forth? The first point to be made is that *prima facie*, it is not all the acts of the subject that are included, for instance religious acts – praying and fasting – seem to be absent. Nonetheless, on further examination, one could argue that all the acts of the subject are included in the classification because even the religious acts that obviously seem to be missing are performed as a result on the subject's deliberations and decisions. Secondly, cognisant that Lonergan's *Insight* explores insight as activity and insight as knowledge, when cognitional process or structure is the issue in question, all the activities of the subject can be categorized into experiential, intelligent and rational acts (1967:223-234, 1992 [2013]:346-347). It is surmised that this is the reason why Lonergan did not explicitly explore ethical and religious consciousness in *Insight* but did explore them in his subsequent works since ethical and religious consciousness arise because of the quest for self-transcendence.

As already indicated, without the possibility of performing some acts, one is not a subject but merely a substance. The activities that a subject can perform are of various kinds. However, the first of these acts are always acts of experiencing. Hence, it is worth examining the nature of human experience since it is the basic foundation of human cognitional structure. The first point to be made is that human experience is both dynamic

and patterned. In any act of experiencing, there is a relation between the act and the sense organ that is responsible for that act, eye for seeing, ear for hearing.<sup>1</sup> However, the relation is not limited to the act and the corresponding sense organ but includes the interest and attention of the subject. It is because of the vital role of the interest and attention of the subject that Lonergan emphasises that human experience is patterned. He writes: ‘Besides the systematic link between senses and sense organs, there is, immanent in experience, a fact variously named conation, interest, attention, purpose’ (1992 [2013]:205) For instance, there is a difference between seeing a datum of experience just because one stumbles on it when walking and seeing a datum because one is captured by its beauty.

The foundation of the patterns of experience of the human subject is the multi-faceted dimensions of the human person. The human being is more than just a living being. He or she is not just biological but is also aesthetically inclined and intelligent. His or her experience caters for those dimensions depending on his or her interest at any particular time. Lonergan classifies the human experience into biological, aesthetic, intellectual and dramatic patterns<sup>2</sup>. The biological pattern of experience accounts for the experiential acts of the human subject because of its basic character as a living being capable of sensing and perceiving. In this pattern of experience, the functionality of the external and internal senses is vital. The external senses serve as the vehicle through which ‘biological opportunities and dangers’ are perceived. Lonergan summarily describes the biological pattern of experience thus:

the pattern is a set of intelligible relations that link together sequences of sensations, memories, images, conations, emotions, and bodily movement; and to name the pattern biological is simply to affirm that the sequences converge upon terminal activities of intussusception or reproduction, or, when negative in scope, self-preservation’ (1992 [2013]:206).

Because of the indispensability of the senses especially the external sense organs, the biological pattern of experience is marked by extroversion. A good example of the

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<sup>1</sup> This relation is not exclusive to the external senses but is vital for the internal senses also. For instance, for there to be the act of imagining, there must be the faculty of imagination, and for one to remember, there must be memory.

<sup>2</sup> Lonergan commentators identify other patterns that are not explicitly mentioned and developed by Lonergan for instance, practical, mystical, symbolic and ethical patterns (Walmsley 2008:138-169). Nevertheless, I have not explored those patterns because they are not essential for the arguments of this thesis.

biological pattern of experience is the sensing of someone who is studying at night and suddenly the lights go off. In order for him to continue with his studies, he must leave his study room to get a torch light or candles but in the process of this movement he stumbles on a chair. There is no doubt that he experiences the chair, but such experiencing is purely biological.

Beyond the biological pattern of experience is the aesthetic pattern. Here the act of experiencing is more than that of a mere biological entity. The aesthetic pattern is said to be beyond the biological because the subject requires more than just his biological and sensitive nature to actualize it. It is characteristic of the act of a subject that is captured by a sense of wonder. For instance, someone who is captivated by movement of waves in the sea or beauty of a piece of art is not merely experiencing biologically even though one makes use of the organ of sight. The experiencing of a piece of art is an example of an aesthetic pattern par excellence. The aesthetic pattern is differentiated from both the biological and intellectual patterns of experience because of its liberating effect. Lonergan states the liberating effect of the aesthetic pattern as follows: ‘Art is twofold freedom. As it liberates experience from the drag of biological purposiveness, so it liberates intelligence from the wearying constraints of mathematical proofs, scientific verification, and commonsense [sic] factualness’ (1992 [2013]:208). If the capacity of the human being’s aesthetic pattern of experience rests neither on his biological nature nor his intellectuality, on what does it rest? The human aesthetic pattern of experience is founded on the symbolic nature of the human subject. In other words, it is because human beings are symbolic beings that they are capable of an aesthetic pattern of experience. Hence, an aesthetic pattern does not require a precise intellectual formulation.<sup>3</sup> For instance, for the one who is traversing a desert, the sight of an oasis is not just a biological experience of water but a symbol of hope. Walmsley (2008:118) captures the liberating effect of the aesthetic pattern of experience that differentiates it from the biological pattern thus: ‘If

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<sup>3</sup> In his clarification of the symbolic nature of the aesthetic pattern of experience Lonergan (1992 [2013]:208) writes: ‘Art then becomes symbolic, but what is symbolized is obscure. It is an expression of the human subject outside the limits of adequate intellectual formulation or appraisal. It seeks to mean, to convey, to impart, something that is to be reached, not through science or philosophy, but through a participation, and in some fashion a reenactment of the artist’s inspiration and intention. Prescientific and prephilosophic, it may strain for truth and value without defining them. Post-biological, it may reflect the psychological depths, yet by that very fact it will go beyond them.’

the biological pattern is the pattern in which the human spirit is constricted, the aesthetic is the pattern of liberation and the pattern of creative concern to be. It is the pattern of concern to be-in-the-world as open to what is 'other' and different.'

Considering that the human subject is not just a biological or symbolic being but also an intelligent being, his experience is patterned intelligently. The biological and aesthetic patterns of experience provoke questions for the human person because of his inquiring spirit. The subject does not only experience. It yearns to understand its acts of experiencing so as to explain them. The biological and aesthetic patterns serve as raw material for intelligible inquiry because the awareness of such acts of experiencing provokes the subject into raising what, why and how questions. However, the consciousness of the biological and aesthetic patterns of experience does not automatically translate into the intellectual pattern. Whether the biological and aesthetic patterns would lead to the intellectual pattern of experience depends on the subject's age, natural aptitude, academic and professional background. The intellectual pattern, therefore, is not a consequence of passivity. Rather, it results from conscious dynamic activities of the subject. As Lonergan puts it: 'To be talented is to find that one's experience slips easily into the intellectual pattern, that one's sensitive spontaneity responds quickly and precisely to the exigencies of mind. Insights come readily. Exact formulation follows promptly' (1992 [2013]:209-210). So in the experiencing of the conscious subject, there is progression from biological pattern to intellectual pattern. Although there is differentiation of the various patterns of human experience, that does not imply total separation among the patterns. There is a unity of the patterns since the human subject is not fragmented. In addition, the human subject is not an island to himself or herself. He is always engaged in relationship because he is a social being. His sociability results in a dramatic pattern of experience because he is or at least should be aware of how he ought to comport himself in the presence of others (1992 [2013]:212).

One might ask, what is the use of exploring the patterns of experience of the human subject if the task of this chapter is to revisit or rethink truth as correspondence? Although at first sight, the necessity of the exploration of the human subject and his patterned experience might not seem obvious, such exploration is not futile. This is because,

reconsideration of truth, especially from Lonerganian or even any neo-Thomist perspective requires that truth is examined within the wider framework of the human quest for knowledge.

### **8.3 Truth and Knowing**

The relation between the process of knowing and truth has long been a topic of interest for philosophers. Denying such a relation is just like playing the ostrich. One might ask whether the purported relationship between truth and knowing is intrinsic or manufactured. In other words, it is important to seek the foundation of the connection between truth and knowing in philosophical pursuit<sup>4</sup>. The foundation of the aforementioned relation is the centrality of cognitional theory in any philosophical position or even counter position (cf. Lonergan 1992 [2013], McCarthy 1990, Meynell 1991). A philosophical position is a philosopher's basic thesis about being, reality, knowledge, truth, objectivity and other philosophical issues. While a counter position is the basic thesis that directly opposes a philosopher's position. For instance, for the critical realist, being is that which is known as the result of intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation, whereas a counter position to the position of the critical realist, is the thesis of the naïve realist – that being is the “already-out-there-now”.

A philosopher's epistemological and metaphysical positions are dictated, or at least, influenced by his or her cognitional theory. Hence, any theory of truth is the consequence of a philosopher's cognitional theory. An adequate cognitional theory gives rise to an adequate account of truth. As such, a reformulation of the correspondence theory must first give an account of a cognitional theory that serves as its foundation. Without the dynamic human process of knowing that begins with empirical consciousness, that is, the act of experiencing, through intelligent consciousness and culminates with rational consciousness, that is, act of reflective understanding and judgement, the question of truth does not arise. Truth, therefore, ‘is a property immanent within rationally conscious acts of judgment’ (McCarthy 1990:325). To highlight that the process of knowing is the context in which the question of truth arises, McCarthy affirms: ‘Ontologically and

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<sup>4</sup> Lonergan articulates the intrinsic relation between knowing and truth and the inevitable role of reflection thus: ‘to know truth we have to know ourselves and the nature of our knowledge, and the method to be employed is reflection’ (1997:87).

formally [truth] resides only in the subject, but intentionally its content is independent of the persons who affirm it.' (1990:325). By differentiating between ontological/formal residence of truth in the subject and the intentional content of truth, McCarthy affirms that although the decisive act of judgment belongs to the subject, it does not affect the intentional objectivity of the content of judgment. This is because the subject's act of judging is marked by "subjective self-transcendence", since in making a judgment the subject goes beyond his whims and caprices to affirm what is actually the case.

Considering the intrinsic relation between truth and human cognitional structure, the dynamic human cognitional process as defended by Lonergan will be explored. According to him, the human process of knowing is characterised by three complementary but irreducible levels of consciousness. They are empirical consciousness, intelligent consciousness and rational consciousness (1992 [2013]:346-347). They correspond to the essential components of the human subject as sensitive, intelligent and rational (1967:223-234). An explicit exposition of the human cognitional structure in three levels of consciousness curbs a correspondence theorist from falling into the danger of reducing correspondence to some empirical acts of matching, mirroring, fitting or comparing that is characteristic in the exposition of the correspondence theory of truth in the analytic philosophical tradition. At the same time, the three-levelled cognitional structure prevents the critical realist from reducing truth to coherence as it is the case with idealists. In other words, just as knowing is not mere perceiving or taking a look for the critical realist, the question of truth cannot be confined to any of the three levels of consciousness separately. It is only when the conscious subject has sufficiently performed the various acts that are characteristic of the levels of the human cognitional structure, that is, when the prospective judgment is virtually unconditioned that knowing (or knowledge) ensues. A prospective judgment or a subject's hypothesis is said to be virtually unconditioned when the subject knows the conditions that need to be satisfied for there to be a reasonable judgment and after deliberate investigations, he or she can evidently ascertain that all the conditions are sufficiently fulfilled.

Consequently, the relation of knowing to that which is known, that is, to being, is truth as critical correspondence. It is noteworthy to state that this does not result from matching a proposition with fact, or the comparing of a judgment with being. Rather it results from the act of judgment by a knowing subject who has experienced attentively, grasped intelligently that which he has experienced, and has reasonably judged through reflective understanding. Although the acts of reflection and judgment are the decisive moments for knowledge and truth, there is no knowing and attainment of truth without prior experiencing (sensing, perceiving and imaging) and prior intelligent grasp (inquiry, insight, understanding and formulation) since the subsequent level of consciousness presupposes and complements the prior level (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:298, 511). To highlight the indispensability of experiencing and understanding in the process of human knowing, Lonergan argues that:

one can pass judgment on something that one does not understand, but then one is exercising not human knowing but human arrogance. Or again, one can pass judgment without any regard to the data of experience; and in that case one is setting fact aside. A judgment that has no relation to any data of experience, no connection with it, is just “in the air”; it is apart from matters of fact (1996:215 -216).

On the other hand, there is no amount of attentive experiencing and intelligent grasp (or understanding) that by themselves result in knowing without a reasonable judgment of an intentional subject. To emphasise that empirical consciousness and intelligent consciousness without rational consciousness (reflection and act of judgment) do not translate to knowing, Lonergan writes:

But if your knowing is just on the first two levels, the levels of experience and understanding, then there is no difference between fact and fiction, reality and appearance, philosophy and myth, astrology and astronomy, alchemy and chemistry, history and legend. Those differences are all a matter of judgment. It is by judgment that you reject what is merely insight into imagination and accept understanding of experience (1996:224)

The common tendency, therefore, to speak of empirical knowledge is itself problematic. This is because it is either an incorrect use of terminology or it is the reduction of knowing to empirical consciousness; that is, the identification of perception with knowledge. Involved here is also the reduction of being to empiricism, with the presupposition that all that is can be empirically verified through limited human experiential and intellectual means. But as it is argued here, it is only a deficient cognitional theory that would reduce

knowing to mere perceiving. And such reduction is detrimental to an elaboration of a robust substantive theory of truth. In the same vein, knowledge cannot be equated with just intelligent consciousness since the activities that characterize the intelligent consciousness are just part of the human cognitional process. Hence, truth or falsity cannot be ascribed to understanding and definitions (Cf. Lonergan 1997:70). Properly speaking understanding and definitions *per se* are correct or incorrect but not true or false.

Knowing cannot be reduced to any of the levels of cognitional structure. Neither can the levels of consciousness be reduced to one another. This is because regardless of the fact that the human cognitional process is dynamic and structural, the parts the structure that is exhibited by the activities that characterize human knowing are ‘related to one another, not by similarity but functionally’ (Cf. Lonergan 1967:224). Therefore, it is a gross mistake to compare empirical consciousness with either intelligent or rational consciousness in terms of analogy (Lonergan 1996:220). For instance, to assert that understanding is to the intellect, what seeing is to the eye, is counterproductive or destructive if one aims at espousing a robust conception of truth as reflective correspondence.

Notwithstanding, the point that is being made so far, that the act of judgment of the knowing subject is essential for there to be knowing and for truth to be known, it does not imply that truth is merely subjective or confined to the private domain. Lonergan in *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, maintains that the role of the subject in composition and division, that is in the act of judgment, does not entail that truth is purely subjective, since judgment and mental synthesis are not equivalent (1997:63)<sup>5</sup>. Judgment is understood as the act of composition and division in Aquinas because, when the subject judges, he affirms of what he has grasped and adequately understood that it is really so, or he denies it by saying that it is not really the case (*De Veritate* Q 1, art 3). Because of the use of the copula in the verbal expression of a judgment, it is called a composition. However, because of the use of the copula and negation when the subject denies, that is,

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<sup>5</sup> In differentiating between mental synthesis and judgment in Thomistic thought, Lonergan states that ‘mental synthesis is one thing and that judgment involves another. Judgment includes knowledge of truth; but knowledge of truth is knowledge not merely of mental synthesis but essentially of the correspondence between mental synthesis and real synthesis’ (1997:63).

when that which is grasped is not what is really the case, Aquinas calls judgment an act of division<sup>6</sup>. To argue his point that truth results from judgment and not a subjective mental synthesis, Lonergan avers:

[T]ruth is not merely the subjective mental synthesis. It is the correspondence between mental and real synthesis. More accurately, in our knowledge of composite things, truth is the correspondence of mental composition with real composition or of mental division with real division; falsity is the noncorrespondence of mental composition with real division or of mental division to real composition (1997:63).

The implication of Lonergan's conception of truth as correspondence that is contained above is that truth is intrinsically connected with critical metaphysical realism. Hence, no degree of mental synthesis or mere judgment yields knowledge and truth if there is no relation to being. Nonetheless, there is the danger of misunderstanding the role of the subject in the cognitional act of judging. The common misunderstanding is to say, if it is the subject that performs the decisive act that leads to knowledge and truth, then knowledge and truth are just subjective. Such misunderstanding is manifest in Frege's quest for the primacy of logic by discrediting the correspondence theory of truth and his elimination of the cognitional acts of the subject from his investigation of truth by emphasising that truth belongs to the third realm because according to him, the realm of thought is objective (1956:302). By so doing, Frege relegates all that has to do with the subject to the merely subjective realm of ideas. Despite Frege's contention, the role of the intentional subject in the quest for truth does entail subjectivity of truth. In fact, the question of objectivity cannot be divorced from the cognitional acts of the subject, since subjectivity and objectivity are not mutually exclusive terms. Rather, genuine objectivity results from the authentic subjectivity of the knowing subject. In other words, subjectivity and objectivity are two sides of the same coin. To clarify this, it is imperative to examine Lonergan's conception of the notion of objectivity which will be accomplished in the next section.

As summary of this section, it is contended that in order to understand what truth is, we need to understand what human intelligence and reason are and what are their roles in the

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<sup>6</sup> To explain why he calls judgement an act of composition and division, Aquinas writes: 'the intellect judges about the thing it has apprehended at the moment when it says something is or is not. This is the role of "the intellect composing and dividing"' (*De Veritate* Q 1, art 3).

cognitional process. This is what it means to say that ‘[t]he proximate criterion of truth is reflective grasp of the virtually unconditioned’ (Lonergan 1992[2013]:573). Or as McCarthy (1990:324) puts it: ‘The normative exigence of rational judgment is identical with the proximate criterion of truth.’ This normative exigence which is realized by the subject is what is lacking in the contemporary investigations of truth by analytic philosophers as their quest for truth is removed from the context of the human pure and disinterested desire to know the virtually unconditioned. Because of the exigence of rational judgment that is characteristic of the pursuit of knowledge and truth, that which the subject affirms is unconditioned and as such, it ‘is independent of the judging subject who verifies and affirms it’ (1990:324). The consequence of the virtually unconditionedness and independence of that which is intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed is its objectivity and self-transcendence (1990:325).

#### **8.4 Truth and Objectivity**

If truth is not objective, on what ground would it be preferable to an opinion or a belief? This is the question that is overlooked in the exposition of truth theorists who neglect or completely eliminate the role of the intentional subject in their investigation. To argue that the intentional acts of the subject do not undermine the objectivity of truth, demands that the notion of objectivity and its relation to truth should be explored. This section will examine the Lonerganian understanding of objectivity.

The simplest way to present the notion of objectivity according to Lonergan is in the light of the Husserlian dictum; ‘every consciousness is consciousness of something’. All forms of consciousness are geared towards a particular thing. There is no form of consciousness that is about nothing or that takes place in a vacuum. For a subject to experience, there must be a given datum of experience. In other words, attentiveness aims at some data. In the same way, every insight or understanding is an insight about or understanding of something that is being inquired about. Lastly, it is the case also with reflection and judgment. No reflection or judgment is self-reflexive. It is always about what has been presented to the sense (both external and internal), and which has been pondered and understood by the intellect. Each level of consciousness has its corresponding or parallel aspect of objectivity. For instance, the experiencing of a subject is grounded because there

is a partial aspect of the objectivity of data which Lonergan calls experiential objectivity (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:405-407). It is because of this partial aspect of objectivity that various visual or auditory data can be distinguished from one another. The acts of understanding and judgment have their corresponding aspects of objectivity, that is, normative and absolute objectivity respectively. Nevertheless, just as acts of experiencing, understanding and judgment do not by themselves separately constitute knowing, their corresponding partial aspects of objectivity do not disjointedly constitute objectivity properly understood.

Objectivity properly understood is patterned within a context. 'Principally, the notion of objectivity is contained within a patterned context of judgments' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:399). A reasonable judgment in isolation does not express the complete understanding of objectivity. An important point that needs to be made regarding Lonergan's conception of objectivity is that, if the principal conception of objectivity is found within the patterned context of judgments, then one cannot coherently talk of objectivity in isolation of the intentional subject that alone is capable of experiencing, understanding and ultimately judging. Therefore, 'there is objectivity if there are distinct beings, some of which both know themselves and know others as others' (1992 [2013]:401) By this Lonergan means that without beings, for instance, humans that are capable of knowing and affirming themselves as knowers and as such of distinguishing themselves from other beings, the question of objectivity would not arise in the first place. Moreover, the relationship between objectivity and existence of distinct beings is vital because if there were just one being, it would have been meaningless to raise the question of objectivity. Raising the question of objectivity therefore, demands that there are distinct beings and that some of the beings know that they are knowers. For instance, this is exemplified when A affirms himself as a knower but at the time can affirm that B is a knower, and that he is not B. It is when there is more than one knower (knowing subject) that the question of objectivity arises, since if both A and B are knowing subjects, then it is meaningful to ask: Is what A claims to know the case and is what B claims to know the case? This conception of objectivity is a clear contrast with the Fregean notion of objectivity which eliminates or truncates the subject.

Rather than trying to account for objectivity of truth by neglecting the subject through the postulation of a third realm of thoughts without the thinker as Frege does, objectivity is attained when the subject sufficiently responds to the following questions: Is there a given datum that is presented to the empirical consciousness of the subject? Does the subject purely, unrestrictedly and disinterestedly desire to understand the given datum so as to grasp it as virtually unconditioned? Does the subject after reflection and gathering of sufficient evidence reasonably make a judgment about that which he has grasped intelligently? When the answers to the three questions are all affirmative, then it is said that that which is known is objective. And because in such a situation, judgment is in harmony with that which is, there is correspondence, that is, 'the relation of knowing to being'. In fact, without an act judgment, after experiencing and understanding, there is no knowledge but mere thinking, and so the questions of objectivity and truth do not arise. The knowledge and truth that is arrived at the end of a cognitional process which culminates with reasonable affirmation of a subject is said to be objective because any intentional subject that is presented with the same data will make the same reasonable affirmation after grasping that which is present as virtually unconditioned.

Although it is the principal notion of objectivity that gives a comprehensive understanding of objectivity, its attainment is only possible because of the three partial aspects of objectivity. Absolute objectivity is directly linked with rational consciousness. Hence, its foundation 'is the virtually unconditioned that is grasped by reflective understanding and posited in judgment' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:402). Any single judgment that results from reflective understanding when a subject has sufficient evidence that leads to the fulfilment of the conditions of one's hypothesis (prospective judgment) is absolutely objective. This is because the truth of that reasonable affirmation is not relative to 'the subject that utters it' or the place and time of its utterance. As such, the truth of such an affirmation is eternal and immutable (1992 [2013]:402). A question that arises is, if true affirmations are eternal and immutable, how is absolute objectivity different from Frege's notion of objectivity that argues that the truth-value of thoughts are eternal and immutable? The basic difference is that Frege's postulation of the third realm, in isolation from the subject, does not even account for how a true affirmation is arrived at. On the other hand, Lonergan's notion of absolute objectivity is not possible at

all without a conscious act of judgment by an intentional subject. That is, one cannot talk of absolute objectivity if there is no prior pure desire to know by a subject.

Just as rational consciousness has its aspect of objectivity, so the intelligent consciousness, there is normative objectivity. This aspect of objectivity has its basis on the desire to know of an intelligent agent, that is wholly ‘unrestricted, detached and disinterested’. This aspect of objectivity is contrasted with ‘the subjectivity of wishful thinking, of rash or excessively cautious judgment’ (1992 [2013:404]). This aspect of objectivity arises from the limitless desire of the human person to know being. As Lonergan put it, ‘to be objective, in the normative sense of the term, is to give free rein to the pure desire, to its questions for intelligence, and to its questions for reflection’ (1992 [2013]:404) That is, the propensity to ask countless “what, how and why” questions that are followed by the ‘is it really so’ question. Moreover, because the experiencing of a subject is an experiencing of a particular datum, there is a partial aspect of objectivity that is experiential. This is grounded on the givenness of sense data as a given (1992[2013]:405-406).

From the discussion about objectivity so far, it is pertinent to point out that objectivity is not reached by contrasting the subject with the object as if they are two opposing poles.<sup>7</sup> There is a situation in which the subject and the object coincide. That is in the case of the self-affirmation of the knower. So it is a mistake to think that in order to attain an objective truth, the knowing subject needs to be sidelined or eliminated altogether. On the contrary, attainment of truth and objectivity is an achievement of an intentional subject who is disinterestedly engaged in a comprehensive cognitional process. McCarthy articulates: ‘Epistemic objectivity and truth are the fruit of an authentic and normative subjective achievement. As human beings, we can respond to the demands of our native intelligence and rationality and, by meeting them, achieve a limited knowledge of the real’ (1990:326). The notion of objectivity that is defended by Lonergan and McCarthy is in clear contrast to that defended by Nagel. As I already indicated, his understanding of objectivity is marked by extroversion and modelled along the paradigm of the empirical

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<sup>7</sup> The attitude of contrasting the subject and the object as two opposing poles that are incapable of crossing over, in modern and contemporary philosophy is at the root of the difficulties that modern and contemporary philosophers have ‘with the objective’ (cf. Figal 2010:107).

sciences. Hence, his defence of objectivity completely excludes the intentional acts of the subject. He articulates:

The pursuit of objectivity therefore involves a transcendence of the self, in two ways: a transcendence of particularity and a transcendence of one's type. It must be distinguished from a different kind of transcendence by which one enters imaginatively into other points of view, and tries to see how things appear from other specific standpoints (1979:209)

If by transcendence of particularity, Nagel means getting beyond one's egoistic desires, wishes and caprices to unrestricted and detached desire to know, then that aspect of self-transcendence is similar to what Lonergan and McCarthy call 'normative exigence of rational consciousness'. Nevertheless, what Nagel calls transcendence of one's type is practically implausible and merely utopic, because in the quest for knowledge, truth and objectivity, the human subject can never transcend his kind, he will always remain human and not become an angel.

Finally, it has been alluded to that correspondence results from the decisive act of judgment by a subject who has exhaustively inquired about a given sense datum and has grasped the virtually unconditioned and it is shown that that which is intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed is in harmony with that which actually is. Put differently, for the judgment of anything at all, some conditions are both necessary and sufficient. Hence prior to making a judgment a conscious intentional subject must know the conditions and be able to establish when the conditions are fulfilled. This differentiates the understanding of correspondence in Lonergan's conception of truth from the attempts to understand correspondence in terms of matching, fitting and mirroring that are prevalent in contemporary analytic philosophy.

Nevertheless, further analysis of correspondence in the human cognitional process indicates that there are two correspondences involved<sup>8</sup>. Firstly, there is a correspondence in understanding, in that for there to be understanding and formulation in terms of definition, the subject's inquiry must be about the data that has been experienced. When the inquiry is not about that which is empirically presented, there would be a

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<sup>8</sup> I acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr Gerry Walmsley for mentioning the two correspondences when pointing out the isomorphism in Lonergan's conception of truth as correspondence.

misunderstanding or an incorrect understanding. The second correspondence results from the acts of judgment. These two correspondences are alluded to by Lonergan (1997:12-59) in his exposition of two types of *verbum* (inner word), that is, *verbum* as definition and understanding, and *verbum* as reflection and judgment.

It has been argued that the quest for truth is contained with the human quest for knowledge and self-transcendence which leads to ethical consciousness and probably religious consciousness. If that is the case, then an investigation of truth as correspondence would not just content itself with clarifying what truth as reflective correspondence is and why it is the privileged conception of truth. Rather, it would go beyond theoretical clarification to the possibility of a transforming effect that the attainment of truth would have in a human person. However, for this to take place, it calls for the appropriation of truth by the subject. Such appropriation is explored below. But prior to that I will brief examine why truth needs to be appropriate.

### **8.5 Truth as a Value**

Truth is not just one of the concepts that philosophers investigate about in order to satisfy some intellectual curiosity. The investigation of truth is important because it is one of the values that humans strive for. ‘Value is a transcendental notion. It is what is intended in the questions for deliberation, just as the intelligible is what is intended in questions for intelligence, and just as truth and being are what are intended in questions for reflection’ (Lonergan 1971:34). In saying that a value is a transcendental notion, Lonergan means that values are transcategorical conditions that make our existential drive towards self-transcendence possible (1971:35) Hence in arguing that truth is a human value, it implies that truth cannot be put into any of the Aristotelian or Kantian categories (*Categories* 1<sup>a</sup>25-2<sup>a</sup>3, Kant 2016:212, B106). It is the transcendental nature of truth that makes truth discourses analogous as the question of truth can be raised in all the endeavours of human pursuit. So the quest for truth does not only have intelligent and rational implications but above it has an existential implication.

Lonergan traces the foundation of the understanding of truth as a value to what he calls ontological truth (1992 [2013]:576). That is, ‘the conformity of being to conditions of its

being known through intelligent inquiry and critical reflection' (1992 [2013]:576). Because of the exigences of the human inquiry, critical and existential spirit, we as human do not content ourselves with making of individual judgments of facts or establishing the patterns intrinsic in the various judgments of facts that we make. Rather, in our quest, we raise questions about our place in the world in which we live. It is because of this existential demand, bearing in mind that our truth expands and deepens as our horizons or viewpoints widen that there is a need for the appropriation of truth. For instance, the most important truth for us as humans, is not that there are facts and states of affairs in the universe. Rather it is that I am in the world, but I am contingent. The consequence of the attainment of such truth is quest for self-transcendence.

### **8.6 The Appropriation of Truth**

Truth is one of the human values. So as a value it has some role to play within human society for there to be a peaceful co-existence. But before truth can yield this result one has to make the known truth his. The making of truth one's own value is what is meant by the appropriation of truth. This is essential because to truly know is manifested by one's deeds. This is so because human 'reasonableness demands consistency between what we know and what we do' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:581). It is because of the exigence for consistency that Socrates avers that 'knowledge is virtue'. In this section, I briefly summarize what Lonergan means by appropriation of truth and comment on it. It is based on section 2.5 of chapter 17 of *Insight*. What is called the appropriation of truth is similar to Shutte's conception of self-realisation, that is, the understanding of the person as "self-realising" which arises from interpersonal relations that is marked by freedom and interdependence (1993, 2001). Besides, what is conceived as appropriation of truth is also similar to Nicholas Maxwell's clarion call that philosophy needs to move from just the acquisition of knowledge to the search for wisdom, that is 'the capacity to realize what is of value in life, for oneself and others', rather than just accumulation of facts (2004, 2006, 2008). Although, the treatment of the appropriation of truth here is not exhaustive, considering the scope of this thesis, it is important to indicate its inextricability in the pursuit of truth. This is because without the indication of the need for appropriation of truth, it is questionable why truth should be taken to be a human value. In other words,

without raising the question of appropriation of truth, the exploration of truth as critical correspondence will still be incomplete.

The appropriation of truth is not an addendum to the quest for truth. The pursuit of truth does not conclude with intellectual grasp and reasonable affirmation. In other words, the one who considers truth to be a value must necessarily allow the attained truth to orient his life and his inter-personal relationships. Moreover, the appropriation of truth is essentially threefold. According to Lonergan, it could be summed up into the problem of learning and understanding, and the problem of identification and that of orientation (1992 [2013]:582). In other words, a comprehensive appropriation of truth involves cognitional appropriation, sensitive appropriation and volitional appropriation. These forms of appropriation are not isolated. They are interrelated. This is because the question of understanding implies identification of that which is to be understood and the quest for identification presupposes some understanding. Furthermore, the pursuit of truth requires good will and good will presupposes understanding. Lonergan writes:

‘if the attainment of truth demands good will, still good will, [...] is nothing but a willingness to follow the lead of intelligence and truth. So it is that man is boxed in: without the appropriation of truth, his will cannot be positively good; and without good will he cannot proceed to the attainment of truth (1992 [2013]:584).

The above quotation accentuates the importance of the psychology of the subject in the quest for truth as correspondence and desire for self-transcendence. Neither Aristotle nor Aquinas stressed that. Moreover, the citation shows that the yearning for self-transcendence is not realised automatically but is a struggle. The struggle that is involved in our desire for self-transcendence is articulated by Shutte (1993) in his understanding of the person as self-realising which fundamentally is a product of authentic interpersonal relationships or intersubjective transactions. According to him, one is just a human being but not a person without interpersonal relationships that is characterised by freedom and dependence (1993:77-88). This self-realisation is interdependent because it is only achieved through authentic contact with other persons who are significant others in one’s life. It is a process that passes from ‘the development of the capacity of self-realisation’ through ‘self-knowledge and self-affirmation’ to ‘self-transcendence and self-donation’. Self-transcendence and self-donation are the culminating point of self-realisation because

there is no authentic self-knowledge and self-affirmation without the readiness for self-transcendence and unreserved giving of oneself for the sake of the other (1993:77-88).

Any quest for truth that remains mainly on the theoretical level without an intention of proceeding to ethical consciousness, that is, without the openness to let the attained truth orientate one's existence, is at best incomplete. Hence, one could say that the attainment of truth as correspondence must (or at least should) lead to another correspondence, that is the correspondence of attained truth with one's mode of living and relating. This is because truth is not merely a compendium of true propositions. Or as Heidegger puts it:

Truth is never a "system" joined together from propositions, to which one could appeal. Truth is the ground as what takes back and towers up, ground that towers above the sheltered without eliminating it, the attuning that attunes as this ground. For this ground is enowning [Ereignis] itself as essential swaying of be-ing (1999:242)

An example of a context in which the appropriation of truth is emphasised, though implicitly, is in the African context. This is exemplified by the predominant assertions among African scholars that the concept of truth has primarily a moral rather than cognitive connotation in the African context (cf. Wiredu 2005:176) as depicted by words that are used to translated truth in many African languages for instance, *Lokwong* (Korring), *Eziokwu* (Igbo), and *nokware* (Akan). These words, when analysed are more suitably translated as truthfulness rather than truth. However, this does not necessarily mean that there is no cognitive concept of truth or propositional truth in African languages and cultures. For instance, among the Orring of Nigeria, it is common to hear people say, when truth is the issue in question, *Oshing oyong okene lokwong nkeke mulube elu* (He or she knows what the truth is but he or she is hiding it). Such an expression definitely refers primarily to cognitive or propositional truth. So it is not the case that the concept of truth as correspondence or as an intellectual attainment is missing in the African context. It is rather, that the moral connotation is more strongly emphasised.

Why then is the moral connotation more emphasised rather than the cognitive? My belief is that the situation is so because, ultimately, an attained truth that is not volitionally appropriated is meaningless. For instance, of what use is a known truth that is hidden? Or what is the purpose of acquired truth that does not translate into making someone a better

person? Definitely, it is only the one who takes truth to be a value, who would desire it, and to yearn for truth implies opening oneself to the transforming effect that the attainment of that truth guarantees. The appropriation of truth is the climax of the pursuit of truth because the quest for truth is contained within the context of self-transcendence.

Lack of the appropriation of truth is akin to what Maxwell (2004; 2006; 2007; 2008) calls the deficiency of academia that demands for an academic revolution. This deficiency consists in the search for knowledge without seeking and promoting wisdom. This is exhibited by an insatiable desire for facts without taking into consideration the question of human values and holistic or integral human wellbeing. Although fact-based inquiry or “knowledge-inquiry” as Maxwell calls it has some benefits, it is indubitable that it also has some disastrous consequences – wars, global warming, environmental degradation, and so on – as the history of the twentieth and the present centuries shows. Articulating the consequence of the acquisition of knowledge without a corresponding promotion of wisdom, Maxwell writes:

That the rapid growth of scientific knowledge and technological know-how should have these kinds of consequences is all but inevitable. Scientific and technological progress massively increases our power to act: in the absence of wisdom, this will have beneficial consequences, but will also have harmful ones, whether intended, as in war, or unforeseen and unintended (initially at least), as in environmental degradation. As long as we lacked modern science, lack of wisdom did not matter much: our power to wreak havoc on the planet and each other was limited (2007:99).

Maxwell’s contention is not that knowledge-inquiry should be stopped but that it should be carried out within the wider context of the search for wisdom, as the human values and realisation of authentic human aspirations would be the driving force behind knowledge-inquiry and not just fact for its own sake. According to him, the way to achieve this is by reorientation of academia so that the focus of universities and research institutes would not be only attainment of knowledge and facts but how human welfare and values can be promoted. In other words, the revolution of academia requires the rethinking of the aim of research and pursuit of knowledge. This is because there is a fundamental difference between ‘making progress towards a better’ world and desiring a ‘better knowledge’ of the world (Maxwell 2007:107).

Rethinking the aim and function of university studies and research institutes implies giving the humanities and social sciences in general, and philosophy in particular, their rightful place (Maxwell 2007). So instead of turning philosophy into the *ancilla scientiae* (handmaid of science), by limiting it within the framework of the natural sciences, it should be the pursuit of wisdom which is its original vocation as the name philosophy portrays. The quest for wisdom does not entail neglect or abandonment of the pursuit of knowledge, rather, it aims to put the desire for knowledge within perspective. As Maxwell puts it:

The fundamental intellectual and humanitarian aim of inquiry would be to help humanity acquire wisdom – wisdom being the capacity to realize (apprehend and create) what is of value in life, for oneself and others, wisdom thus including knowledge and technological know-how but much else besides (2007:109)

Considering that ultimately the search for wisdom, as argued by Maxwell, is aimed at the realisation of the human person through the promotion of authentic human values, one can say that the call for the revolution of academia is a call for the appropriation of truth. Hence, just as the pursuit of truth without its appropriation is at best incomplete, so also the acquisition of knowledge without corresponding wisdom that helps in improving human interpersonal relationship and the wellbeing of all is deficient.

## **8.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter the conception of truth as correspondence is reconsidered by going beyond the analytic paradigm for the investigation of truth. Truth as correspondence that is defended here is the Lonerganian approach that is traced to the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. This version of truth as correspondence is situated with the context of the human quest for knowledge and self-transcendence. Hence the intentional acts of the knowing subject are priceless. It is argued that the questions of truth, knowledge and objectivity arise in the decisive act of judgment by a subject who is disinterestedly engaged in the cognitional process. Because of the acknowledgement of the essential role of the subject in the quest for truth, knowledge and objectivity, this version removes the dominant hurdle of analytic philosophers who tend to understand correspondence as matching, mirroring or fitting. Because this version of truth as correspondence is rooted in the critical realist view, it establishes that truth is a robust substantive concept. Besides, it is

robust because it does not reduce truth as correspondence to mere analysis of mental synthesis but contends that truth is only attained if there is correspondence between mental synthesis and real synthesis. Lastly, the chapter concludes by emphasising that the quest for truth is not merely an intellectual and rational pursuit but ought to culminate in the transformation of the person who searches for truth, as a result of attaining a higher viewpoint and ethical consciousness because the attainment of truth is meaningful when there is the appropriation of truth.

## Chapter 9

### Conclusion

#### 9.1 Main Conclusion

The principal conclusion of this thesis is that the conception of truth as reflective correspondence is the robust substantial theory of truth that is capable of adequately accounting for the nature of truth without presupposing the concept of truth itself. This version of truth as correspondence acknowledges the intrinsic relation between truth and critical realism. And so, the investigation of truth begins with accounting for knowing and knowledge through an elaborate analysis of the human cognitional acts and structure. The special attention that is paid to the cognitional process and intentional acts of the subject is vital so as to clearly spell out the connection between knowledge, objectivity, truth and being.

This pursuit of truth is based on a different paradigm from the investigation of truth in the analytic philosophical tradition, that tends to explore truth independently of the subject who is capable of knowing and attaining truth, and so places emphasis on intentional signs, like concepts and propositions. The paradigm of the robust substantial theory of truth that is defended in this thesis is a critical realist approach, or what McCarthy (1990:314) calls an intellectualist approach. This is an approach that champions the indispensability of the centrality of the intentional acts of the subject. Hence the starting point of truth investigation is a comprehensive examination of the human cognitional structure and process. This is the case because a theorist's conception of truth is dependent on his or her cognitional theory. Put differently, the adequacy (or inadequacy) of a philosopher's conception of truth is dependent on the adequacy (or inadequacy) of his or her notions of knowing and being (reality).

Beginning with the human cognitional process is indispensable because it enables the truth theorist not to fall into the trap of the naïve realist who tends to reduce the human complex cognitional structure to mere empirical consciousness (experiencing). The reduction of the human knowing process to experiencing is counterproductive because it confuses knowing with the analogy of seeing or looking. As a result, knowledge is taken to be merely intuitive as it is in the spectator theory of knowledge. Such conceptualisation of knowledge has destructive consequences for the understanding of the concept of being, since being is understood in terms of extroversion as that which is “already-out-there-now” (Lonergan 1992[2013], McCarthy 1990). Consequently, truth as correspondence is understood with the residue of empirical consciousness. Hence, correspondence in the analytic paradigm is viewed in terms of comparing, fitting, matching, copying or even comparative arrangement of propositions and facts.

The major shortfall of all the versions of the correspondence theory in the analytic tradition, or rather all the theories of truth considered in this study that are espoused within the analytic framework, is that they are based on a mistaken or inadequate theory of knowledge. Even realist conceptions of truth within the analytic framework are caught up in the web that reduces the concept of truth to a “thin” concept because of the neglect of the subject and allegiance to inadequate cognitional theories that ultimately results in a minimalist conception of truth. For instance, although Alston (1996:32-41) calls his conception of truth *A Realist Conception of Truth*, his exposition shows that he considers truth to be a “thin” concept and so he concentrates on the analysis of the conditions for the truth of propositions, statements and beliefs, without raising the question: what is truth? Due to the neglect of the question concerning the nature of truth or any attempt at defining truth, Alston’s T-Schema (Truth-Schema) is very similar to Tarski’s Convention-T (Cf. Alston 1996:26-32, Tarski 1994:341–376). This means that his “realist” conception of truth is not a full-blown realist understanding of truth but a quasi realist one since it is very similar to semantic and logical analyses of the truth predicate<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Alston argues that he does not take truth to be a “semantic notion”, and this is what informs his choice of proposition as the primary truth-bearer against the choice of sentence as the truth-bearer that is prevalent among semantic and logical truth theorists (Alston 1996: 31).

Notwithstanding that Alston acknowledges that there are some similarities between Tarski's semantic conception of truth and his realist conception, he maintains that the two conceptions are worlds apart because Tarski's semantic conception of truth is meant for formalised languages, while his conception of truth is informal and so applicable to discursive natural languages. Besides, he argues that whereas 'Tarski's equivalences of form T are material equivalences', his T-statements are 'presented analytically, and hence necessarily true' (1996:31). Granted the differences between Tarski's and Alston's conceptions of truth, Alston's T-statements already contain the truth predicate and so presupposes truth. Although Alston contends that his alethic realism which is minimalist in character could be viewed 'as an inchoate correspondence theory' (1996:33), it cannot be developed into a robust substantive theory of truth because its foundation rests on inadequate cognitional theory, that is, the spectator theory of knowing. The engulfment of alethic realism by the spectator theory of knowing manifests itself in Alston thus: 'For when one looks at a particular T-statement it leaps to the eye that there is an identity of content between proposition and fact' (1996:33) Therefore, one could conclude that allegiance to realism *per se* does not guarantee a robust substantial theory of truth. Rather, it is the adequacy of a realist's cognitional theory that grounds the theory of truth that he or she subscribes to.

On the contrary, exploration of the three levels of human consciousness, viz, empirical, intelligent and rational consciousness, highlights that knowing ensues from intelligent grasp as virtually unconditioned of that which is experienced and a reasonable affirmation of that which is adequately understood. Being as such is, therefore, not already-out-there waiting to be seen, but is an 'objective of pure desire to know' (Lonergan 1992 [2013]: 372). Hence the roles of intelligence and rationality are priceless. It is self-refuting to deny the three-fold structure of knowing since for us to know, we must be attentive, intelligent and reasonable. Truth as critical correspondence results when the subject judges that which is known to be in harmony with that which is (that is, with being). Emphasising the role of intelligence and rationality in the human quest for knowledge and truth McCarthy writes:

A critical reconception of the epistemic subject needs to be extended to its intended object. Taken as the object of human knowledge, being is not the content of an immediate intuition

but the reality intended in questioning that becomes known through the act of true judgment. Every notion of being depends on an implicit reference to intentional subjectivity. When the concept of the intentional subject is not sufficiently critical, the account of the epistemic object invariably follows suit (1990:323).

An element that is central to the conception of truth as reflective correspondence that no other conception of truth explicitly takes into consideration is that the quest for truth is found within the wider context of the human yearning for knowledge and self-transcendence. Because of this wider context, the pursuit of truth is not geared to accumulation of true propositions. Rather, embedded in the quest for truth is the desire for transformation and responsible/better living and improvement of one's interpersonal relationship.

The conception of truth as critical or reflective correspondence that is defended in this thesis does not only address the inadequacies of the formulation of the various versions of the correspondence theory of truth within the analytic tradition. It also shows that various alternative theories – whether substantive, deflationary or third-way – cannot articulate an adequate account of truth since they do not explicitly address the cognitional theory on which they are founded. In fact, all the alternative theories, even the deflationary theories, assume at least minimal correspondence as I have argued. The redundancy theory, minimalism, disquotational and prosententialism are possible because of reliance on the equivalence or disquotational schema. But the schemata themselves assume minimal correspondence. For instance, saying that: It is true that grass is green, is equivalent to, grass is green, assumes that we know that it is actually the case that grass is green.

Moreover, the Lonergan-inspired understanding of truth as correspondence which is an appropriation of a tradition that goes back to Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas, addresses the issues that philosophical investigation of truth within the analytic framework raises. For instance, the question of the relationship between truth and assertibility (in any of its forms – warranted assertibility, superassertibility and idealized justified acceptability) is solved by taking into consideration the distinction that Lonergan draws between truth and its expression. Whereas judgment is vital for there to be knowledge and truth, one can

even assert that which is not true. In other words, judging and asserting are different acts and so truth and assertibility are not identical (Lonergan 1992 [2013]:576).

Furthermore, the critical realist articulation of truth as correspondence surmounts the challenges of the alethic paradoxes because it is founded on a comprehensive cognitional structure and twofold consciousness. The twofold consciousness is consciousness as the self-presence of the knowing subject to himself while performing the cognitional acts, and intentional consciousness, that is, consciousness of the object of knowledge (Walmsley 2008:11-12). The critical realist account of truth is capable of overcoming the challenges of alethic paradoxes because it shows that the ascription of truth predicates is primarily to propositional contents and not merely to sentences since sentences by themselves are either correct or incorrect but not necessarily true or false. Hence when an inconsistent theorist argues that: ‘This sentence is false’, would lead to contradiction because if it is the case that ‘this sentence is false’ then it is true, a critical realist would argue that it is a flawed analysis. This is because it cannot be assumed that a sentence is true or false without direct reference to its propositional content (section 6.3).

Also, considering that there are various distinct beings and the close similarity between being and fact in Lonergan’s philosophical thought as already argued in this thesis, it can be concluded that slingshot argument is not an obstacle to the understanding of truth as critical correspondence, when properly understood. This is because, just as various distinct beings are irreducible to one (big) Being, so also all facts cannot be reduced to one big Fact (section 6.4). Furthermore, since as I have already pointed out, all the alternative theories of truth assume at least minimal correspondence, it is contended that the indefinability of truth as argued by Davidson is indefensible (section 7.2). Also considering that centrality of the concept of truth in theoretical philosophy and the importance of the concept in everyday human engagement, truth cannot be eliminated or be merely consigned to cautionary use as Rorty suggests (section 7.3).

## **9.2 Summary of the Chapters**

In order to reconsider the understanding of truth as correspondence, this thesis, after the introductory chapter (chapter 1), investigated the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of the

correspondence theory of truth in chapter two. This tradition acknowledges the relation between truth and realism. However, because that tradition's main focus was metaphysics rather than cognitive theory, its conception of truth faced a serious challenge in the modern era especially because of the dominance of naïve or common-sense realism and its spectator theory of knowing. The influence of naïve realism and the spectator theory of knowing led to the reformulation of the correspondence theory in terms of conceptual analysis and thus resulted in the understanding of correspondence in terms of mapping, matching, comparing of propositions or belief and fact (Russell) or correlation of sentences and statements (Austin) as argued in chapter three. This understanding misrepresents the conception of truth as correspondence as it neglects the intentional subject and importance of cognitive theory in the quest for truth. The reduction of truth investigation to conceptual analysis resulted in some controversies, for instance, the questions concerning the ontological status of propositions and facts, and whether there are negative facts since there are negative propositions and negative truths. Such controversies gave rise to the trivialisation of the correspondence theory of truth and the quest for the elimination of the correspondence theory and its substitution with alternative theories.

In chapter four, we examined the various alternative theories including substantive theories (coherence, pragmatic and identity), mid-way theories (minimal realism, alethic pluralism and functionalist theory) and deflationary theories (redundancy, minimalism, disquotationalism and prosententialism). However, from our exploration, it is argued that the alternative theories (even the deflationary theories) presuppose truth as correspondence or at least minimal correspondence. The implication of this is that the correspondence theory cannot be eliminated. On the other hand, the articulation of the correspondence theory in the analytical philosophical tradition is faced with enormous challenges. Consequently, there is a need for the reconsideration of the conception of truth as correspondence which takes into consideration the centrality of cognitive and intentional analysis, and the indispensable role of the intentional subject in the quest for truth. This is the focus of chapter eight of this thesis.

Nevertheless, before the reconsideration of the conception of truth as correspondence, three contentious issues of truth investigation in the analytical tradition that we identified were explored in chapters five, six and seven. The issues are: the relation between truth and assertibility, alethic paradoxes, and issues concerning the relevance of philosophical investigation of the nature of truth (Davidson's indefinability thesis and Rorty's quest for the elimination of truth because of its lack of practical relevance). In the examination of these issues, we used the Lonergan-inspired understanding of truth to address them. For instance, in chapter five, it is argued that when the differences between truth and its expression, judging and asserting (as articulated by Lonergan) are taken into consideration, it becomes obvious that irrespective of the relation between truth and assertibility, they are not identical. So warranted assertibility, Wright's superassertibility or even Putnam's idealised rational acceptability cannot be equated with truth. Regarding chapter six, it is argued that when the relation between truth and critical realism is accounted for, alethic paradoxes (the paradox of the liar and revenge paradox) do not arise because truth is primarily ascribed to propositions (the contents that are expressed by sentences) and not sentences themselves. Hence, the seeming contradiction in the analysis of the truth predicate in the so-called paradoxical sentences results from faulty analysis.

As regard issues concerning the relevance of philosophical investigation of the nature of truth which are the focus of chapter seven, it is claimed that Davidson's contention that truth is indefinable because it is a primitive concept that is irreducible to a more basic concept is influenced by his understanding of philosophy as conceptual analysis and his limited understanding of definition. Hence it is argued that definition is not just reduction of concepts to more basic concepts. Rather, as Lonergan avers, definition can be nominal or explanatory. Furthermore, it is argued that implicit definition is at least assumed in Davidson's truth discourse and this is exemplified his articulation of the relation between truth and meaning in his truth conditional semantics. Concerning Rorty's call for the elimination of truth, his argument rests on the equation of truth with justification, and the lack of social utility of truth. Contrary to his equation of truth and justification, it is argued that truth and justification are not identical especially as he argues that justification is group and generation bound. For if what is true for group A is not true for group B, then the objectivity of truth is called into question. Besides, it is contended that the

establishment of Truth Commissions or Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in some countries after troubled times shows that contra Rorty, truth has practical utility.

Finally, chapter eight proposes truth as critical correspondence as a conception of truth that overcomes the obstacles (ranging from spectator theory of knowing to the challenges of truth investigation in the analytical framework) that led to disregard of the correspondence theory in particular and the deflation of truth in general in contemporary philosophical investigation of truth. This Lonergan-inspired conception argues that the quest for truth is found within the human quest for knowledge and self-transcendence. For this reason, an elaborate articulation of the cognitional theory in which a theory of truth is based is essential. Hence, instead of a truth investigation that is focused on analysis of intentional contents (propositions and concept), it is argued that the importance of cognitional and intentional analysis is irreplaceable for an investigation of truth to be adequate. An explicit exploration of cognitional structure is important in order illustrate the relation between knowledge, truth, objectivity and being. Moreover, since the question of truth does not arise without the agency of the knowing subject, the role of the human subject in the quest for truth cannot be neglected. As we have seen in this thesis, such neglect results in the inadequacy of the articulation of the correspondence theory within the analytic framework. Because of the vital importance of cognitional theory and the indispensability of the role of the conscious and intentional subject in the articulation of a robust substantial conception of truth as it espoused in chapter eight, correspondence does not result from mapping, matching, mirroring or arrangement of propositions and facts (as analytic correspondence truth theorists seem to propose). Rather correspondence results through the act of judging of the subject after attentive experiencing, adequate intelligent understanding and marshalling of sufficient evidence. In other words, correspondence results from a reasonable affirmation of the knowing subject.

Lastly, it is argued that because the quest for truth is found within a wider context that includes the human desire for self-transcendence, truth investigation is not just a theoretical quest. Rather, the attained truth is supposed to be appropriated (that is, one should make the attained truth one's own) so that the known truth manifests itself in the

way one lives one's life daily and in one's interpersonal relationships. In other words, truth investigation is not just a quest for theoretical knowledge or merely an intellect pursuit, but a journey through knowledge to wisdom.

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