

# The Subject and the Quest for Truth: Heidegger and Lonergan on Truth

**Patrick Owo Aleke**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6949-1854>

St Joseph's Theological Institute, South Africa

paleke@sjti.ac.za

## Abstract

Since the “elimination of the subject” from truth discourse by Frege, by identifying the subject—or rather the subjective—with the private and personal, philosophical investigations of truth have consciously or unconsciously truncated the role of the knowing subject in the quest for truth. The neglect of the subject has turned the exploration of truth into logical, semantic, conceptual or linguistic analysis of the truth predicate. The consequence of this is that some philosophers tend to treat truth as if it does not really matter; as is shown by their deflationary attitude towards truth or even the total denial of truth. Despite the prevalent elimination of the subject from truth discourses, two thinkers that acknowledge the importance of the subject in the exposition of the concept of truth are Martin Heidegger and Bernard Lonergan. In this paper I explore their positions and argue that Heidegger’s situating of the centrality of Dasein in relation to truth in disclosedness—as the basic state of Dasein’s ontological constitution—is inadequate. Following Lonergan, I argue that an adequate account of the centrality of the role of the subject can only be situated in the cognitional acts of the subject within the context of the human quest for knowledge, and that the pivotal cognitional act is the act of judgment.

**Keywords:** intentional subject; Dasein; truth; judgment; cognitional acts

## Introduction

The irony of the contemporary philosophical investigation of truth is that while the various theories of truth are claims made by philosophers, there is an overt or covert neglect of the knowing subject that makes truth claims or to whom the question of truth matters. A critical look at the deflationary theories makes manifest the irony of denying that truth has a nature or that truth is a robust substantive metaphysical concept since the denial is itself a truth claim (Rorty 1995; Horwich 1998; 2001; Grover 2001; Grover,



Phronimon

<https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/Phronimon>

Volume 21 | 2020 | #7274 | 14 pages

<https://doi.org/10.25159/2413-3086/7274>

ISSN 2413-3086 (Online)

© The Author(s) 2020



Published by Unisa Press. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

Camp, and Belnap 1975; Lewis 2001; Lynch 2001a&b; Quine 1960; 1990; Scharp 2007; 2013). The neglect of the subject in truth discourses (Frege 1956) is not limited to the deflationists but also evident in the works of substantial truth theorists, including correspondence theorists (David 1994; 2001; 2004; Engel 2002; Kirkham 1995; Rasmussen 2014; Vision 1998; 2003; 2004).

While contemporary philosophical investigation of truth truncates the centrality of the knowing subject in the quest for truth, two philosophers that acknowledge this centrality are the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), and the Canadian Jesuit philosopher-theologian, Bernard Lonergan (1904–1984). Although both acknowledge the importance of the knowing subject or Dasein as Heidegger prefers, the roles they assign to the subject are different. Lonergan underscores the vital role of the subject in the quest for truth, since according to him judgment is the primary locus of truth. Heidegger, on the other hand, denies that judgment is the primary locus of truth and thus obscures the role of Dasein in the quest for truth. In this paper I examine the two positions to show why the act of judgment is inevitable in the quest for truth. I argue that Heidegger’s analysis of truth is not critical enough but clouded with the inherent problem of phenomenology, that is, the difficulty of “breaking through to explanatory and critically validated metaphysics” (Beards 2018, 21) and the residue of naïve realist cognitional theory.

## Heidegger on Truth: Dasein as Central to Truth

A close look at Heidegger’s analysis of truth shows that according to him, Dasein is central to the quest for truth. To show that he is not equivocal about the place of Dasein in the quest for truth, he writes: “‘There is’ truth only in so far as Dasein is and so long as Dasein is” (Heidegger 1953[2008], 269). He continues to argue his point: “The Being of truth is connected primordially with Dasein. And only because Dasein is constituted by disclosedness (that is, by understanding), can anything like Being be understood; only so is it possible to understanding Being” (Heidegger 1953[2008], 272). Granted that Heidegger asserts that there is a close connection between Dasein and truth, a question that arises is: What role does Dasein play in the quest for truth? Or does disclosedness as a constitution of Dasein suffice for the centrality of Dasein in the quest for truth? Contra Heidegger, I contend that disclosedness or understanding is not enough for the attainment of truth. However, before going into the details, it is important to examine why Heidegger chooses disclosedness rather than judgment as the primary locus of truth.

## The Meaning of ἀληθεια and its Implication for Heidegger’s Conception of Truth

The starting point (and one would argue the core) of Heidegger’s exploration of truth is the etymological analysis of ἀληθεια—the Greek term for truth, and the association of truth and being in the history of philosophy, especially as exemplified by Parmenides and Aristotle (Heidegger 1953[2008], 256). These two elements are at the heart of Heidegger’s conception of truth.

To show the importance of the analysis of the Greek term ἀληθεια for his philosophical investigation of truth, Heidegger writes:

The Greek word for truth—one can hardly remind oneself of this too often—is ἀληθεια, *unhiddenness [Unverborgenheit]*. Something true is ἀληθές, unhidden. What do we glean first of all from this word? We discover two things:

1. The Greeks understood what *we* call the true, as the un-hidden, as what is no longer hidden, as what is *without* hiddenness, as what has been torn away from hiddenness [*Verborgenheit*] and, as it were, been robbed of its hiddenness. For the Greeks, therefore, the true is something which no longer possesses something else, namely hiddenness, and is freed from this. Therefore the Greek expression for truth, in both its semantic structure and its morphology, has a fundamentally different content to our German word “*Wahrheit*” [truth], as also to the Latin expression “*veritas*.” The Greek expression is *privative*. The meaning-structure and word formation of ἀληθεια are analogous to the German word “*Unschuld*” [innocence] in its contrast with “*Schuld*” [guilt], where the negative word presents the positive (to be free from guilt) and the positive word presents the negative (guilt as deficiency). So, for the Greeks, *truth* too is privative. It is curious that “true” means what something *no longer* has. We could let this stand as a curiosity and remain at the practical level!

2. Initially, the meaning of the Greek word for truth, unhiddenness, has nothing to do with *assertion* and *that* factual contexture in terms of which the essence of truth is usually explained, i.e. with correctness and correspondence. (Heidegger 2004, 7–8 [italics in original])

Considering the attention that Heidegger pays to the etymological analysis of the Greek term for truth, by highlighting that it is privative whereas the German and Latin terms for truth are not privative, it would not be an exaggeration to argue that such analysis is at the core of Heidegger’s exposition of truth.

While Heidegger’s etymological analysis of ἀληθεια is worthwhile and important, it is not sufficient for a philosophical investigation of truth. Emphasising etymological analysis at the detriment of critical explanation of the term truth within a wider context of human knowledge and self-transcendence would be similar to the reduction of truth discourse to semantic, linguistic or logical analysis of the truth predicate, without taking into account the role of the subject in the discovery of truth. Nonetheless, it would be simplistic to think that Heidegger’s exploration of truth is on par with the deflationist linguistic, semantic and logical analysis of the truth predicate. An obvious difference between the deflationist and Heidegger’s account of truth is that while the deflationist denies that truth has a substantive nature, Heidegger’s quest in his philosophical investigation of truth is to make the essence of truth manifest (Heidegger 1967; 2004). In fact, to show that his conception and investigation of truth are different from that of the deflationists and that of analytic philosophers in general, Heidegger argues:

## Aleke

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. (Heidegger 1999, 242)

If Heidegger’s alethic project is beyond mere analysis, why then is the “going back to Greek” term for truth so vital to his exploration of truth? The importance of the etymological analysis for Heidegger is to clear the air that the primary locus of truth is not judgment and to show that truth “in the primordial sense, belongs to the basic constitution of Dasein” (Heidegger 1953[2008], 269). It is important to note that Heidegger does not deny that judgment is a locus of truth. He is familiar with truth discourses in the ancient and mediaeval periods and knows that judgment features in the truth discourses of Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas (Heidegger 1953[2008], 256–258). Hence, his contention is that judgment is not the primary locus of truth. His main argument is that since etymologically, truth means unconcealing or uncovering, and uncovering or disclosedness is the basic characteristic of Dasein, it implies that the primordial understanding of truth belongs to Dasein and that the truth of judgment is derived from the primordial conception. He writes:

To say that an assertion “*is true*” signifies that it uncovers the entity as it is in itself. Such an assertion asserts, points out, “lets” the entity “been seen” (*ἀπόφανσις*) in its uncoveredness. The *Being-true (truth)* of the assertion must be understood as *Being-uncovering\**. This truth has by no means the structure of agreement between knowing and the object in the sense of a likening of one entity (the subject) to another (the Object). Being-true as Being-uncovering\*, is in turn ontologically possible only on the basis of Being-in-the-world. This latter phenomenon, which we have known as a basic state of Dasein, is the *foundation* for the primordial phenomenon of truth. (Heidegger 1953[2008], 261 [italics in original])

To further defend his position regarding the primordial locus of truth, Heidegger claims that “Aristotle never defends the thesis that the primordial ‘locus’ of truth is in the judgment. He says rather that the *λόγος* is the way of Being in which Dasein can *either uncover or cover up*” (Heidegger 1953[2008], 268). Unfortunately, Heidegger does not give any reference to support his claim about what Aristotle considers to be the primordial locus of truth. It is contestable whether Aristotle’s position about the locus of truth is correctly represented by Heidegger. However, I will not pursue that here because it will take us away from the scope of this paper.

From his exposition of truth and his claim that truth belongs to the ontological constitution of Dasein, Heidegger concludes: “The upshot of our existential-ontological Interpretation of the phenomenon truth is (1) that truth, in the most primordial sense, is Dasein’s disclosedness, to which the uncoveredness of entities within-the-world belongs; and (2) that Dasein is equiprimordially both in the truth and in untruth” (Heidegger 1953[2008], 265). It is important to note that an indispensable element of Heidegger’s conception of truth is his connection of the etymology of *ἀληθεια* with his

understanding of the ontological constitution of Dasein as disclosedness. It is from his linking of the two elements that he contends that truth “as clearing for self-sheltering-concealing is grounded on Da-Sein” (Heidegger 1999, 239). A question that is inevitable is whether Heidegger’s conception of truth has adequately outlined the centrality of the subject in the quest for truth? Put differently, one would ask: Does Heidegger’s account of truth adequately address the concerns of philosophers regarding the concept of truth, and supposed centrality of Dasein? These questions will be explored in the next section.

### **Evaluative Critique of Heidegger’s Conception of Truth**

Heidegger’s etymological analysis of ἀληθεια and how he relates it to the being of Dasein is commendable. However, it does not adequately address the notion of truth and the ineluctable role of knowing subject in the quest for truth. First, the relationality that is intrinsic to the concept of truth is not attended to by comparing the etymological analysis of the Greek term for truth and the basic constitution of Dasein as Heidegger does in his exploration of truth. In talking of relationality, I assume truth as correspondence as paradigmatic for the understanding of the concept of truth. I am not going into the detail and what it entails here but will briefly discuss it below while treating Lonergan’s conception of truth.<sup>1</sup> If the relationality that is intrinsic to the nature of truth is taken into account, then the question of the centrality of the knowing subject or Dasein comes into play by establishing the act of Dasein that determines its centrality in the quest for truth. By contrast, Heidegger’s comparison of ἀληθεια—unhiddenness or unconcealment and Dasein’s constitution as disclosedness—does not establish the centrality of Dasein with regard to truth. At best, what Heidegger’s argument achieves is the identity of truth with Dasein. However, such identity suffers similar objections that are raised against Hornsby’s (1997[2001]) and Dodd’s (1995; 2008) versions of the identity theory of truth (cf. Aleke 2018b, 125–131).

A corollary problem that arises if truth is identified with Dasein (or even other beings or entities) as Heidegger’s account seems to suggest, is the inadequacy of his conception of truth to attend to a philosophical account of truth—especially since there are various domains that the truth predicate can be applied to. For instance, how can empirical, mathematical, moral, religious/theological and negative truths be identified with the disclosing feature of Dasein’s ontological constitution? Moreover, if it is assumed “that Dasein is equiprimordially both in the truth and in untruth” (Heidegger 1953[2008], 265) since it can uncover and cover, then it is not sufficient to equate truth with Dasein’s disclosing or uncovering character, since it can privatively disclose itself by covering. In other words, if Dasein can uncover and cover, then it takes more than merely etymological analysis to account for the nature or essence of truth. It will take the acts

---

1 For discussion on truth as correspondence as paradigmatic understanding and how other theories of truth presuppose the correspondence theory of truth, see Aleke, 2018b, “Truth as Correspondence Reconsidered”; Aleke 2018a, “Analogy as the Key to Understanding the Unity of Truth”; Aleke 2019, “Truth and the Quest for Definition.”

of a conscious intentional subject to understand what unveiling or veiling is—and subsequently to affirm when Dasein is unveiling or veiling.

Heidegger's exposition of truth from the etymological analysis of ἀληθεια can be likened to the question of divine revelation. For when there is a divine revelation, it does not imply an automatic understanding and knowledge of the truth of that revelation. The cognitional acts of a conscious intentional subject are necessary for the establishment of the truth of the revelation. If that were not the case, there would not have been heresies. So when there is unconcealment of being, there is need for the understanding of that which is experienced and conditions that would establish that what is understood is actually that which has been experienced. It is only then that the question of truth arises. So, truth is relational and it arises from the act of judgment. Thus, contra Heidegger's position, judgment is the primary locus of truth. If disclosedness is equivalent to understanding, as Heidegger (1953[2008], 272) suggests, then it cannot be the primordial locus of truth because humans are prone to misunderstanding. Hence, as Lonergan argues, when one gains an insight upon inquiry after experiencing, and then understands what he or she has experienced, there is a need for reflective understanding to ascertain whether one's understanding is correct or incorrect. It is only after reflective understanding that judgment is made and it is from the act of judgment that truth, just as knowledge, is attained (Lonergan 1992[2013], 304–305).

If my exploration of Heidegger's account of truth and his articulation of the centrality of Dasein in relation to truth is anything to go by, an unavoidable conclusion is that Heidegger's account does not adequately explain and justify the centrality of Dasein. Nevertheless, this conclusion does not undermine the claim concerning the centrality of the knowing subject in the quest for truth. Considering the limitation of Heidegger's account, it is time to turn to Lonergan's account.

## Lonergan on Truth

Before exploring Lonergan's conception of truth, it is important to briefly introduce him, since many philosophers are not familiar with his works. Bernard Joseph Lonergan (1904–1984) was a Canadian Jesuit philosopher-theologian who could be described as a neo-Thomist. His philosophy in general (and his conception of truth in particular) is an appropriation of the thoughts of St Thomas Aquinas. Hence, Lonergan's philosophy can be placed within the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. Nonetheless, this does not mean that Lonergan's philosophy or his conception of truth is a mere repetition of the works of either Aristotle or Aquinas. Whereas Aristotle and Aquinas lived and philosophised in a context in which the philosophical focus was on metaphysics, Lonergan lived and philosophised in a context in which the focus was on cognitional theory and epistemology and in a culture in which the empirical and human sciences were thriving. This context influenced his philosophical method, which he called generalised empirical method (Lonergan 1992[2013], 96–97, 268; Beards 2018, 1–48) but sometimes also referred to as transcendental method (Beards 2018, 5–14; Lonergan 1971, 13–25). This method pays explicit attention to cognitional and intentionality

analysis. According to Lonergan, for there to be an adequate account of knowledge and truth, an exploration of one's cognitional theory is essential. He calls his philosophical method generalised empirical method, because:

... his cognitional theory is tripartite: experiencing (empirical consciousness), understanding (intelligent consciousness) and judging (rational consciousness) (Lonergan 1967; 1992[2013]). According to Lonergan, the three-levelled consciousness is necessary for the attainment of knowledge (and truth). However, none of the levels, independent of the others, leads to knowing. In other words, experiencing, understanding and judging by themselves independently do not result in knowing (and consequently to truth). In his philosophical approach, an explicit analysis of one's cognitional theory is essential for an adequate account of truth since the quest for truth arises within the wider context of human knowledge. (Aleke 2019, 7)

It is important to note that none of the three levels of consciousness—empirical, intelligent and rational—independently constitutes the process called human knowing (Lonergan 1967; 1992[2013]; 1996). It is when knowing is reduced to one of the three levels of consciousness that a distorted account of knowing arises, as is the case with naïve realism and its spectator theory of knowing and idealism and its representationalism. Hence, it is crucial not to equate generalised empirical method with empiricism.

### **Truth and Knowing**

From the brief introduction to Lonergan, one could guess why the conscious intentional subject is central to the quest for truth. It is the human subject who performs the various acts that comprise the dynamic cognitional process and it is within the context of the quest for knowledge that the question of truth arises. It is the conscious subject who has the unrestricted desire to know that when he or she has intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed, he or she tries to establish whether what he or she claims to know is actually the case. In order to underscore that the question of truth arises within the broader context of knowledge, Lonergan articulates:

The definition of truth was introduced implicitly in our account of the notion of being. For being was identified with what is to be known through intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation; but the only reasonable affirmation is the true affirmation; and so being is what is known truly. Inversely, then, knowing is true by its relation to being, and truth is a relation of knowing to being. (Lonergan 1992[2013], 575)

Considering Lonergan's definition of truth, some important points need to be noted. First, in his view, an adequate exposition of the notion of truth cannot be carried in isolation of the context of the quest for knowledge and self-transcendence. Any attempt to do that reduces philosophical investigation of truth to logical, semantic, conceptual or linguistic analysis of the truth predicate. However, when the context of the human quest for knowledge and cognitional self-transcendence is taken into account, then the centrality of the role the knowing subject becomes manifest—especially since the act of

judgment is decisive for the attainment of knowledge and truth. Lonergan states this point while articulating the criterion for truth thus: “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” (Lonergan 1992[2013], 573). By “virtually unconditioned” Lonergan refers to a prospective judgment or a proposition or even a hypothesis whose truth conditions are known and it is established that all the conditions are fulfilled (Lonergan 1992[2013], 305–309). In other words, a judgment, a proposition or a claim is said to be virtually unconditioned when its truth conditions are known and there is sufficient evidence that all the relevant conditions are fulfilled. Since it is the knowing subject who can identify the truth conditions of a proposition, or a claim, and who can establish when the relevant conditions are fulfilled, the centrality of the knowing subject cannot be ignored in the quest for truth if a philosophical investigation of truth is to be adequate and exhaustive.

A second important point to note is that, although the role of the subject is vital to the discovery of truth, that does not mean that truth is subjective or relative. Irrespective of the role of the conscious intentional subject, truth is objective. Lonergan argues this point thus:

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 the self. Such is the meaning of absolute objectivity<sup>2</sup>, and from it there follows a public or common terrain through which different subjects can and do communicate and agree. (Lonergan 1992[2013], 573)

In effect, Lonergan’s argument is that the acts of the subject in the quest for truth, though central, do not undermine the objectivity of truth in any way because truth is intentionally independent of the knowing subject. But he argues that the intentional independence of truth is only possible because of the subject’s capacity for “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).

Michael McCarthy, in his interpretation of Lonergan, also acknowledges that even if the attainment of truth is “the fruit of an authentic and normative subjective achievement” (McCarthy 1990, 326) that does undermine the objectivity and self-transcendence of truth. He argues:

Truth is a property immanent within rationally conscious acts of judgment. Ontologically and formally it resides only in the subject, but intentionally its content is

---

2 According to Lonergan, in addition to the principal notion of objectivity, there are three partial aspects of objectivity—experiential objectivity, normative objectivity and absolute objectivity—that correspond to the three levels of consciousness—empirical consciousness, intelligent consciousness and rational consciousness—respectively (Lonergan 1992[2013], 399–409).



independent of the person who affirms it. Because the responsible act of judgment is an instance of subjective self-transcendence, the intentional content of judgment is objective. (McCarthy 1990, 325)

The relationship between the subject, truth and the act of judgment, which McCarthy employs in the quotation, is not only found in Lonergan (1974; 1992[2013]) but could be traced to Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, question 16 articles one and two and in the *Questiones Disputate de Veritate*, question one where he argues that "truth resides, in its primary aspect, in the intellect" (Aquinas 1920, 227–228). In highlighting the link between judgment and truth Aquinas argues that "judgment 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). This act of judgment from which knowledge and truth result, is what Aquinas terms "real synthesis" as opposed to "mental synthesis," which results from the act of understanding. In his interpretation of Aquinas, Lonergan writes:

[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. (Lonergan 1997, 63)

The necessity of the act of judgment for the attainment of truth cannot be overemphasised. In Lonergan's view, truth cannot be attained or discovered without reasonable affirmation consequent upon an intelligent grasp. Hence, understanding *per se* does not entail the attainment of truth. Rather, since there is always a possibility that one's understanding could either be correct or incorrect in the quest for truth, just as in the quest for knowledge, it is vital that every act of understanding is followed by an act of reflective understanding or reflective grasp. The purpose of reflective understanding is to establish whether one's directing understanding is correct or incorrect. It is only when the act of understanding is correct that a reasonable affirmation, that is, an act of judgment can be made. It is from such judgment that truth ensues.

The third salient point that is worth mentioning from the exploration of Lonergan's conception of truth is that there is an intrinsic connection between truth, knowledge, objectivity and being. As such, one cannot give an adequate account of truth without an explicit exposition of one's cognitional theory. Put differently, cognitional and intentionality analysis is indispensable for robust substantial articulation of the concept of truth. The intrinsic connection between truth, knowledge, being and objectivity can be expressed thus: Whatever we know or can know is being and we can know only that which is true and our knowledge is objective. This connection is embedded in Lonergan's definition of these key philosophical terms. For he writes: Being "is the objective of pure desire to know" (1992[2013], 373). "The objective of the pure desire is the content of knowing rather than an act" (1992[2013], 374). "Truth is a relation of

knowing to being” (1992[2013], 575). “Objectivity in its principal sense is what is known through any set of judgments satisfying a determinate pattern. In brief, there is objectivity if there are distinct beings, some of which both know themselves and know others as others” (1992[2013], 401). Knowledge ensues from “intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation.” Another aspect of the intrinsic relation among the terms truth, knowing/knowledge, objectivity, truth and being is a cumulative progressive continuum from cognitional theory through epistemology to metaphysics in Lonergan’s philosophical thought.

So far, I have been arguing for the centrality of the role of the subject in Lonergan’s conception of truth but I have not stated explicitly what the subject is according to Lonergan. It is time to briefly state what Lonergan means by the term subject. When the term subject is mentioned, some questions that might arise are: What is a subject? Is a subject synonymous with a human being or human person? Is a subject characterised by its ontological constitution? According to Lonergan, it is not merely an ontological constitution that determines who a subject is. Rather than just an ontological constitution, a subject is characterised by the performance of conscious acts. And one is more of a subject when the acts are cognitional (intelligent and rational) or volitional (deliberative and decisive). So in a sense, while every human person is potentially a subject, it does not follow that every human person is an actual subject. Lonergan articulates his position about being a 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. (Lonergan 1967, 241)

By this, Lonergan means that there are different degrees of being a subject. The lowest degree is being a potential subject, for instance when one is “unconscious in dreamless sleep or in a coma.” But in order to be an actual subject, a person’s engagement in conscious acts is a prerequisite. Hence, dreaming is the most basic degree of being an actual subject, while rational self-consciousness—deliberating, deciding and acting upon one’s decision—is the highest degree (Lonergan 1974).

If it is taken for granted, as Lonergan argues, that the quality of one’s being a subject progresses from sensitive through intellectual and reasonable (cognitional) to responsible (deliberations and decisions) acts, it follows that it does not suffice to link the centrality of the knowing subject in the quest for truth to the “basic ontological state” of Dasein, as Heidegger does. Rather the centrality arises from the cognitional acts of the subject and the decisive act in the quest for truth is the act of judgment.

## Conclusion

The principal claim of this paper is that the role of the knowing subject is vital for an adequate philosophical investigation of truth, despite the ubiquitous neglect of the

subject in the exposition of truth. Hence, I examined the thoughts of two philosophers who consider the centrality of the subject in the quest for truth. I argued that Heidegger's articulation of the centrality is inadequate because it results from the comparison of the etymological analysis of ἀληθεια—the Greek term for truth—with disclosedness as the basic state of Dasein as Being-in-the-world. On the other hand, I have argued with Lonergan that it is when the focus is shifted to the conscious and intentional acts, especially the act of judging (of the knowing subject) that an adequate account of the centrality of the subject can be justified. This is because truth claims are made by subjects within the wider context of the quest for knowledge and self-transcendence. Put differently, cognitional and intentionality analysis is inevitable for a proper understanding and articulation of the centrality of the role of the subject in the pursuit of truth. And the pivotal act of the subject that leads to the discovery or attainment of truth, is the act of judgment. Nevertheless, judgment is only possible after a reflective understanding, the act by which the subject assesses the correctness or incorrectness of his or her understanding. In reflective understanding, the relevant truth conditions are grasped and a judgment is pronounced if the conditions are satisfied. If a judgment is made without an act of reflective understanding, what results is a guess and not the attainment of truth (Lonergan 1992[2013], 304).

It is worth noting that the focus on the act of the subject is not inimical for the notion of the objectivity of truth. “Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity. It is to be attained only by attaining authentic subjectivity” (Lonergan 1971, 292). Any affirmed truth is objective, since such affirmation presupposes that there is sufficient evidence that all the relevant truth conditions are fulfilled. “The drive to truth compels rationality to assent when evidence is sufficient but refuses assent and demands doubt whenever evidence is insufficient” (Lonergan 1971, 35). For instance, if the proposition <Africa is the most affected by the effects of climate change> is true, its truth is not relative to the person who first made the affirmation, or the time and place when it was first made. What is relevant is that there is sufficient evidence for that affirmation. Lonergan makes this point thus: “A subject may be needed to arrive at truth, but, once truth is attained, one is beyond the subject and one has reached a realm that is non-spatial, atemporal, impersonal. What is true at any time or place can be contradicted only by falsity. No one can gainsay it, unless he is mistaken and errs” (Lonergan 1974, 70).

The fact about the objectivity of truth is expressed by human capacity for intersubjective communication. Hence, instead of viewing authentic subjective achievements of the conscious intentional subject in the pursuit of knowledge and truth as antithetical to the objectivity of truth and knowledge, it is important to acknowledge that subjectivity and objectivity are complementary concepts, rather than contradictory ones. When this is done, philosophical investigation of truth will not focus on intentional signs in terms of logical, linguistic, semantic and conceptual analysis but will focus on intentional acts in terms of cognitional and intentionality analysis. Focus on intentionality analysis will address truth controversies in contemporary philosophical investigations of truth.

Finally, to emphasise the centrality of the role of knowing subject in the quest for truth, let me make my own the words of Lonergan: “The fruit of truth must grow and mature on the tree of the subject, before it can be plucked and placed in the absolute realm” (Lonergan 1974, 70).

## References

- Aleke, Patrick O. 2018a. “Analogy as the Key to Understanding the Unity of Truth.” *Logos: African Journal of Philosophy and Studies* 1: 15–29.
- Aleke, Patrick O. 2018b. “Truth as Correspondence Reconsidered.” PhD Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Aleke, Patrick O. 2019. “Truth and the Quest for Definition.” *Phronimon* 20. <https://doi.org/10.25159/2413-3086/4421>.
- Aquinas, Thomas. 1920. *Summa Theologiae*.
- Aquinas, Thomas. 1952. *Questiones Disputate de Veritate*, English translation: *The Disputed Questions on Truth*, translated from the definitive Leonine text by R. W. Mulligan. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company.
- Beards, Andrew. 2018. *Lonergan, Meaning and Method: Philosophical Essays*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- David, Marian. 1994. *Correspondence and Disquotation: An Essay on the Nature of Truth*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- David, Marian. 2001. “Truth as Identity and Truth as Correspondence.” In *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, 683–704, edited by M. P. Lynch. Cambridge, London: The MIT Press.
- David, Marian. 2004. “Don’t Forget about the Correspondence Theory of Truth.” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 82 (1): 42–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713659802>.
- Dodd, Julian. 1995. “McDowell and Identity Theories of Truth.” *Analysis* 55 (3): 160–165. <https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/55.3.160>.
- Dodd, Julian. 2008. *An Identity Theory of Truth*. London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230584266>.
- Engel, Pascal. 2002. *Truth*. Chesham: Acumen. <https://doi.org/10.1017/UPO9781844653393>.
- Frege, Gottfried. 1956. “The Thought: A Logical Inquiry in Mind.” *New Series* 65 (259): 289–311. <https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/65.1.289>.

- Grover, Dorothy. 2001. "The Prosentential Theory: Further Reflections on Locating Our Interest in Truth." In *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, 505–526, edited by M. P. Lynch 2001. Cambridge, London: The MIT Press.
- Grover, Dorothy, L. Joseph, L. Camp, and Nuel D. Belnap. 1975. "A Prosentential Theory of Truth." *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 27 (2): 73–124. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01209340>.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1953[2008]. *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen-Niemeyer. English translation: *Being and Time*, translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. New York: HarperCollins.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1967. *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit, Wegmarken*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag. English translation: "On the Essence of Truth," translated by J. Sallis. In *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, 295–316, edited by M. P. Lynch, 2001. Cambridge, London: The MIT Press.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1988[2004]. *The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Parable of the Cave and the Theaetetus*, translated by T. Sadler. London, New York: Continuum.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1989[1999]. *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann. English translation: *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, translated by P. Emad and K. Maly. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hornsby, Jennifer. 1997[2001]. "Truth: The Identity Theory." In *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, 663–682, edited by M. P. Lynch. Cambridge, London: The MIT Press. Originally printed in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 97: 1–24.
- Horwich, Paul. 1998. *Truth*, second edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198752237.001.0001>.
- Horwich, Paul. 2001. "A Defense of Minimalism." *Synthese* 126 (1/2): 149–165. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1005279406402>.
- Kirkham, Richard L. 1995. *The Theories of Truth: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge, London: The MIT Press.
- Lewis, David. 2001. "Forget about the 'Correspondence Theory of Truth'." *Analysis* 61 (4): 275–280. <https://doi.org/10.1093/analysis/61.4.275>.
- Lonergan, Bernard J. F. 1967. "Cognitive Structure." In *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan, SJ*, 221–239, edited by F. E. Crowe. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.
- Lonergan, Bernard J. F. 1971. *Method in Theology*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.
- Lonergan, Bernard J. F. 1974. "The Subject." In *A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard J F Lonergan, S J.*, edited by W. F. Ryan and B. J. Tyrrell. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.

## Aleke

- Lonergan, Bernard J. F. 1992[2013]. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Lonergan, Bernard J. F. 1996. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing." In *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958–1964*, edited by C. Croken et al. Toronto: Toronto University Press. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442678415>.
- Lonergan, Bernard J. F. 1997. "Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas." In *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, edited by F. E. Crowe and R. M. Doran. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442683037>.
- Lynch, Michael P. (ed.). 2001a. *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*. Cambridge, London: The MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/4884.001.0001>.
- Lynch, Michael P. (ed.). 2001b. "A Functionalist Theory of Truth." In *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, 723–750, edited by M. P. Lynch. Cambridge, London: The MIT Press.
- McCarthy, Michael H. 1990. *The Crisis of Philosophy*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Quine, Willard V. 1960. *Word and Object*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Quine, Willard V. 1990. *Pursuit of Truth*. Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press.
- Rasmussen, Joshua. 2014. *Defending the Correspondence Theory of Truth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415102>.
- Rorty, Richard. 1995. "Is Truth a Goal of Inquiry? Donald Davidson versus Crispin Wright," *Philosophical Quarterly* 45 (180): 281-300.
- Scharp, Kevin. 2007. "Replacing Truth." *Inquiry* 50: 606–621. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00201740701698589>.
- Scharp, Kevin. 2013. *Replacing Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199653850.001.0001>.
- Vision, Gerald. 1998. *Modern Anti-Realism and Manufactured Truth*. London, NY: Routledge.
- Vision, Gerald. 2003. "Lest We Forget 'The Correspondence Theory of Truth'." *Analysis* 63 (2): 136–142. <https://doi.org/10.1093/analysis/63.2.136>.
- Vision, Gerald. 2004. *Veritas. The Correspondence Theory and its Critics*. Cambridge, London: The MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/7091.001.0001>.