



Heidegger's Unlikely Alliance with Locke in Identifying Truth and Knowledge

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Abstract

The paper examines Heidegger's notions of truth and knowledge in the context of Locke's theory of same. It argues that when Heidegger's expositions of "primordial truth" and knowledge as a "retainment of assertion" are analyzed in their Beings, new and improved definitions emerge which support Locke's ideas of truth and knowledge. It shows that Heidegger's primordial truth is the process which uncovers Locke's propositional truth and on which any knowledge must be based. Wherefrom, to solve the problem of what knowledge is and how one defines it, one must start with Heidegger's conceptions of truth and knowledge.

Keywords Disclosedness · Uncoverdness · Retainment of assertion · Primordial truth · Being · Dasein · Comportment

For Heidegger, truth as traditionally understood is rooted in a more basic "primordial" truth while knowledge, is the "retainment of an assertion" rather than a "relation". However, when Heidegger's outline of knowing as Dasein's Being-in-and-towards-the-world is examined, together with the process leading to Dasein's knowing, it is clear, this process must include "uncovering" or the Being of truth as an element of knowing. This element is missing from Heidegger's exposition of knowledge, but if knowing is the "retaining of an assertion" and an assertion is what is confirmed when "uncoverdness" takes place, is "uncoveredness" knowledge or truth, given that assertion is a necessary element of both as the former retains it and the latter confirms it. Or is it rather, that retention and confirmation of an assertion are simply two stages of the same process – process which ultimately describes the Being of knowing rather than the Being of truth. It seems, Heidegger misidentifies truth and knowledge and unwittingly but inadvertently, misapplies their definitions

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for if “uncoveredness” is knowledge, one is apt to ask what truth in the context of Being is then – truth must be the “confirmation of an assertion”. Heidegger could still argue that truth is “primordial” and cannot be demonstrated but only talked about or expressed, and this explains why truth is thought of as having propositional character. But this also means that truth as an “agreement” still stands as well. Why is this important?

Heidegger laments the fact that “no headways have been made with this problem in over two thousand years” and wishes that truth’s analysis is kept “within the sphere of the subject while interpreting the immanent consciousness of truth” (BT, 1962, p. 259, 217) and yet, John Locke’s (2011) definition of truth as an “agreement or disagreement of ideas” does just that.¹ The idea of truth as Locke (2011) understands it is an improvement over Heidegger’s since “uncoveredness” does not accommodate the possibility that Dasein could be in a state of Being-in-and-towards-the-world even if an entity isn’t “uncovered”. But how could Dasein be in a state of knowing if the entity to be known remains concealed one could balk here, and not without a cause?

Locke’s (2011) notion of knowledge as the “perception of agreement or disagreement of two ideas” aligns perfectly with my reformulated conception of Heidegger’s knowledge as “uncoveredness”. Of course, one must conceive of knowledge in terms of truth and not vice versa since the relation between truth and knowledge is not symmetrical and reflexive as they are not identical, and whether one defines truth in terms of knowledge or knowledge in terms of truth matters. Heidegger seems to overlook this issue and defines truth in terms of knowledge rather than the other way around. But, if one were to examine truth and knowledge in their proper relation, their conceptions as Heidegger explicates them would be perfectly acceptable provided the two are correctly identified and defined. Undoubtedly, the possibility that either Locke or Heidegger would have conceived of his theory in the context of the other’s theory is very unlikely, but this cannot be a reason for one not to consider the implications of such a collaboration.

1 Heidegger’s Conflation of Truth and Knowledge

Understandably, Heidegger’s discussions of truth and knowledge are driven by his investigation of Being, but he does not seem to have any one specific definition of knowledge in mind whose revision he is concerned with. He simply summarizes the knowledge debate as he sees it and examines a definition of knowledge reflecting this summary. The lack of clearly stated traditional conception of knowledge Heidegger is revisiting reorients his expositions of both truth and knowledge as he does not realize that however one defines knowledge, that definition must refer to truth in some sense.² The absence of truth inevitably leads him to formulate an incomplete

¹ Though in Heidegger’s defense, given Locke’s (2011) claim that our ideas originate with experience there is no reason for Heidegger to look for a new approach when analyzing truth and knowledge with Locke (2011).

² It must be noted that there still isn’t a widely accepted or successfully defended definition of knowledge philosophers refer to in their discussions apart from Locke’s (2011) definition which, however, has been largely ignored by epistemologists.

definition of knowing even if fundamentally correct one. Knowing according to Heidegger, involves “addressing” oneself to an entity, “interpreting it broadly” and “determining” it based on this interpretation. The determination is then retained and preserved as an assertion made about the entity in question – Heidegger describes this process as the “perceptive retention of an assertion”. (*BT*, p. 89, 62) Clearly, he sees truth and knowledge as connected when noting that: “Being does indeed ‘go together’ with truth, the phenomenon of truth has already been one of the themes of our earlier analyses, though not explicitly under this title”. (*BT* p. 213, 256) I gather Heidegger refers here to the preceding discussion of knowledge and yet, truth is not part of it. He further clarifies this connection by asking: “When does truth become phenomenally explicit in knowledge” and answers, “It does so when such knowing demonstrates itself as true. By demonstrating itself it is assured of its truth”. (*BT*, 1962, p 260, 218).

Well, if this were the case, “preceptive retention of an assertion” would be an inadequate definition of knowledge for such an assertion must be confirmed or its truth demonstrated in order to be knowledge. Furthermore, if knowledge is “assured of its truth” only after it has demonstrated itself, what makes it knowledge in the first place if not the fact that it is true. And how is such a demonstration accomplished if demonstrating its truth is not the way? Heidegger puts the cart before the horse here which explains why his discussion of knowledge precedes his discussion of truth. Had he realized that the Being of knowledge presupposes and necessitates the Being of truth, I am certain, he would have discussed truth and knowledge in tandem and saved us a great deal of trouble trying to understand his conceptions of both.

Heidegger does, however, clearly outline the notion of truth he intends to revisit. He notices that once Aristotle’s claim “that the soul’s ‘Experiences’, its ‘representations’, are likening of Things” (*BT*, 1962, 214, p.257) was interpreted and treated as a definition of “truth”,³ it was easy for Avicenna, Aquinas, and Israeli among other medieval philosophers to develop further this claim and define truth as “*adaequatio intellectus et rei*”, or “*correspondentia*”, or “*convenientia*”, (*BT*, 1962, 225, p. 267) i.e., as the “correspondence of knowledge with its object”, and for modern philosophers and linguists to continue the tradition. Heidegger offers reasonable objections to said definition which are not easily dismissed when noting for example, that knowledge and its object, *intellectus* and *res*, are different in kind so they couldn’t possibly agree in anything; they are certainly not equal; and neither is their relation such that one is “just as” the other. Wherefrom, Heidegger asks:

“How are we to take ontologically the relation between an ideal entity and something that is real and present-at-hand? Such a relation indeed subsists [besteht]; and in factual judgments it subsists not only as a relation between the real content of judgment and the Real Object, but likewise as a relation between the ideal content and the real act of Judgment.” (*BT*, 1962, 217, p.259)

³ Heidegger was also not convinced that said description was meant as a definition of truth by Aristotle.

Surely, we must grant Heidegger his objections here, as it is not clear how one is to compare a real or concrete entity such as a tree for instance, with the knowledge of a tree in order to claim correspondence between the two. Or is one to compare a real or concrete entity with the impression of that entity in one's mind, i.e., the cognition of that entity. In other words, the concrete or real entity is out there in the external world, while the impression or cognition of it is presumed behind a veil and in the mind of the knower. Heidegger thus would ask, are we to compare the sign or the word *tree* with the actual tree in this instance.

Having disavowed the definition of truth as correspondence, Heidegger argues that truth for Aristotle and the Ancients is *aletheia*, or unconcealing by letting an entity show itself or reveal itself. (BT 213, p. 256) It is this interpretation of truth Heidegger takes as his starting point aiming to show that truth is “uncoveredness”. And when elaborating on said definition of truth, Heidegger notes that:

“... we have not shaken off the tradition, but we have appropriated it primordially; and we shall have done so all the more if we succeed in demonstrating that the idea of agreement is one to which theory had to come on the basis of the primordial phenomenon of truth...” (BT, 1962, 220, p. 262)

That is, truth as a correspondence is to be conceived of as rooted in a more basic primordial truth which is a mode of Being for Dasein. Heidegger further explains that “the most primordial phenomenon of truth is first shown by the existential-ontological foundations of uncovering”. (BT, 221, p. 263).

Fair enough, but Heidegger also notes that the conception of truth as an “agreement” would be an acceptable definition of truth if the conception of knowledge allows it, i.e., the claim that truth is an “agreement” could still stand if certain conditions are met:

...this characterization of truth as ‘agreement’, *adaequatio*... is very general and empty. Yet it will still have some justification if it can hold its own without prejudice to any of the most various Interpretations which that distinctive predicate “knowledge” will support. (BT, 1962, 216, p.215)

Well, if Heidegger's definition of knowledge as “retained assertion” is clarified and improved, it will not only presuppose truth as an “agreement”, but it will demand it. For when analyzed in the context of Aristotle's analysis of knowledge, it becomes clear that knowledge cannot be properly defined as “retained assertion”. To that end, Aristotle (1976) notes that:

“Knowledge and its object differ from opinion and its object in that knowledge is of the universal and proceeds by necessary propositions; and that which is necessary cannot be otherwise; but there are some propositions which, though true and real, are also capable of being otherwise.” (PA, 88b, 30-35)

Thus, knowledge is not an opinion for an opinion can be true or false as “it is opinion that is concerned with that... which may be otherwise.” (PA, 89a, 4–5) Aristotle does not dispute that opinion can be true and resemble knowledge in

this sense, but knowledge can be true only and it is this peculiarity which distinguishes it from opinion. However, opinion according to Aristotle, is an “assumption of a premise which is neither mediated nor necessary...for opinion, like events of the character... is uncertain.” (PA, 89a, 6–9) And being uncertain is not an attribute of knowledge for if one thinks that a proposition can be otherwise, this proposition is not necessary and therefore not true absolutely.

What is significant about Aristotle’s discourse on knowledge is that the definition of opinion he offers, when expressed, is identical to Heidegger’s definition of “assertion”. Heidegger tells us that “assertion” is “*pointing out*”, “*predicating*”, and “*communicating*”. Isn’t that what an expressed opinion or an expressed assumption is? In Heidegger’s picture example when one’s back is turned against the wall and one asserts that the picture is askew first, one *points-out* the picture as an entity, then one *predicates* of the picture that it is askew and finally one *communicates* that the picture is askew. The first two acts of asserting can clearly be described as assuming. It follows that Heidegger’s assertion is Aristotle’s assumption only expressed or communicated. But Heidegger treats assertion here, as truthful and as a means to acquiring knowledge while fully aware that assertion can be false even if one does not liken it to Aristotle’s definition of opinion as “assumption”. This means that there must be an additional step which transforms said assertion into knowledge, i.e., there must be something which makes the assertion true or confirms it. Heidegger explains this by noting that: “...pointing-out which assertion does is performed on the basis of what already has been disclosed in understanding or discovered circumspectively”. (BT, 1962, 157, p.199) That is, in our everyday dealings we encounter entities like door for example, which we point out – an entryway in this case – followed by predicating a property of it, being an entryway to a restaurant let us say, and finally communicating the assertion that it is a restaurant’s entryway. Such an assertion is based on one’s discovering the entryway circumspectively, i.e., one discovers it as it looks or matters to one when one is entering a restaurant and not as it is phenomenally or in-itself. But for this assertion to become knowledge, one needs to *address* oneself to the restaurant entryway as a door, *interpret* it and *determine* it, according to Heidegger’s notion of knowledge. One does that by looking at the entryway not from the perspective of one’s usual concerned Being-in-the-world, but from the perspective of “tarrying alongside” Being-in-the-world which in this case means, that when one looks at the entryway, one looks at it with curiosity and examines it. One notices that it is a door made out of glass with gold ornaments for example and determines that the restaurant entryway is a glass door with gold decoration. This is the “perceptive retention of assertion” Heidegger talks about for “assertion asserts, points out, ‘lets’ the entity ‘be seen’ in its uncoveredness”. (BT, 1962, 219, p. 261) Ergo, one has “uncovered” the being of the door as it is in-itself by confirming one’s assertion about it.

This seems right, but what we are dealing here with, is an assertion whose confirmation has transformed it into knowledge, i.e., the assertion itself is not knowledge for there is the extra step between the assertion made and the knowledge acquired which separates the two. This step is the comparison of the asserted or intended entity with the perceived entity which results in the *confirmation* Heidegger speaks about. But if one pays close attention to the explanation he offers as to how the

process of “uncovering” takes place and what in fact uncovering as such amounts to, one will realize that the uncovering is the Being of knowledge which is secondary to the confirmation of the assertion. Thus, there is the confirming of an assertion first, or the Being of truth first, and then this confirmation is followed by “uncovering” which can only be described as knowing. Heidegger states as much himself:

“What comes up for confirmation is that this entity is pointed out by the Being in which the assertion is made – which is Being towards what is put forward in the assertion; thus, what is to be confirmed is that such Being uncovers the entity towards which it is. What gets demonstrated is the Being-uncovering of the assertion.” (BT, 1962, 218, p. 261)

What Heidegger tells us here is that when an assertion is made, its goal is the uncovering of an entity and when this assertion is confirmed, the entity which was asserted is uncovered in its Being. That is, once an assertion is made its truth must be demonstrated in order to be retained and preserved, i.e., the assertion must be confirmed if it is to be knowledge. For “confirmation” according to Heidegger “signifies the entity’s showing itself” and when an assertion is true, “it uncovers the entity as it is in itself” (BT, 1962, p. 261, 219) Clearly then, if truth is the confirmation of an assertion, then the uncovering of an entity as a result of it, must be something else of which truth is an element. And if “uncovering” is not truth what else can it be but knowing for Dasein is in a state of “uncovering” an entity. Hence, uncovering is knowing, and a confirmation of an assertion is truth according to Heidegger’s expositions of truth and knowledge. But what does such definition of truth spell about the nature of truth as an agreement?

2 Heidegger’s *primordial* Truth as Lockean Knowledge

Not unlike Heidegger’s investigation of knowledge and truth, Locke’s (2011) is notably part of a larger project inquiring about human understanding where Locke examines how we form our ideas in order to outline and explain truth and knowledge. Not only does Locke define the terms but like Heidegger again, he explains what it means to know in addition to identifying and defining knowledge. According to Locke, our thinking’s only objects are our own ideas which we form by experiencing the world around us. These ideas and our reflections upon them represent all the content of our knowledge:

“All ideas come from sensation or reflection... in one word from EXPERIENCE. In that all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself... our Senses... convey into the mind several distinct perceptions of things, according to those various ways wherein those objects do affect them. And thus, we come by those ideas we have of yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, hard, bitter...” (*The Essay*, Book IV, Chapter I, 2 - 3)

And similarly to the Heideggerian Dasein who uncovers an entity by comporting towards it and leisurely examining it so that its nature can be unconcealed, the

Lockean subject acquires knowledge by examining and comparing the ideas it has formed through experience. Such comparison can reveal either agreement or disagreement of ideas which “may be any of the four sorts” as Locke (2011) points out: “Identity or diversity; Relations; Co-existence or necessary connection; Real existence”. The kind of agreement or disagreement of ideas relevant here is that of identity or diversity without which “there could be no knowledge” according to Locke (2011) for:

“It is the first act of the mind... to perceive its ideas... to know each what it is, and thereby also to perceive their difference, and that one is not another. This is so absolutely necessary, that without it there could be no knowledge, no reasoning, no imagination, no distinct thoughts at all.” (*The Essay*, Book IV, Chapter I, 3 – 4)

Locke (2011) elaborates further that:

“...the mind clearly and infallibly perceives each idea to agree with itself, and to be what it is; and all distinct ideas to disagree, i.e., the one not to be the other: and this it does... but at first view, by its natural power of perception and distinction.” (*The Essay*, Book IV, Chapter I, 4)

This means that when one perceives or touches a tree for example, one forms the idea of a tall and relatively straight shape with long outgrowths sprouting from the shape. One also notices the colors white and brownish-gray let us say, senses that the surface is smooth and hard, etc. and one gives the name *birch tree* to the idea one forms as a result of perceiving the tree or the particular unit of qualities as Locke (2011) describes the objects of perception. It is how we form our ideas or the objects of our thoughts according to Locke.

But to *know* that we are looking at a birch tree we need to compare our idea of a *tree* with the idea we form of whatever it is we are perceiving. If the ideas we are comparing agree, then we know we are looking at a tree. But if the ideas disagree because what we are perceiving has short and wide shape let us say, its surface is smooth but prickly, and the object has red, yellow, and green colors, then we know that what we are looking at is not a tree but let us say a rose.

Therefrom, Locke (2011) defines knowledge as “the perception of agreement or disagreement of two ideas” (*The Essay*, Book IV, Chapter I, 2) and tells us that when one knows one is in “possession of truth”. Truth on the other hand, is the “agreement or disagreement of ideas” itself according to Locke (2011) who also notes that truth is that which belongs properly to propositions alone. (*The Essay*, IV, V, 2) What is notable about this definition of truth is that Locke (2011) does not speak of agreement of knowledge with its object, but of agreement of ideas which are of the same kind, can be claimed to be “just as” one another and are equal with one another. In other words, this definition of truth answers Heidegger’s objection that an agreement presupposes a relation between an “ideal” entity and “something that is Real”. Therefore, if one applies Locke’s (2011) definition of knowledge to Heidegger’s picture example, it turns out that Heidegger’s notion of truth as uncoveredness and the process which accomplishes the unconcealing of an entity is in perfect congruence with Locke’s (2011) definition of

knowledge. For when the man with his back against the wall who has an idea of an object on a wall which is askew turns around and perceives the picture hanging on the wall crookedly and forms an idea of it, he compares two ideas rather than an object with its knowledge. If the ideas agree, the man knows that there is a picture on the wall which is askew, but if the ideas disagree because when the man turns around and there is not an object on the wall hanging askew, then the man still knows but knows that there is not a picture on the wall which is askew but whatever it is the man perceives instead. In fact, Heidegger considers such an agreement when elaborating on the meaning of *confirming* by asking: “Do we, let us say, ascertain some agreement between our ‘knowledge’ or ‘what is known’ and the Thing on the wall?” His answer illustrates the technical problems plaguing the debate about knowledge which are not Heidegger’s alone, but he’s identifying knowing with judging in addition to defining truth as an assertion, adds to the problems when he asks: “If he who makes the assertion judges without perceiving the picture, but ‘merely represents it to himself’, to what is he related?” (*BT*, 1962, 218, p. 260).

Well, he who makes an assertion does not judge but expresses an opinion or makes an assumption which needn’t be related to more than one’s past experience, or one hearing something on TV or radio, or one reading something in a newspaper. None of these can furnish one with knowledge however, for there would be no uncovering of an entity in Heideggerian terms, unless one is perceiving an agreement or disagreement of asserted and perceived objects or ideas in Locke’s (2011) words; or unless one is confirming the aforementioned assertion through perception or cognition. For when an assertion is made, one does not judge or know but asserts. Indeed, Heidegger’s own conception of assertion – as “pointing out, predicating, and communicating” – does not allow one to speak of judging or knowing in lieu of asserting. Only after an assertion is confirmed can one be said to know or judge. In addition, there is no agreement between “what is known” and the “thing on the wall”, for if one already knows “what is known”, i.e., if one already knows the entity being asserted one need not confirm one’s assertion for one has already uncovered the entity. An assertion thus is transformed into knowledge when one perceives or uncovers though Heidegger does not put it quite this way. How this transformation takes place is by comparing the “pointed out, predicated and communicated” entity with the entity which is perceived or cognized. And this is correct for we must remember that according to Aristotle opinion is an assumption of a premise which is “neither mediated nor necessary”, and when the man with his back against the wall asserts a picture askew, he merely assumes it without mediation or necessity. Once he turns around however, his assumption is mediated or made necessary by the perception or cognition and the assumption is transformed into knowledge. In the end, Heidegger’s notion of truth as “uncoveredness” is really the Lockean notion of knowledge as the “perception of truth”.

That notwithstanding, Heidegger would be correct to object here that the acts of *confirming* and *agreeing* cannot be equated simply because they play a role in acquiring knowledge and therefore, I cannot claim that truth is an “agreement” after all – the terms have different significations and denote different things. But the issue here is not whether “confirmation of assertion” amounts to “agreement of ideas”,

but rather what role *non-confirmation* plays which is at the root of Heidegger's argument about truth.

3 Truth as Confirmation or Non-confirmation of Assertion

Now Locke's (2011) definition of truth includes the *disagreement* of ideas as well as agreement which is easily explained. *Non-confirmation* on the other hand, is a term which is hard to make sense of within the structure of Being for what would it mean for Dasein to not uncover an entity, or in this case to uncover that there is no picture askew on a wall and that Dasein's assertion is not confirmed? In one sense, Dasein would be uncovering something, but would not be uncovering the entity asserted, and yet, Heidegger's claim about the primordially of truth hangs on such uncovering. In other words, Dasein's assertion would not be confirmed and Dasein would still be knowing, but without truth according to Heidegger. Which is worse here, assertion as knowledge or knowledge without truth for as Heidegger tells us: "... the knowing which asserts and which gets confirmed is, in its ontological meaning, itself Being towards Real entities, and a Being that uncovers."? (BT, 1962, 218, p. 261) Moreover, knowing shouldn't need confirmation or else it wouldn't be knowing and in knowing Dasein does not assert but knows. For if an entity is asserted but not confirmed or uncovered, then knowing is no different than assertion or assumption. Either way, truth as uncovering through confirmation is a problematic definition when there is no confirmation. Mark Wrathall touches on this issue somewhat, in his discussion of what it means for something to be true and false for Heidegger and notes that:

...the object as sensed and the object as intended show that it is possible to make a judgment, either that the object as sensed is such and such kind of object, or that the object intended is satisfied by such and such sensed object (see p. 220 ff.). This double structure makes an error possible because it allows, for example, that the sensed object is brought under an *idea* that is not appropriate for it. (p. 224)

Regrettably, neither Heidegger nor Wrathall (or Kant for that matter) realize that error as bringing of a sensed object under an inappropriate idea is not falsity per se though an assertion is not confirmed. What is false is the assertion itself or the asserted object because it does not agree with the sensed object. One could argue that erring is the bringing of an object under an inappropriate idea, but this would be a conceptual error or error of understanding rather than perceptual error or error of knowing which would be required if falsity is to be claimed. Error in this sense is still knowing for the sensed object which is uncovered by perception gets brought under a different idea than the one asserted but is uncovered, nevertheless. For as soon as one realizes that the sensed object doesn't agree with the asserted or intended object, one must and does bring it under a different idea. The non-confirmation of an assertion will do as well, as it will allow the knower to compare the asserted and sensed objects and consequently lead one to bring the perceived object under the appropriate idea when one apprehends the disagreement of the compared

entities or ideas. In Heidegger's defense, he clearly does not realize that he boxes himself in when he insists that "confirmation" does better job than "agreement" not recognizing that if an assertion isn't confirmed, a perception is left undefined as to what it is one is uncovering if nothing was asserted or intended prior to that perception. And if one cannot confirm an assertion, then one knows that one's assertion is in error which is different kind of knowledge than the one Heidegger defines but knowledge, nevertheless. It is why, Locke (2011) defines knowledge as the "perception of agreement or *disagreement* of ideas" for so long as one perceives or apprehends either of these one knows, and one is "in the truth" as Heidegger tells us or "in possession of truth" as Locke (2011) does. The question then is not whether one knows but what one knows.

4 Conclusion

Admittedly, if Heidegger were to adopt Locke's (2011) exposition of truth as "agreement or disagreement of ideas", he can argue that the issue about the primordality of truth remains for truth according to Locke (2011) applies to signs and words only.

However, Heidegger does not dismiss the idea of truth as agreement altogether, but rather clarifies its meaning as it relates to the question of what truth is and notes that:

"...we call true not only an actual joy, genuine gold, and all beings of such kind, but also and above all we call true or false our statements about beings... A statement is true if what it means and says is in accordance with the matter about which the statement is made... though, it is not the matter that it is in accord but rather the *proposition*." (*Basic Writings*, 2008, p. 117)

That is, we can speak of agreement when it comes to the truth of what is said about a matter and whether a proposition represents a statement about a matter truthfully for as Heidegger notes:

"The true, whether it be a matter or a proposition, is what accords, the accordant. Being true and truth here signify accord... the consonance of a matter with what is supposed in advance regarding it, and... the accordance of what is meant in the statement with the matter." (*Basic Writings*, 2008, p. 117)

But where or what such truths derive their truthfulness from is the question Heidegger considers and ultimately answers. In other words, what is it that grounds propositional truths – the primordial truth Heidegger means to expose for "truth so conceived, propositional truth, is possible only on the basis of material truth". (*Basic Writings*, 2008, p. 118) That is to say that in order for us to state the truth or express a true proposition, we must experience or become aware of the truth first by comporting ourselves to an entity and letting it show itself to us, or unconcealing it, wherefrom the "perceptive retention of assertion". Only after, can we make a true statement, and can we claim to know for "truth does not originally reside in the proposition". It is what Heidegger calls the "inner possibility of accordance" which

“lends propositional correctness the appearance of fulfilling the essence of truth”. (*Basic Writings*, 2008, p. 123) Such inner possibility of accordance is rooted in the “possibility of correctness” which is wholly dependent on Dasein for so long as Dasein exists, it “lets beings be” by comporting itself to them so that it can uncover or know them.

The same considerations apply to Locke’s (2011) notions of truth and knowledge for signs and words represent ideas, but ideas according to Locke (2011) are formed through experience. That is, before an “agreement or disagreement of ideas” can be represented by a proposition it must be experienced – only after, can one speak of the truth of a proposition. Thus, one can argue that Locke’s truth is necessarily rooted in or derived from Heidegger’s “primordial” truth.

More to the point, if one were to ask Locke (2011) what exactly is it that one perceives when one perceives an agreement or disagreement of ideas, Locke (2011) would be hard-pressed to explain. For given that knowledge according to him is the “perception of agreement or disagreement of ideas” – ideas which we acquire through experience – and at the same time, the only objects of our perceptions are qualities or aggregates of qualities such as colors, sounds, solidity, etc., Locke (2011) cannot explain the perception of agreements or disagreements of ideas itself, in terms of qualities. Because ideas are not qualities and therefore, the perception of their agreements and disagreements is not a quality one can speak of either. That is, we do not experience our ideas or their agreements and disagreements – we experience aggregates of qualities according to Locke (2011) when we perceive anything at all, and these perceptions are merely represented by our ideas. But if this were the case, then Locke (2011) could not argue that we perceive the agreements or disagreements of ideas because they are not qualities or aggregates of such. Put otherwise, Locke (2011) would not be able to translate the perception of our ideas’ agreements and disagreements in terms of units of qualities.

Of course, Locke (2011) can argue that we reflect on our ideas and become aware of truth as the result of such reflections, but this is not what he argues for. And if such reflections ground true propositions which is Heidegger’s point, and not our direct experiences of the world around us, then Locke’s (2011) propositional truth is rooted in Heidegger’s basic primordial truth which depends entirely on Dasein and its rational capacity.

When one compares the idea of a unicorn with the idea of a horse for example, and one realizes that the ideas disagree, the question is what such a realization looks like in terms of perceived qualities – there doesn’t seem to be an intelligible way to answer this question or cash out such a realization. Unless of course, one adopts Heidegger’s notion of primordial truth as one of Dasein’s essential modes of Being through which Dasein expresses itself, or the phenomenal explicitness of truth in knowing. In fact, Heidegger says as much when considering the truth of propositions though without the reference to Locke’s (2011) theory of ideas and knowledge when he explains that:

“...the sheer sensory perception of something, is ‘true’ in the Greek sense, and indeed more primordially than the *logos*... Just as seeing aims at colours, any *αισθησις* aims at its idea... and to that extent this perception is always

true. This means that seeing always discovers colours, and hearing always discovers sounds. Pure *νοεῖν* is the perception of the simplest determinate ways of Being which entities as such may possess, and it perceives them just by looking at them. This *νοεῖν* is what is ‘true’ in the purest and most primordial sense; that is to say, it merely discovers...” (BT, 1962, 34, p. 57)

Similarly, Aristotle (1984) considers the peculiarity of the act of knowing when inquiring about knowledge and notes that:

“...what knowledge is, if we are to speak exactly and not follow mere similarities, is plain from what follows. We all suppose that what we know is not capable of being otherwise, of things capable of being otherwise we do not know, when they have passed outside of our observation, whether they exist or not.” (NE, 1139b20-2)

What Aristotle claims here is that once we are no longer perceiving the object of our investigation, we do not know how and what such object is, and whether it exists. For if the object is one which is subject to change, we certainly do not know anything about such an object when we are no longer observing it. Or when we are no longer in a position to unconceal it and let it show itself in Heideggerian terms, or no longer in possession of truth as Locke (2011) elaborates.

More importantly, the perception or cognition of agreements and disagreements of ideas is an act of the understanding which precedes the cognition of propositional value. Indeed, such perception is a necessary condition for the cognition of the truth or falsity of a proposition. It is why Heidegger claims that the truth’s Being is fundamentally dependent on Dasein’s Being for without Dasein’s intending, perceiving, and comparing the entities Dasein addresses itself to, propositional truth is an unintelligible notion, and so is the notion of knowledge for that matter.

Consider the truth of the proposition “there is a picture askew on the wall” independently from the man’s perceiving the picture and comparing it with the asserted picture for example, such a truth is meaningless unless one can base it on one’s cognition of such a comparison’s outcome. Heidegger’s “primordial” truth in this sense is experienced or its Being apprehended – a cognition allowing one to form propositions which can be thought of as true or false. It is these propositional truths in turn which are represented by signs and words as Locke (2011) notes, not the primordial truth in which they are rooted. For one can only describe how one becomes aware of the Being of truth which is what knowing is and which is ultimately what Heidegger does – describes the process which takes place when one knows, a process which makes possible the propositional representation of Locke’s (2011) truth as derived from Heidegger’s primordial truth.

With all this in mind, how likely is that Locke (2011) the empiricist, would have accepted Heidegger’s help in phenomenally grounding Locke’s (2011) ideas of truth and knowledge while subjecting their possibility to Dasein and its essential necessity as Dasein for discourse? Not very likely. Particularly, given Locke’s (2011) objection to the idea that knowledge can be grounded in human rationality. He clearly does not think that our understanding is well-suited for the task and cautions that:

“...Men, extending their Enquiries beyond their Capacities, and letting their Thoughts wander into those depths where they can find no sure Footing; ’tis no Wonder, that they raise Questions and multiply Disputes, which never coming to any clear Resolution, are proper to only continue and increase their Doubts, and to confirm them at last in a perfect Skepticism.” (*Essay*, I.1.7)

Similarly, Heidegger would have probably been just as hesitant to accept that knowledge is the beholding of truth as “agreement or disagreement of ideas”, though one must remember that he did not dismiss or object to the traditional notion of truth as it were, even as *correspondence* or *agreement*, but insisted rather on its grounding in a primordial truth. Indeed, Heidegger might not have rejected collaboration with Locke (2011) outright, perhaps. For as I have shown he does need Locke’s (2011) help in defending his exposition and definitions of the terms. And isn’t that the point, we must go where our inquiry takes us for often, the more unlikely the outcome, the larger the possibility that it will bring long-sought solutions to important philosophical questions.

And the questions what knowledge is and what makes a statement true are two questions philosophers are still grappling with, and it is perhaps time we accorded Locke’s (2011) and Heidegger’s theories of truth and knowledge the attention they merit. Lest epistemology remains mired in ceaseless debates about knowledge as “justified true belief” without end in sight, while we are presented with two excellent discourses on knowledge which are inexplicably ignored. Or we hazard another half of century of subtle philosophical reasonings, relentlessly producing ever so intricate logics while crafting theories which seem not even remotely connected with the world we live in, plagued with barely plausible examples of possible worlds with impossible scenarios. After all, Locke (2011) did tell us that:

“...human knowledge... may be carried much further than it has hitherto been, if men would sincerely, and with freedom of mind, employ all that industry and labour of thought, in improving the means of discovering truth, which they do for the colouring or support of falsehood, to maintain a system... they are once engaged in.” (*The Essay*, III, 6)

Declarations

Conflict of interest The author declares that she has no conflict of interest.

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