

**A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF BERNARD LONERGAN'S NOTION OF
JUDGMENT AS A RESPONSE TO THE CRITICAL PROBLEM**

BY

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**A Research Project Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy in the Department of
Philosophy and Religious Studies**

University of Nairobi

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DECLARATION

This research is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university.


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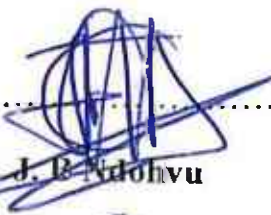
This research has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors


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DEDICATION

To all the women who are dedicated to the noble pursuit of truth and wisdom.

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First and foremost, I am sincerely grateful to God the Almighty, the giver of life, from whom all truth and wisdom emanate. Through His providence, I got a place at the university and ability to pursue my dream. I thank the University of Nairobi for giving me the opportunity to pursue my graduate studies; many thanks to all the professors and lecturers in the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies for the assistance and support that they generously gave me during my studies. In a special way, I wish to thank my supervisors: Dr. Oriare Nyarwath for his never ending moral and intellectual support and Dr. J.B Ndohvu for his unrelenting encouragement and academic input.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| DECLARATION | ii |
| DEDICATION | iii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | iv |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | v |
| ABSTRACT..... | viii |
| | |
| CHAPTER ONE | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Background to the Problem..... | 1 |
| 1.2 Statement Problem | 6 |
| 1.21 Definition of Key Terms | 7 |
| 1.3 Objectives of the Study | 8 |
| 1.4 Justification and Significance of the Study..... | 8 |
| 1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study | 9 |
| 1.6 Literature Review..... | 10 |
| 1.7 Theoretical Framework | 24 |
| 1.8 Hypotheses | 27 |
| 1.9 Methodology | 27 |
| | |
| CHAPTER TWO | 29 |
| THE ROOTS OF THE CRITICAL PROBLEM | 29 |
| 2.1 Introduction..... | 29 |
| 2.2 The Beginning of Philosophical Inquiry Itself..... | 29 |
| 2.21 Shift from Common Sense to Theory..... | 30 |
| 2.3 Change of Interest from the Object to the Subject..... | 31 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 2.3.1 The Attempt to Define Knowledge | 33 |
| 2.4 Skepticism | 36 |
| 2.5 The Search for Meaning from a Theological Perspective..... | 39 |
| 2.6 The Return to the Subject..... | 45 |
| 2.6.1 The Beginning of Transcendental Philosophy | 51 |
| 2.7 The Return to the Object | 54 |
| 2. 8 Recent Developments..... | 58 |
| 2.8.1 African Philosophy Perspectives of the Critical Problem | 59 |
| 2.8.2 Critical Remarks..... | 61 |
| 2.9 Conclusion | 61 |
| | |
| CHAPTER THREE | 64 |
| THE NATURE OF JUDGMENT AS A RESPONSE TO THE CRITICAL PROBLEM | 64 |
| 3.1 Introduction..... | 64 |
| 3.1.2 The Nature of Judgment..... | 64 |
| 3.1.3 Definitions of Judgment | 65 |
| 3.2 The Logical Analysis of Judgment | 68 |
| 3.2.1 Types of Judgment | 72 |
| 3.3 The Linguistic Analysis of Judgment | 74 |
| 3.4 The Epistemological Analysis of Judgment..... | 78 |
| 3.5 Judgment According to Lonergan..... | 79 |
| 3.6. The Role of Insight in Bridging the Subject and the Object | 81 |
| 3.6.1 The Possibility of Judgment | 84 |
| 3.6.2 The Difference between Understanding and Judgment..... | 85 |
| 3.7 Judgment and Evidence: The Search for Certitude..... | 87 |
| 3.7.1 The A priori of judgment..... | 92 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| 3. 8 Judgment and the Subject..... | 93 |
| 3.9 Judgment and the Object..... | 94 |
| 3.10 Judgment and Truth..... | 97 |
| 3.11 The Importance of Judgment | 99 |
| 3.12 Critical Remarks..... | 99 |
| 3.13 Conclusion | 101 |
| | |
| CHAPTER FOUR..... | 103 |
| SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 103 |
| 4.1 Summary | 103 |
| 4.2 Conclusion | 105 |
| 4.3 Recommendations | 108 |
| | |
| NOTES | 110 |
| | |
| REFERENCES..... | 123 |

ABSTRACT

This project sets out to explore the core of the critical problem. The critical problem is the epistemological question concerning the objectivity and subjectivity of human knowing. The question raised is whether man is capable of cognitive self-transcendence, i.e., to go beyond himself as a subject and to know the object as it is in itself. The critical problem is mainly concerned with the extent, limits, value or validity of knowledge. The study highlights the philosophical debates since ancient Greece to modern times and the manner in which different perspectives have shaped the debate. It particularly examines Lonergan's treatment of the problem. From the study, it emerges that philosophers have emphasized either the subject or the object leading to objectivism or subjectivism, extremes that deny the human mind the ability to constructively know the truth.

The research seeks to propose a comprehensive solution in the exploration of the nature of judgment as a response to the critical problem since it is in judgment that knowledge comes to finality. For one to claim that knowledge is exclusively subjective or objective or both objective and subjective requires that one arrives at a judgment. The study therefore, attempts to explore the way in which an understanding of judgment will possibly lead to a plausible solution from the theoretical perspective of critical realism. In critical realism, the objective existence of reality is affirmed by the need to rationally ground the existence of the object. This facilitates the elucidation of the subject object relationship from a rational framework. The study employs a descriptive, analytical, critical and evaluative method in explaining the process of human consciousness and how depending on the approach one adopts, he/she arrives at either subjectivity or objectivity of knowledge.

In the process, the study establishes that philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and Franz Brentano who have extensively explored the nature of judgment fell short of coming to a positive solution given their time and social-cultural environment. They

failed to highlight the nature of judgment as epistemologically relevant to the question of cognitive self-transcendence. This led to the investigation of the subject as dealt by Bernard Lonergan who is a 20th century philosopher, and who in his book *Insight*, gives a fresh understanding of knowledge as comprising of a threefold process of experience, understanding and judgment. The research centers on his perception of judgment to establish the extent to which it addresses the question of cognitive self-transcendence as a possibility that is realized through the act of judgment. The study progressively comes to the conclusion that indeed the critical problem has not been solved since philosophers were not able to understand judgment as a mental synthesis of both subjective and objective poles of human knowing.

The study recommends that Lonergan's theory of knowledge with regard to the nature of the "virtually unconditioned" which for him is the core that defines judgment and hence solves the critical problem to the nature of the "virtually unconditioned". It also recommends that the aspect of judgment be further explored to establish ways in which man can best avoid conflicts that arise from the subjectivity of his/her claim to know and understand reality based on the understanding of the subject as capable of personal discovery, self-affirmation and appropriation as a knowing being.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Problem

Philosophical problems concerning the nature of human knowledge continue to occupy today a central role not only in philosophy (epistemology) but also in other disciplines such as psychology, anthropology and sociology in so far as all the sciences seek for truth. The attainment of truth is a fundamental human desire which is intertwined in all aspects of man's life so much so that he/she cannot live without it. Such is the case as stated by Bewaji that knowledge in itself bears fundamental theoretical and practical importance.

Attaining knowledge has always been a serious human desire, and because of this, understanding knowledge as a concept and as an instrument has been a serious pre-occupation of the reflective members of all civilised societies from time immemorial, becoming a subject of great intellectual, material, cultural and technological investment. This is because knowledge is a crucial element in all domains of human life- be it practical or theoretical.¹

Apart from being theoretical, knowledge is also practical within the human society. Human beings have constructed learning institutions, built professions based on practical and theoretical knowledge and formed organizations that advance further research on knowledge accumulation. Knowledge is hence the driving force behind many human activities such as industrialization, socialization, education, exploitation of natural resources and development in general. The importance of knowledge therefore leads the study to the examination of knowledge in itself. This examination in philosophical terms is referred to as Epistemology.

The term 'epistemology' was perhaps first used by J.F. Ferrier in the middle of the 19th century in his publication *Institutes of Metaphysic: The Theory of knowing and Being*. It is the doctrine of the theory of knowing, just as ontology is the doctrine of the theory of being. It is the science of true knowing and asks the general question what is knowledge, what is knowing and what is known?² It is the philosophical

branch that studies the nature, scope and value of knowledge. Epistemology investigates such general questions as what are the essential components of human knowledge, how does man know anything and what is the extent of human knowledge, (can one have knowledge, if so, does one actually have it).³ As a science, it studies the general laws that govern human thought seeking to answer the above questions from a philosophical perspective.

Epistemology's material object is knowledge, while its formal object is knowledge in its ultimate causes and first principles studied under the light of natural reason.⁴ The subject matter is knowledge in general as found in the arts and sciences while the essence of epistemology is to study the principles that give rise to these bodies of knowledge. According to *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* the term comes 'from the Greek words 'episteme', 'knowledge' and 'logos', 'explanation' to mean 'the study of the nature of knowledge and justification.'⁵ Thus, 'epistemology' is also called 'criteriology' that is from '*Kriterion*' - a rule by which one may test knowledge to distinguish truth from falsity. It is also called '*gnoseology*' from '*gnosis*' to mean 'knowledge in the general sense.'⁶ Other times, it is called '*noetics*' to mean the 'study of the mind or intellect'.

But what is Knowledge? Philosophers are yet to arrive at a uniform account of the exact definition of knowledge. However, the traditional view originating in Plato's *Meno* and *Theatetus* 'is the view that knowledge is, inherently, justified true belief. That for any knowledge to be termed true, it has to satisfy the three conditions namely belief, truth and justification.'⁷ This view has however been challenged over time by Edmund Gettier (1927) in the 20th century through his counter-examples (where one has justified true belief that P but lacks knowledge that P due to sheer luck). Ferrier holds a contrary view that the definition of knowledge is ambiguous and unintelligible since knowledge cannot be understood in its present form.⁸

Epistemologists however unanimously agree on the different types of knowledge. Such includes empirical knowledge as derived from sensory experience; non-empirical knowledge as derived from pure reason or pure understanding; knowledge by description that is a sort of propositional knowledge, knowledge by acquaintance (a sort of non-propositional knowledge) and finally knowledge as skill, i.e., knowledge of how to do something.⁹ In this study, while dealing with knowledge in general, the study focuses on propositional knowledge, which is knowing that something is the case.

The primary concern of epistemology is whether mankind can really know the truth given the distinction between the knower and the known. Philosophers have responded to this distinction differently leading to diverse theories of knowledge some contradictory, others complementary. The relativists held the view that mankind can know the truth except that truth depends on the subject while skeptics held that man cannot know truth. Plato, who is a rationalist, was of the idea that true knowledge was knowledge of forms and not experience. Aristotle held that all knowledge begins from sense experience and so ideas are a result of sense experience and abstraction. In the mediaeval period, St. Thomas Aquinas, a realist, closely held to Aristotle's view that knowledge begins from sense experience but not all knowledge arises from sense experience. This led to the rise of two distinct theories namely, empiricism and rationalism, each attempting to justify the source of knowledge in which both solutions had problems.

Rationalists (Plato, Leibniz, Spinoza, Wolf, and Descartes) among others held that all knowledge is *a priori*; independent of experience, while the empiricist held that all knowledge comes from sense experience, i.e., it is *a posteriori*. Empiricists (Berkeley, Locke, and Hume) among others held that knowledge is objective in sense experience yet sense experience is subjective. Core empiricism holds that one cannot have knowledge of reality through the non-empirical use of reason. If therefore, one cannot have knowledge of reality through non-empirical use of reason, then one is incapable of knowledge of reality by rational intuition or by innate universal principles.

Consequently, any knowledge of reality derives from sensory experience.¹⁰ On the contrary, rationalists held that the objectivity of knowledge is in reason as the primary source of knowledge. For them, reality in itself consists of Form, that is, eternal, universal, unchanging entities that are accessible to reason. Reality exhibits, moreover, a rational structure arising from logical relations among the forms. The Forms exist independently of the sensory world of material objects and the latter are only a shadowy reflection of the real world of forms.¹¹

The weakness of the rationalistic view is that it undermines the world of sense experience and the role it plays in attaining knowledge. The resulting question is whether people can know an independent reality or merely subjective experience namely, cognitive self-transcendence. This phenomenon of knowledge later on laid bare the foundation of what was to be called the critical problem (objectivity versus subjectivity of knowledge) later in the study of epistemology. 'With the advent of the modern philosophy, the critical problem clearly presented itself- that is, the necessity to justify the knowledge of reality, a fundamental problem in gnoseologic stage of philosophy between Descartes and Kant.'¹² This is further elaborated by Derksen who states that:

Closely bound up with Descartes radical doubt is what has come to be known as the "critique of knowledge" or simply the "critical problem". The indubitable ground to which Descartes finally came, the "*Cogito, ergo sum*- I think therefore I am". From then on, all philosophy was supposed to start with the subject, with the "I", and the existence of everything that is not I, would first need to be proved. This is precisely what makes the "critical problem". The critical problem would ensure that subsequent philosophers would always recognise the primacy of the thinking self, the subject and to try to work their way out into the world, the object.

¹³<http://www.catholicapologetics.info>

Derksen emphasizes that Descartes' radical doubt redirected philosophy in a manner different from the scholastics. This is evident as in Kant's *Transcendental Ego*, Hegel's *Geist* and Kierkegaard's Subject "I"; all have the subject at the centre.¹⁴ Descartes began with a universal doubt concerning the capacity of the human intelligence to know reality. For him, the *Cogito* "I Think" was the beginning of all philosophy as it would lead philosophy to clear and distinct ideas. This raised further

questions concerning how the relationship between subject and object would lead to clear and distinct ideas.

Kant raised the difficulty of the relationship between the subject and the object, whether knowledge is subjective or objective and if the responses that emerged were valid. The responses reveal two kinds of theories of knowledge which may be grouped with regard to their degree of emphasis on the subjectivity or objectivity of knowledge. Subjectivist theories on one hand state that 'No, we do not know an independent world as the cause of our ideas. We cannot go beyond our experience or ideas and we cannot speak of a knower experiencing them. Objectivists on the other hand hold that 'yes we do know an independent world of material objects, answering to some form of materialism and realism.'¹⁵ On the one hand, truth is held to be subjective, while on the other, it is regarded to be objective and the methods to attain truth differ accordingly. In both cases, a judgment is made as to whether knowledge is subjective or objective. These responses demonstrate the critical problem in such a way that it is yet to be answered. The validity of their claims brings to the fore discursive narratives of the subjectivist and objectivists to the point of addressing the critical problem.

It is against this background that this study attempts a notion of judgment as possible means to addressing the critical problem. As Steenburgen observes:

We can thus formulate the critical problem as follows. What should we think of the finality of the cognitive subject's instinctive claims, or the finality to which he attributes his knowledge? If the cognitive act is a synthesis between an object and a subject, to what extent can it claim objectivity, to what extent does it give me the object as it really is? The critical problem is therefore the value of knowledge expressed in terms of the finality it shows. The value of the analysis of consciousness is made through knowledge and expressed in judgements. Therefore, if we see that a favourable solution has to be given to the critical problem, the first result of this solution will be to confirm the meaning and value of the various assertions of descriptive epistemology.¹⁶

The above analysis fundamentally indicates that the critical problem raises critical questions regarding the validity of knowledge hence in essence, questions one's judgments of reality. Since knowledge is conveyed through judgment, it is necessary

to understand the cognitive processes by which one arrive at judgments. A judgment is the mental act in which one expresses the finality of his or her knowledge by either affirming or denying reality. 'The judgment appears to be completion of the cognitive act. For, with judgment, consciousness and the subject's assimilation of the object reach the highest point.'¹⁷ According to Kant, judgments are synthetic and analytic, and 'the proper function of a judgment is the subsumption of an object under the subject.'¹⁸ For Lonergan, it is the grasp of the virtually unconditioned. 'A first determination of judgment is reached by relating it to propositions, a second determination by relating it to questions for reflection and questions for intelligence and the third determination involves a personal commitment, a responsibility of the one judging.'¹⁹ It is in this analysis of judgment that an attempt to solve the critical arises.

1.2 Statement Problem

Lonergan like previous philosophers such as Kant and Descartes expresses the difficulty in addressing the critical problem by stating thus; '...as yet, we are unprepared to answer the Kantian question that regards the constitution of the relation of knowing subject and known object.'²⁰ The relationship between the subject and the object is complex because while the object is empirically given, the subject knows the object through judgment. It is only in the mental act of judgment that one either affirms or denies reality. Consequently, it is in judgment that knowledge is therefore, final. If on the one hand, one lays claim that knowledge is objective, hence all his/her judgments are objective; on the other hand if one claims knowledge to be subjective, then all his/her judgments are subjective.

In order not to assume a myopic view of reality, it is necessary to ask if in establishing the mechanism of judgment, the study can find a plausible solution to the critical problem. In this perspective therefore, the core problem of this research is to interrogate the extent to which judgment is a solution to the problem of subjectivity and objectivity of knowledge. Questions arising from the core problem are with regard to the issues of judgment on one hand and, subjective and objective

epistemological assertions on the other hand, specifically what is the source of the critical problem? What is the essence of judgment, what is its nature and structure and how is it related to the cognitional process and how is it important? To what extent do judgments reflect reality as it is or are they elusive? Is mankind really capable of knowing the absolute? What is the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity and does one exclude the other? When one adopts an objectivist position, what does he/she lose and vice versa? Is it possible to attain absolute objectivity and can man escape subjectivity? How is judgment linked to subjectivity and objectivity and can an analysis of judgment resolve the critical problem? These challenges draw attention to the need to analyse the nature of judgment in relation to the critical problem concerning what within human cognitive experience is subjective or objective. The study will examine the epistemological assertions of Lonergan vis-à-vis other philosophers to establish whether indeed the critical problem can be settled through the understanding of the cognitive act of Judgment.

1.21 Definition of Key Terms

The study will be guided by the following operational terms as relevant to the content.

Critical Problem: the epistemological problem of the validity of human knowledge concerning whether the human mind (subject) can attain knowledge of the absolute (object).

Judgment: the process of human understanding when the intellect acknowledges the source by which it knows either by affirmation or denial.

Realism: the theory that affirms the existence of external objects as objectively true.

Critical Realism: a branch of realism that holds that reality is the object of knowledge and is grasped by the intellect and expressed in the very first affirmation that something exists

Reflective Understanding: the act of grasping sufficient evidence for a prospective judgment.

Subjectivism: the theory that all knowledge is limited to experiences by the self and that transcendent knowledge is impossible.

Objectivism: the theory that all reality is external to the mind and that all reality is reliably based on extrinsic facts/ independent of the thinker.

Virtually Unconditioned: that which exists independent of the mind that knows it yet still exists in the mind.

Being: all that exists within and beyond the limits of sense experience.

Knowledge: the totality of correct judgments.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- a) To examine the problem of cognitive self- transcendence.
- b) To critically analyse Lonergan's notion of judgment as a response to the question of the extent of subjectivity and objectivity of knowledge.

1.4 Justification and Significance of the Study

The importance of judgment in shaping epistemological concerns is no doubt a philosophical interest. Judgment is a critical aspect of knowledge. Human beings are often obliged to move from doubt and opinion to knowledge and certitude through judgment. Thus the mental act of judgment is not merely a matter of logical synthesis and deductive certainty but it also involves the subject validating the certitude. Whether one determines reality to be objective or subjective, the fact is that he/she in so doing one makes a judgment. Moreover, people are confronted daily with the necessity to pass judgments in all aspects of their lives whether professional, social, cultural, economic, moral, judicial, religious, environmental, political, interpersonal, *et cetera*. The claim to plurality of knowledge as expressed in the modern times especially through the media calls for each individual and every individual in the

society to exercise mature judgment and develop a critical approach to overcome knowledge bias which has a direct influence on their choices, decisions and actions.

Though judgment is an individual mental act occurring within the subject, it involves the judgment of an object which is outside of the mind, that is, an extra mental reality independent of the mind that judges it. It is therefore important to establish the place of judgment in the cognitive hierarchy in order to bridge the gap between the subject and the object in the noble pursuit for truth and wisdom. Throughout the history of epistemology, the concept of judgment has not achieved as much attention in the exploration of the nature of human intelligence. The epistemological analysis of the mental act of judgment is necessary in helping to determine the epistemological challenges and subsequent dangers of overlooking subjectivity or objectivity in knowing. Over emphasis of objectivity over and above subjectivity leads to the exclusion of the individual and human dimensions in knowing much as stressing subjectivity over and above objectivity leads to relativism and skepticism hence lack of a founded metaphysical knowledge. Such overtones may lead to chaotic interpretations of reality for example in the political arena thus reaffirming the need for an epistemologically relevant balanced view of reality.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The critical problem in epistemology is wide as explored by various philosophers throughout the philosophical traditions of which philosophers have encountered difficulty in addressing. However, it will not be possible in the limits of this study to examine each and every individual's theories though; the study will attempt to find a plausible solution. This study concentrates on the critical aspects pertaining to objectivity and subjectivity of knowledge. The focus will remain on the mechanism of judgment in determining the extent to which it bridges the objective and subjective aspects of knowing.

There are philosophers who have attempted to explore the concept of judgment, such as Franz Brentano in his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. Another is Gottlob Frege in his *Theory of Judgment*. The two philosophers give a linguistic

analysis of judgment. These and other philosophers will form a basis of the study. However, special attention will be given to Lonergan in his *Insight* in judgment. The term judgment has a legal, ethical and sometimes religious connotation. In this study, the term will be restricted to its philosophical reference to the mental act.

1.6 Literature Review

The investigation to the critical problem and the notion of judgment is instructed by several studies. For example D. C. Philips in his article on "Subjectivity and Objectivity: An Objective Inquiry" states that it is clear in normal parlance the term objective is applauded whereas subjective conveys negative undertones. 'After all it is not a good thing for a judge, physicists, an anthropologist, or a professor to be subjective. It is even worse if they are biased, this latter term being sometimes used to mark the contrast with objectivity.'²¹ Subjectivity in daily experiences is often shunned and objectivity praised yet both are aspects of human knowing. Scholastic philosophy especially Thomism was more occupied with the metaphysical or objective world. Modern philosophy or thought is originally cast to the subjective as well as contemporary philosophy.

In ancient and medieval philosophy, subjectivity was often given a negative connotation until in the recent times when existentialist philosophers asserted truth to be subjective. Even those who set out to establish the canons of objectivity such as, neo-thomists, Descartes and Kant who were great leaders of idealism ended up in subjective idealism stressing that objectivity cannot be attained. This was coupled by the fact that empiricists viewed judgment as a mere association of ideas. Various meanings were then ascribed to the definition of judgment. This is explained by Nuchelman in his article "Proposition and Judgment" where he perceives that 'Locke gave a special sense to the word judgment, opposing judgment to knowledge; he described it as the faculty which God has given man to supply the want to clear and certain knowledge in cases where that cannot be had.'²²

For Locke, judgment was an entity given to man by God in instances where knowledge was doubted. For Descartes, judgment was a matter of personal will. As a result, ‘an issue that came to be much discussed in the second half of the century concerned the mental faculty to which the act of judging should be assigned. The controversy was kindled in particular to Descartes contention that judgment belongs to the will.’²³ For Descartes, judgment consists in the freedom to accept clear and distinct ideas. Nuchelman further explains that ‘This Cartesian conception of judgment finds it’s most striking corollary in the view that the highest degree of liberty consists in assenting to those propositional ideas which are so evident that it is impossible to disbelieve them. Among those who adhere to a common view are Antoine L. Grand, Malebranche and to a certain extent Spinoza.’²⁴ These conceptions of judgment were related to the way in which each philosopher understood the process of knowing. Descartes for example could not explain the nature of clear and distinct ideas therefore, judgment of those clear and distinct ideas depended on one’s free will to accept them. Locke’s theory of representation objectified sense experience leading him to account for dubitable truths as truths that needed God’s guidance to pass a judgment. The result was judgment was understood as an isolated intellectual act with no relation to experience or understanding. The scholastics nonetheless understood judgment in a different way.

The common scholastic position that judgments are acts of the intellect was upheld by other philosophers apart from the Cartesians on one hand. For instance, ‘Leibniz explained judgment as a response to full questions where one need say only ‘it is so’ or ‘it is not so’ (*Es taut non est*).’²⁵ Leibniz is classified as a rationalist. For him, a judgment was an answer to a question in order to affirm or negate the response in light of sufficient evidence. This is a view also held by Lonergan in reflective understanding where before passing a judgment, one asks the question ‘is it really so?’ This position regards judgment as a categorical proposition in which the affirmation is sufficiently evident to exclude the possibility of error. At this point, it is worth noting that the question ‘is it really so?’ seems to have led philosophers in affirming either the subject or the object in the way they understood best. For example, is it really the case that knowledge is subjective or objective? This was evident with Kant’s Copernican revolution which attempted to provide a solution to the dilemma of objectivity versus subjectivity of knowledge.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason* first edition, in the chapter “Transcendental Analytic”, Kant writes in his response to St. Thomas that:

My critique of knowledge had proved in its most conclusive fashion the impossibility of metaphysics. That Descartes tried to make the problem a matter of objective evidence but the complete checkmating of his system in all its departments shows that he did not find the real source of truth. For in reflecting on the problem of knowledge, one thing became apparent at once to the mind; that the problem rests between two terms: Objects and subjects, reality and our principles for laying hold off this reality.²⁶

Since the study observes that Kant unlike his predecessors clearly articulates the critical problem and for him, the knowing subject which was the essential apprehension of being was left in the shadow of Thomistic Metaphysics. His turn towards the subject is famously referred to as the Copernican Revolution. For him, the subject was at the centre and reality conformed to the categories of the mind. Kant's theory of knowledge led him to denying the *noumena* and so that one can only know *phenomena*. He concluded by affirming knowledge of appearance and not of the object in itself. His theory of judgment therefore was unclear since for him understanding and judgment are the same. ‘We can reduce all acts of the understanding to judgment and the understanding may therefore be a faculty of judgment.’²⁷ All acts of understanding were submerged in judgment of which this view makes it more difficult for the subject to differentiate itself from the object. Knowledge therefore was subjective; consequently, he denied metaphysical truths since they could not be justified through appearance.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, “Transcendental doctrine of Judgment, chapter II Systems of all Principles of Understanding”, the role of judgment is to subsume an object under the subject. He supposes that, the function of judging is to synthesize different representations by means of concepts found by empirical intuition meaning that understanding and judgment become one and the same. By confusing understanding with judgment, Kant could not positively solve the critical problem

since understanding and judgment while connected, are different mental activities. His *Critique of Judgment* was mainly concerned with judgment in practical, aesthetic and teleological applications. What Kant addresses is very important as it will assist to justify whether he brought to finality the critical problem and if not, whether Lonergan has made a contribution to contemporary philosophy.

In the latter tradition of philosophy, 'contemporary analytic philosophers showed little interest in the theory of judgment.'²⁸ Those who did gave a linguistic analysis such as Wittgenstein, with their interest in the semantic and logical forms of expressions of Judgment. Frege in his theory of judgment was concerned about the origin of ideas and in relation to the objectivity of judgments. 'If ideas are mental entities, existing only in our consciousness and if judgments are comprised of such ideas, then the act of judgment are in danger of turning out to be a solipsistic act. How then are we able to judge about the world, and not merely about our ideas?'²⁹ Frege's concern is valid since it implies that the theories people adopt that explain the origin of ideas greatly determine the subjectivity or objectivity of one's judgments. If one adopts a subjective the view that reality is that which is in the mind, then, the subject becomes the only existing reality. The result is plurality and relativity of knowledge hence plural judgments regarding the same reality. It is thus important to note that judgment comes as the final expression of the cognitive act by which one either affirms objective existence of his/her ideas or subjective existence of his/her ideas. Each stand has its implications.

Frege's analysis raised an equally important question to determine the nature of judgment though in linguistic perspectives. Frege's conclusion was that 'a judgment is an act, the act of putting together tokens (whether physical, psychical or linguistic) in conformity with certain rules.'³⁰ This acknowledgment confirms judgment as an act of synthesis which most philosophers assent to. Regardless of the content of judgment, it's role is to synthesize the products of knowledge according to the rules of the game. His theory only postulated that logic ensures formal correctness of reasoning in exploring the meaning of judgment. The underlying factor is that judgment is a mental

activity which synthesizes physical (objective) or Psychic (subjective) properties. This is further explained by the likes of Hegel.

Hegel in his theory of mental activity, claimed that 'subjective thought and objective thought are in reality one and the same thing though admittedly in different forms. For him, judgment is not merely the assertion of a relation between two independent and indifferent things. It is precisely the view of the nature of judgment which must be overcome which is mired too deeply in the abstract of the universal. For him, judgment is as much a feature or structure of the objective reality as of the subjective.'³¹ He asserts the view that judgment is a feature common to both objective and subjective realities. This view comes closely to linking the subject and object as not separated but related. Though his theory of judgment was individualised, it was more or less a distinction between the individual and the universal and how the two can be unified. He distinguished between judgments and propositions asserting that not everything propositional qualifies for a judgment. Hegel did not as such explore the nature of judgment in unifying knowledge but was in fact concerned with the subjectivity and objectivity of knowledge. His views were to be opposed by existential philosophers.

Existential philosophy was emphatic on the subjectivity of knowledge. This was especially manifest in Soren Kierkegaard's philosophy who argued that the truth of human existence lay in individual passion rather than in anonymous knowledge of the truth. 'Indeed the whole of Kierkegaard's career might be partly construed as an attack on the notion of objective truth, truth that is common, true for everyone and anyone.'³² Objectivity was for Kierkegaard, the authentic human life found in one's existence. He was concerned not with the idealism of his predecessors but the subjectivity of the individual in his life experiences moving from objectivity to ground subjectivity. His views are best summarised as follows by Malantshuck:

Kierkegaard, while studying the various themes and subjects which were of particular interest to him showed a tendency to concentrate on the actuality of the subject thereby gradually moved away from objective branches of knowledge towards a steadily stronger emphasis on the subjective elements which bear on

man's existential element. For him, truth was to be found only in the subject thus his later thesis subjectivity of truth.³³

Subjectivity of truth was therefore, the emphasis of the existentialist. This assertion is divergent from other theories which hold that truth is both subjective and objective, that is, it is bi-polar. The polarity of human knowing has consequently, greatly determined judgments. While others strongly hold that reality is subjective, the 'I' is at the centre; others hold that the object is at the centre. If truth is subjective, then all judgments are subjective, if truth is objective then all judgments are objective. This implies that either one's knowledge about reality is objective or subjective if knowledge is dichotomised. This is an extreme position that is opposed by the likes of Vincent Potter.

Vincent Potter views the basic structure of all conscious acts as bi-polar. 'They always involve a subject positing the conscious act and an object which the act intends or is about. Hence within consciousness itself is a subjective and an objective pole or component.'³⁴ He thinks that knowledge is not a diametrically opposed activity between the subject and the object rather it is relational. 'Any conscious act is intrinsically structured by a relation between the subject and the object. Without such a relation, consciousness is impossible. Hence, the recognition of the role of the subject does not necessarily imply subjectivism.'³⁵ Knowing would not take place unless there is a subject in whom the knowing takes place and an object which is to be known. This implies that both subjectivity and objectivity are equally involved in knowing reality. The question here is how judgment can synthesise both subjectivity and objectivity in a coherent whole. This requires an analysis of the nature of judgment in view of the synthesis between the subjective and objective positions regarding knowledge.

In ancient Greek philosophy, 'Plato spoke of the conjunction and separation of ideas as the nature of judgment and Aristotle following Plato, speaks of judgment as a conjunction or a separation or division. The same type of judgment is found in St

Thomas Aquinas. However from the Thomist view point, the relevant composition is composition of essence with existence on the objective side.³⁶ According to the Morelli, Aquinas's judgment has more weight on the objective side. However, Morelli makes a distinction between judgment as positing a synthesis and judgment as synthesis. In positing a synthesis, the judgment is probable and is yet to be affirmed with certitude. In the later, one could be easily mistaken while the former looks introspectively at the mental act of judgment. An understanding of the nature of judgment as synthesis would not yield a solid account of judgment unless further understood as a synthesis bent on an affirmation based on certainty. The study shall examine the views of Aristotle, Aquinas and Lonergan as their theories are similar with subtle differences on the same account of judgment.

Aristotle, in his *Metaphysics*, states that one cannot make an assertion between two contradictory statements. 'One thing must either be asserted or denied. This is clear if we first define what is truth or falsehood. A falsity is a statement of that which is that it is not or of that which is not that it is, and a truth is a statement of that which is that it is or that which is not that it is not. Again, thought either affirms or denies every object of thought or intelligible object.'³⁷ For Aristotle, judgment is an assertion found in the copula 'is' where when one affirms that something is, it must correspond to what it actual is in reality, then the assertion is true and vice versa if it is denied. This is same in his *Categories* where the operation of the mind is to deny or affirm reality same as in the *De Interpretatione* 5, 17 A. In fact, Nuchelman observes that 'The mental act of judging was commonly held to assume either a positive or negative form, being an act of assenting or dissenting, of affirming or denying. Aristotle's remark is to the effect that the first single statement making sentence is the affirmation and the next negation sometimes prompted to question as to whether affirmation is prior to negation.'³⁸ It is then necessary to ask, according to Aristotle, if judgment starts and stops with affirmation.

Brian Cronin thinks that Aristotle is unclear in his examples since supposing is different from affirming because the later requires confirmation. For instance, the proposition 'Socrates is sick' will not be the case unless there is evidence that it is the case. This is different from supposing. Cronin states that 'Aristotle's approach in the

Categories was very grammatical; a predicate is affirmed or denied of a subject. This was ambiguous as the judgment could still be on the level of definition or supposition. Most of his examples in the *Analytics* were simple suppositions e.g. ‘Socrates is sick.’³⁹ For Cronin, judgment comes with a personal responsibility that is beyond merely supposing or considering. Therefore, affirmation does not take place unless confirmed to be the case. The contention is whether the confirmation is drawn from objective or subjective sources. Aristotle’s views were similar to those of Aquinas where they both agree that truth is found in judgment.

Aristotle’s epistemology distinguished operations of the first intellect and those of the second intellect. His views were closely echoed by St. Thomas Aquinas in asking if truth is found only in the intellect joining and separating. ‘Just as truth is found primarily in the intellect rather than in things, so also is it found primarily in the joining and the separating, rather than in an act by which it forms the quiddities of things for the nature of the true consists in a conforming of thing and the intellect.’⁴⁰ This position highlights the relationship between truth and judgment as found in the intellect by virtue of the fact that the intellect can grasp the essence of the object and affirm it in judgment as the truth.

Aquinas posits that truth is in reality. However, it is not posited in understanding but in judgement where it is affirmed or denied. ‘But when the intellect begins to judge about the thing it has apprehended, and then its judgement is something proper to itself-not found outside the thing. And the judgment is said to be true when it conforms to the external reality. Furthermore, the intellect judges about the thing it has apprehended at the moment when it says that something is or is not. This is the role of the intellect composing or dividing.’⁴¹ Thus, for Aquinas, while truth exists secondarily in essences, it is there primarily in judgment. This view is shared by the Logicians.

Logicians have declared that logical truth is found in judgment. For instance, Spangler Mary Michael in her book *Logic: An Aristotelian Approach* states that the human intellect has three operations; simple apprehension, judgment and reasoning. 'The second act of judgment is defined as a mental process which obtains the proposition by combining or dividing the concepts of simple realities. This proposition if conformed to the real world is confirmed as true if not, it is false.'⁴² However, according to Sanguineti, 'Formal logic presupposes the fundamental notions of knowledge, which are the objectivity of our concepts, the existence of truth and the ultimate foundations of human judgements.'⁴³ Thus the study of logic presupposes the problems of knowledge and shares the concept of Judgment as a synthesis of representations, an affirmation or denial of reality.

The occupation with logicians has mostly been predicative with less concern on the content of judgement Edmund Husserl notes that:

Since Aristotle, it has been held as certain that the basic schema of judgement is the copulative judgement, which is reducible to the basic form "S is p". According to this schema, judgment presupposes the "is" of existence which is used to join the subject and the predicate. Throughout the whole tradition of logic, there extend distinctions between the most varied forms of judgement as well as efforts to fix, by the most diverse means what the "Judgement" is in itself. However, what has been established from the beginning from the founding of our logical tradition with Aristotle is the most general characteristic of predicative judgment is that it has two members: a substrate (*hypoleimomenon*) about which something is affirmed and that which is affirmed of it (*Kategoroumenon*).⁴⁴

It follows therefore that all judgments consist of a predicate and a subject. From the logical perspective, Husserl emphasises that the task of the logician is to be primarily concerned with the rules and principle of formal reasoning. As a result, the study cannot entirely depend on a logical perspective of judgment to fully grasp the nature of judgement even though the logician is secondarily concerned with the content of judgment. There is need to look for a well-grounded epistemological perspective of judgment.

The study observes that Lonergan closely develops an epistemological notion of judgment from Aquinas's composition and division which is also shared partially by Aristotle.

Compositio vel divisio is the usual Thomist name for the second type of the inner word. Its origin lies in the Aristotelian use of grammar for the specification of philosophic terms. In Thomist writings, I believe, the use of Aristotelian terminology obscures to some extent a more nuanced analysis. The point to be noted here is that truth is not merely the subjective mental synthesis. It is the correspondence between mental and real synthesis. 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.⁴⁵

Lonergan gives an epistemological perspective of judgment that goes beyond the logical perspective by embracing both mental synthesis and extra-mental synthesis. A judgment according to his view has to correspond with extra-mental reality and not merely subjective opinion. This view will be developed later as in Lonergan's *Insight* which is heavily influenced by Aristotelian and Aquinas thought.

John Jekins in his article "Aquinas and the Veracity of the Intellect"⁴⁶ observes the similarity between Aristotle and Aquinas which is evident in Lonergan.

'Aristotle says that the statements by which the intellect says "something about something" as happens in affirmation is always true or false (in *De Anima*, 111.X4.766). As said above, such a judgment involves the predicative composition, the joining of discrete ideas in thought and some assent, that is, the subject either takes an affirmative attitude in judgmental *compositio*, asserting that the mental synthesis exists in reality or takes a negative attitude in *divisio*, denying such a correspondence. Such mental states are said to be true or false with respect to the content of a mental predication understood (according to Thomas) as corresponding or not corresponding to what is.'⁴⁷

Logically, it follows that when the intellect affirms or denies a reality as true or false, the judgment is a reflection of the actual state of affairs and not otherwise. Aristotle assumes hence that a judgment must necessarily correspond to the reality. It is vital to mention that it is not always the case that a judgment made corresponds to the actual reality. Furthermore, Aristotle does not address the nature if these correspondence between reality and the mind. The similarity is that Aristotle, Aquinas and Lonergan

all agree regarding the veracity of the intellect in the first operation of the intellect in apprehending and judging reality in gaining truth.

For Lonergan, truth is the medium in which being is known and is formally found only in judgment. Judgment is presupposed by the question for reflection 'Is it so?'. It is here that truth is arrived at by Yes or No answer and before we affirm or deny, there is marshalling of sufficient evidence. He emphasizes that:

To grasp a prospective judgment is to grasp the prospective judgment as the virtually conditioned...the virtually conditioned has conditions indeed but they are fulfilled. The function of reflective understanding is to meet the question for reflection by transforming the prospective judgment from the status of a conditioned to the status of a virtually unconditioned and reflective understanding effects this transformation by grasping the conditions of the conditioned and their fulfilment.⁴⁸

For Lonergan, 'the level of understanding never yields any certainty but only possibility. It is because of this basic fact and the somewhat innate awareness that we have of it that one's mind spontaneously asks the critical question 'is it really so?' The process is discovered in the introspective world. For Lonergan, 'knowledge is a manifold of experience, understanding and judgment of which judgment is the climax. It is in judgment that we come to know something. These judgements do not occur in a vacuum since they depend on experience, understanding and reflective understanding.'⁴⁹ It is here that the study finds the intimate connection between judgment and evidence and the criterion that enables man to affirm reality as objective.

Objectivity is achieved in judgment. The relationship between the object and the subject is built by Lonergan in one's self-affirmation as knowing beings. 'How does the knower get beyond himself to the known? The knower cannot know himself until he makes the correct affirmation, I am. Further, we contend that other judgments are equally possible and reasonable, so that through experience, enquiry and reflection there arises knowledge of other objects both as beings and as beings other than the

knower.⁵⁰ He further explains that ‘the content of a judgment is an absolute; it is withdrawn from relativity to the subject that utters it, the place in which he utters it, and the time at which he utters it. This is because the conditions of the virtually unconditioned which are to be fulfilled are *de facto* absolute.’⁵¹

While for Lonergan objectivity is attained in judgment through the grasp of the virtually unconditioned, he leaves several questions unanswered concerning the nature of the virtually unconditioned as is it given or is it innate? Is the sufficiency of evidence grasped a matter of privileged knowledge of the subject or is it given? Is the absolute of the virtually unconditioned given or in the mind? The study in exploring the nature of judgment strives to make not of the virtually unconditioned as an absolute for judgment but whose absoluteness is subject to many questions. Nonetheless, it is critical to remark that the element of commitment to judgment is a distinct view from Lonergan introducing a subjective obligation to affirm the truth.

Judgment requires taking a personal stand. ‘There is an element of personal responsibility that enters with the judgment which is not there when we are merely considering or supposing. We take a personal responsibility for the judgment because it is a commitment. We have made the judgment in the basis of the evidence.’⁵² Thus, for him judgment is an individual commitment where a person is to be held accountable for his or her judgments. However, to critically examine his views, the study will take into account the criticisms that have been advanced against Lonergan by McKinney Ronald in his article on “Deconstructing Lonergan”. He accuses Lonergan of cognitive bias, favouring theoretical discourse throughout his work by promoting hermeneutic of demystification.⁵³

Lonergan is also accused of ‘withdrawing into a subjective objectivity (*veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*) clearly confusing both dimensions of reality. The objectivity retracts into or collapses into the subjective and in all objectivity becomes subjectivity.’⁵⁴ This criticism will help form a valid response to the critical problem as they elaborate the strengths of his epistemology as transcendental. The study notes that Lonergan and Michael Polanyi make similar assertions regarding the critical

problem by uniquely pointing out that the subject has an obligation to go beyond subjectivity to embrace objectivity.

Michael Polanyi's view is that 'the act of knowing includes an appraisal and this personal coefficient, which shapes all factual knowledge, bridges in doing so the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity. It implies the claim that man can transcend his own subjectivity by striving passionately to fulfil his personal obligations to universal standard.'⁵⁵ For Polanyi, man cannot speak of objectivity as though the knowledge he/she have has nothing to do with him/her as the subject. Science which is often perceived to be objective is inclusive of the subject's personal knowledge through commitment and responsibility to reach the universal principles. This thought is also shared by Lonergan in the personal responsibility found in judgment. It is significant to inquire the extent if applicability of the subjects responsibility in gaining validating knowledge.

The study concludes from the review that Plato's idealism, Aristotle's realism, Thomistic moderate realism, Descartes rationalism, Berkeley's immanentism, Locke's empiricism, Hume's radical scepticism, Kant's transcendental idealism, Spinoza's and Leibniz rationalism have not addressed the critical problem in its entirety neither have they explored judgment as a possible response to the critical problem. While contemporary philosophers like Polanyi have demonstrated that knowledge is both objective and subjective, they have not shown judgment as a link to objectivity and subjectivity. Lonergan who attempts to give an answer leaves several questions unanswered which the study shall consider, thus the need to explore the precise characterization of judgment to establish a cogent response to the critical problem.

The exploration of the critical problem in summary is that 'inquiries into the nature of knowledge immediately encounter a distinction between the knower and known, often interpreted in terms of subject and object or of the subjective and objective ingredients in experience. Exploration of the nature of subjects and objects led to the formation of many theories, some of which involve further distinctions between apparent (phenomenal) self and a real (noumenal) self as subject and between

apparent (or phenomenal) things in and real (or noumenal) things as objects.’⁵⁶ It follows that many philosophical attempts to respond to the critical problem have led to extreme positions concerning the role of the subject and the object in the entire process. With this in mind, the study will develop a comprehensive account of judgment that will determine a most adequate response to the apparent objectivity and subjectivity of knowledge, that is, the critical problem. In order to avoid the extreme positions, it is crucial to adopt a critical approach.

Reginald Oduor in his article on “Research methodology and Philosophy within an Interdisciplinary and Commercialised African Context” highlights the critical technique as a methodology in philosophy. ‘The word critical, from the Greek word *Krinein*, he says denotes the act of judging. It focuses on the need to examine a claim from all possible perspectives, with a view to ascertaining its truth and or applicability, with the highest degree of objectivity possible within the confines of human finitude and subjectivity. This forms the core of philosophical reflection.’⁵⁷ This technique of philosophy is the cornerstone of philosophical reflections which are present in judgments. To make such judgments requires sufficiency of evidence in order for the knowledge to be objective.

It is indispensable to take into account that the same reflections may be hindered by subjective inclinations therefore, the need to be critical. By the same reasoning, it is not out of order that an analysis on the precise nature of judgment has to be carried out in a critical manner to determine the link between subjectivity and objectivity in human knowing. For it is through the judgments one makes that a critical mind can be identified and a philosophical stand which indicates wisdom can be recognised. This is the mark of reasonableness and in Lonergan’s words, intellectual conversion. Humanity therefore can not ignore the call to achieve wisdom. This is possible by first examining the validity of knowledge. Is it merely subjective opinion or objectively valid? The answers to this question has a direct implication on all other human activities therefore, undertaking such as exercise in not an intellectual futility since

the answers determine how society functions with the knowledge it attains and claims to be valid.

In an attempt to understand the nature of the critical problem, the study examines the historical roots and how philosophers have responded to its emergence at different times. The brief review of the historical antecedents of the topic indicates that depending on how philosophers have perceived reality and conceived the nature and sources of knowledge, their response has led to either subjective or objective stand by over-emphasis on either aspect. Other philosophers such as Polanyi have claimed knowledge to be both subjective and objective. In so doing, their perceptions have contributed to how they understood judgment either from a logical, epistemic or linguistic perspective. Therefore, the debate between objectivity and subjectivity cannot be divorced from the aspect of judgment. The debate in the process highlights the element of reflection, criterion, responsibility and the role of the subject and object in the process of arriving at a judgment about reality. The study establishes in the next chapters the aspects of judgment that respond to the critical problem in detail.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

In exploring the critical problem, the study is confronted by the nature of the relationship between the subject and object and how this relationship yields to knowledge of reality. This relationship is best supported by realism; the theory that holds that my consciousness puts me in touch with what is other than myself. It is contrary to idealism which holds that every act of knowing terminates in an idea which is a purely subjective event.⁵⁸ In other words, realism refers to the position that one knows directly, or indirectly, physical objects and their sense qualities as constituting a world independent of any finite mind.⁵⁹ Realism unlike non-realism affirms the existence of being, of the object or reality as independent of the subject.

Realism asserts that the object plays a critical role in the process of knowing. Non-realism which also refers to idealism holds that the object has no identity of its own

except as idealised by the subject. Both theories can be traced from Platonic and Aristotelian theories of knowledge as a reaction against the empiricism of Heraclitus and the scepticism of the Sophists.⁶⁰ There are different views of realism. They include naïve realism, critical realism, critical virtual realism and critical formal realism. Naïve realism while affirming the existence of the object asserts that knowing is taking a look. 'It holds that the precise qualities which we sense in objects are formally there independent of sensation. My act of perceiving makes no difference at all to the perceived objects; it has no hand in constituting what I perceive but that it reaches this object just as it is in itself.'⁶¹ This position is not sustainable as it takes reflection for granted assuming that objectivity is obtained in seeing or taking a look at reality. In this case, sensation cannot judge, taking a look does not contain truth or falsity but simply reports on data present to man. The theory is implicit in John Locke and George Berkeley's theories of knowledge.

Critical realism on the other hand states that,

A real object can be known by a subject but also that a real subject appearing as an apparent subject apprehends the object as apparent by endowing it with objectivity through the subject object relationship.⁶²

Critical realism holds that the subject is indeed capable of knowing the object through an affirmation of the objective existence of the object that is independent of the subject. The subject first acknowledges that fact that the object exists and that this knowledge must be grounded rationally or critically. The tension between the subject (knower) and the object (known) is affirmed as a reality that has to be examined critically first through acknowledging the reality of the subject as it moves towards knowing the object. Critical realism can be traced back to Aquinas. 'While all forms of empiricism emphasize receptivity, passivity and experience, idealism and rationalism emphasize spontaneity, activity and an *a priori* element. Realism tries to reconcile the two elements.'⁶³ In the Thomistic view, knowledge is a human act which comes from the subject, remains and exists for the subject and is present at every level of the act of cognition, sensation, imagination, conceptualization and judgment therefore reconciling empiricism and rationalism.⁶⁴

Critical virtual realism is the position that sensed qualities are fully objective only for consciousness and only virtually objective independent of consciousness. In this theory, there is a power in the object independently of perception which accounts for the formality which is present when perception occurs.⁶⁵ Consciousness therefore becomes the actualization of both the capacity of the subject for sensing and capacity of the object for being sensed. Hence, what is presented to consciousness is the physical object through sensation.

This can be contrasted by critical formal realism which holds that sensed qualities are formally objective independent of all conscious experience. That it is not only through experience or reference of an observer that the full meaning of colour or sound is attained. The problem with this view is that the world outside consciousness is reduced to a qualitatively barren state.⁶⁶ It does not differ from naïve realism because the subject remains passive in sensing the object; therefore, the qualities of the object are not different from the subject's perception of the object. Without consciousness, then one cannot come to the realization of an objectively valid reality. This means that one need not arrive at a judgment since given his/her different sensory organs; one will perceive differently the true meaning of colour or sound. The similarity between naïve realism, critical virtual realism and critical formal realism maintain that objectivity is principally located in the empirically given and knowing is principally taking a look.⁶⁷ Both formal and virtual realists emphasise on description and not on explanation as critical realism.

This study makes a particular reference to critical realism in a comprehensive approach that takes into account the affirmation of both the objective existence of the subject and object (knower and known) as not only existing in the mind but existing autonomously. Brian Cronin holds that correct judgments define what is real and therefore the question of the subject and the object can only be addressed through correct judgments.⁶⁸ Taking into account critical realism from the Thomistic perspective which informs Lonergan's notion of judgment is essential to arrive at a comprehensive conclusion. It is from their perspective of critical realism that the

study exposes judgment as a cognitive reality and affirms its mental existence. Critical realism will be instrumental in accounting for judgment of mental and extra mental realities, empirical and abstract realities that are either *a posteriori* or *a priori*. Thus critical realism informs the locus of subjectivity and objectivity in the analysis of judgment.

1.8 Hypotheses

The following assumptions guide the study.

1. The existing responses to the critical problem are inadequate in their solutions.
2. Lonergan's notion of judgment offers a solution to the critical problem.

1.9 Methodology

The study relied mainly on library sources. This entails the works of major philosophers as found in written texts. It is expositional and analytical in its approach. It is expositional by bringing to fore the critical problem and the various responses in epistemology with particular reference to the notion of judgment. It is analytical in critically establishing the claims brought forward by the various epistemologists to establish the extent to which they address the critical problem or not. The study employs conceptual analysis in its search on the notion of judgment so as to reveal its nature and epistemological relevance in responding to the critical problem.

In all, critical reflection informs the development of concepts in the study to establish critical judgments in describing, analysing and examining the nature of judgment as such. This is because in addressing the critical problem, one ought to first describe the process of knowing and analyse the data of consciousness in order that he/she may arrive at a precise relationship between the subject and the object. This is through the introspective method of experience, understanding and judgment which is also referred to as the generalised empirical method which is broadly associated with Lonergan and Thomistic philosophy. The study must nevertheless proceed further in

critically evaluating the relationship between the subject and the object in a reflective and critical sense to determine the extent of subjectivity and objectivity in the judgments that one makes concerning reality.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROOTS OF THE CRITICAL PROBLEM

2.1 Introduction

Human beings remain rational so long as philosophical problems persist throughout generations. The problem of human knowing can be traced from ancient Greece to contemporary society. This chapter undertakes a historical analysis of the epistemological concerns on subjectivity and objectivity of human knowledge with the aim of finding out the roots of the critical problem and the responses that have shaped it. It discusses the main authors whose philosophical contributions have highlighted the tension between subjective and objective claims to knowledge in their response to the epistemological question on the nature and sources of knowledge. It examines how the debate of objectivity and subjectivity of knowledge has manifested itself in the discourse of philosophy with the hope of identifying the weaknesses and strengths of the various theories.

2.2 The Beginning of Philosophical Inquiry Itself

The origin of the critical problem can be traced from the start of philosophical inquiry into the nature of reality which raised fundamental questions concerning the essence of reality. Philosophy began with man's sense of wonder and curiosity expressed in the questions like: 'What are things really like? 'How can we explain the process of change in things?' What prompted these questions was the gradual recognition that things are not exactly what they seem to be, that appearance often differs from reality.'⁶⁹ These questions were raised by the Milesians (Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes) in the 6th century BC and are considered to be the birth of a philosophical quest to understand the nature of reality. They observed that the mythological explanations given by the Gods concerning human affairs were unsatisfactory.

The shift from Greek mythology which had earlier on dominated the understanding of reality indicated a substantial deviation to understand reality in rational terms. 'To ask as they did, what are things really like? And how can we explain the process of

change in things indicates a substantial departure from the poetry of Homer and Hesiod and a movement towards what we should call the temperament of science.⁷⁰ Poetry and mythology ceased to make adequate explanations concerning the world therefore, the need for theory stimulated the advancement of rational accounts of reality.

2.21 Shift from Common Sense to Theory

While the Milesians were more concerned with describing nature, the basic underlying questions were to set a motivation to further discover the essence of reality. Though it is not implicit that they were concerned with knowledge, the responses indicate a desire to gain objective knowledge concerning reality. 'It must be remembered that the critical questions concerning the nature and limits of human knowledge had not yet been raised.'⁷¹ The concern lay on nature and its constituents but not exactly the nature of knowledge. However, it is here that the study finds the first tension between objectivity and subjectivity since for the Milesians, the mythologies did not provide objective responses to their questions and observations of nature.

After the Milesians, Heraclitus (535-547) was to take over. He was apprehensive about the phenomenon change. His chief idea was that all things are in constant flux suggesting change was the only permanent reality. This position was to be counteracted by Parmenides (515 B.C) whose view was that Change is just but an illusion. 'For Parmenides, the concept of change was neither thinkable nor expressible. He maintained that whatever exists must be absolutely or not at all...that whatever is simply is.'⁷² His interpretation while being rigid, expressed an aspect of objectivity that, whatever exists does so absolutely so that reality could not be interpreted in any other way than what is manifested. Knowledge therefore is unchangeable. This view was to be adopted later by the likes of Plato in his theory of forms especially the differentiation between reality and appearance. This differentiation took root in the fact that sensible things offer no fixed object of knowledge for they are constantly changing.

The Pre-Socratics, while not focused on the essence of knowledge, wanted to objectively understand nature in its physical element. This desire to understand nature as it is in itself without reference to the gods as common sense dictated would ultimately lead to the objective knowledge of reality. Though their conclusions were conflicting, they remained the foundation of subsequent philosophers to gradually attempt to understand the essence of human intelligence in the process of acquiring objective knowledge of reality from a theoretical perspective.

2.3 Change of Interest from the Object to the Subject

Given the numerous attempts to explain the nature of reality, the human mind naturally got exhausted with the conflicting theories. The emphasis by Heraclitus on one side that change was permanent and Parmenides on the other that change was not real led to confusion and chaos as every philosopher struggled to articulate their perceptions about reality in response to both philosophers. This chaos ignited a radical change of mind from nature (the object) to man (the subject). 'The first philosophers had focused their attention upon nature; the sophists and Socrates shifted their concerns to the study of man.'⁷³ The result was a shift from cosmic studies to man whom the assumption was that he/she could concretely comprehend. This study was taken up by the Sophists. The most famous among them were Gorgias (485-390 BCE), Protagoras (490-420 BCE), and Thrasymachus (459-400BCE). The shift was to later draw focus on the subject which introduced a sceptical approach that greatly contributed to shaping the critical problem.

The difficulty for the Pre-Socratics to arrive at a common understanding of the principles of reality led to a sceptical mood regarding the capability of human reason to discover the truth. This made skepticism a serious subject for concern. It redirected philosophy to concerns about the nature of knowledge as such and especially arriving at the truth. Instead of debating about alternative theories of nature, philosophers now addressed themselves to the problem of human knowledge asking whether it was possible for the human mind to discover any universal truths.⁷⁴

The Sophists, followed by Socrates, took up the debate resolving that man was not capable of knowing universal truths given the different cultural contexts in Greece at their time. They raised ethical concerns regarding man's capacity to know the absolute good. Given the pluralistic beliefs, they concluded ethics was relative. The sceptical nature of their conclusion was the same regarding knowledge of reality. Stumpf states that Protagoras was famous for the thought that 'Man is the measure of all things, of the things that are that they are and of the things that are not, that they are not therefore, 'For Protagoras, that apparently meant that "whatever knowledge man could achieve about anything would be limited to his human capacities.'⁷⁵ This meant that all knowledge is relative since man's capacities are limited to what he/she can subjectively know.

'Knowledge, said Protagoras, is limited to our various perceptions and these perceptions will differ with each person. If two persons were to observe the same object, their sensations would be different because each would occupy a different position in relation to it. The implication of his argument is that scientific knowledge is unattainable since there are inherent differences in each observer leading one to see things differently.'⁷⁶ Protagoras argument implied then that all knowledge is subjective since reality is perceived differently by every man according to his senses.

Gorgias on the other hand denied that the possibility of any truth at all. For him 'nothing existed and if it did it was incomprehensible and even if it is incomprehensible, it cannot be communicated. He was convinced consequently that there could be no reliable knowledge and certainly no truth.'⁷⁷ Already from his conclusion, the study deduces the difficulty concerning comprehending a universal objective truth. At this point, truth is relegated to subjective interpretations of reality. The subjectivity implies an objective acceptance that all truths are subjective leading to intellectual skepticism. Such a position as with the skeptics is contradictory and hence cannot be sustained. The study notes further that Skepticism was latter taken up by Phyrro after the death of Aristotle.

2.3.1 The Attempt to Define Knowledge

The shift from nature to man at this point introduces not only man as the centre of all knowledge but also methodologies that give rise to knowledge. It is these methodologies that contribute further to the emergence of the critical problem as they determine whether man arrives at knowledge subjectively or objectively. Socrates (469-399 BC) concerned with the relativism and negative implications of the Sophist conclusion regarding morality passionately objects and sets on a mission to pursue truth 'in order to seek out the basis for stable and certain knowledge.'⁷⁸ This he did through a well known method of dialectic. 'Through this technique of definition (essential nature) Socrates indicated that true knowledge is more than simply an inspection of facts. Knowledge has to do with the power of the mind to discover in facts the abiding elements that remain after the facts disappear.'⁷⁹ The mind according to Socrates thinks about two different kinds of objects; the particular and the general so that in the process of dialectic, the particular elements which are contingent are eliminated and the general elements which are universal persist to the logical conclusion of the discussion. Knowledge of reality is obtained through this method.

In the process of coming up with a methodology, ancient philosophers discover that they must first define what knowledge is. In the *Theaetetus*, the study highlights the first methodological process of attempting to define knowledge and its limits. This method is referred to as the dialectical method. The Theory of knowledge in the *Thaetetus* associated with Socrates is the first to indicate that subjectivity subsists in the particular element and objectivity in the general element of reality.⁸⁰ Plato (427-347 BCE), in the *Republic*, clearly distinguished between reality and appearance in a manner akin to solving Parmenides and Heraclitus problem of change:

Whereas the Sophists thought that all knowledge is relative because the material order, which is all they knew, is constantly shifting and changing, Plato argued that knowledge is absolute because the true object of thought is not the material order but the changeless and eternal order of material and forms.⁸¹

Plato's theory is such that knowledge derived from sense experience represents appearance which is deceptive. Knowledge of reality is derived from the world of forms which is eternal and immutable. This is well illustrated in the Allegory of the Cave where he purports that the shadows in the cave represent knowledge *faux pas* and exposure to the bright light outside the cave casts away the shadows replacing them with true knowledge; the real object. In his theory of knowledge, Plato concludes that one arrives at knowledge that is true, sure and superior to mere opinion i.e., knowledge of things not in their superficial aspect and transient flux but in their inner nature and purpose which is their reality, that is the idea, unchanging form, the whiteness squareness, beauty and truth.⁸²

Plato's thesis puts into perspective the aspect of objectivity while highly suspicious of the subjectivity of sense experience. He already develops his theory on the paradigm that there exists certain knowledge that is not subject to doubt. Plato however takes the debate on knowledge a notch higher by trying to explicitly define knowledge. Even though philosophers are yet to have a uniform account of the exact definition of knowledge, the traditional view originates in Plato's *Meno* and *Theatetus* 'that knowledge is, inherently, justified true belief. This means that for any knowledge to be termed true, it has to satisfy the three conditions namely belief, truth and justification.'⁸³

This definition was to be challenged later by Edmund Gettier (1927-) in contemporary epistemology by his counter examples. The study explores later how this definition contributed to the knowledge by shaping the critical problem in response to the skeptic. It is worth noting that it was Plato who first came to put aside the Greek word '*episteme*' in his mature dialogues and that like Socrates, knowledge of the essence of things became for many philosophers a paradigm of knowledge.⁸⁴ Objectivity at this point was the emphasis of ancient Greek philosophers in whose works the study notes the first epistemological works. Plato's methodology was intrinsically idealistic and rationalistic. This was contrary to Aristotle.

Aristotle (384-322 BCE), who was a student of Plato, while borrowing some of Plato's ideas held a different view concerning knowledge. Aristotle observed that knowledge begins from sense experience. It is the window through which human beings get in touch with reality. Conversely, from sense experience, the mind is able to abstract the essence of the object and arrive at a concept which defines the thing as it is in itself. Aristotle's theory of knowledge is mainly found in *De Anima* when he talks of active and passive intellect. He alludes to sense experience and the role it plays in abstraction directly linking the practical and the abstract, the particular and the universal. 'Our mind has better knowledge of the things close to our senses. For this reason, our minds move from knowledge of particular things discovered by observation to universal ideas or class of ideas which we do not as such sense. We observe particular men from the general idea of man.'⁸⁵ Though his theory starts from an empirical point of view, he is considered a moderate realist and in fact ends up as a rationalist.

He further states that:

.....actual perception is of particulars, while knowledge is of universals which are in a way in the soul itself hence it is up to us to think whenever we want to but it is not up to us to perceive whenever we want to since perception requires the presence of its object (*De anima* 30: 418a 5). The perceiver is potentially what the perceptible object actually is already. Understanding consists of being receptive of the form; it has the quality of the object potentially not actually (*De anima* 429 a10 655). He appreciates that 'the intellect is capable of grasping the objective in reality.'⁸⁶

The intellect obtains objectivity by identifying the essence of an object from which all subsequent knowledge is built upon. This ability to identify the essence is within the subject as a being capable of perceiving and understanding. In essence, objectivity involves the potential of both the subject and object to become one. This is facilitated by sense experience.

Aristotle, while giving importance to objectivity, acknowledged subjectivity by arguing that sense knowledge is valid and is the necessary starting point or the beginning of knowledge. 'He avoids Protagoras phenomenalism and Plato's

intellectualism.⁸⁷ For Aristotle, Forms exist in physical objects as an essential part of them, i.e. they are not separate thus, rational intuition of the forms is only possible through the occasion of sensory experience. For example, one perceives an event through sensory experience and rationally intuits eventness and causality. Hence, a judgment is made possible through rational intuition of sense experience.⁸⁸ In this way, he was able to address the problem of change and becoming through his emphasis on the immutability of substance therefore allowing certitude of knowledge, a strong indication towards the objectivity of human understanding especially through his idea of logic. Logic was for him the instrument for analysis of human thought about reality. It was a reflection of man's apprehension of the truth by means of words.⁸⁹ It was the means by which man is able to articulate his/her knowledge either through affirmation or negation. This is where the study locates the first link between truth and judgment.

Aristotle's regard for sense experience was later to form a school by the name empiricism. His view of knowledge contributed to the debate on knowledge by trying to reconcile the source of knowledge from the nature of knowledge. From definitions proposed by Socrates and Plato, the debate advanced a step further into the inquiry concerning the origin of knowledge. Where does knowledge come from? This led to many attempts to explain where and how knowledge arose. The rationalist and empiricist views overemphasized the object and the subject respectively. These two approaches while reflecting on the critical questions on epistemology, what knowledge is and what its sources further led to the distance between the subject and the object. The result was the third question concerning the validity of knowledge which was the specialization of the skeptic. This would later ground the core of the critical problem, the justification of knowledge.

2.4 Skepticism

Greek philosophy after Aristotle responded mainly to his philosophy by laying emphasis on skepticism and morality. It was specifically the Stoics, Epicureans, Skeptics and Neo-Platonist who cast philosophy in yet another light. The study

nevertheless focuses on the Skeptics who were also called Academics after Arcseliaus (316-241 B.C).The Skeptics are doubters. They built their method of inquiry upon a Socratic form of doubt. The academics declared that discovery of truth is impossible. They concentrated more on their personal life and how as individuals they would achieve a satisfactory life by refraining from any ideals whose truth was doubtful.⁹⁰ This is the climax of the critical problem. Skepticism formed the core concept that would influence and condition subsequent philosophies as it cast doubt on all existing and potential knowledge.

Skepticism is the school of thought that claims that certitude of knowledge cannot be attained due to disagreements concerning fundamental aspects of knowledge itself. It was founded by Pyhrro (361-270 B. C) and is also known as Pyrrhonsim. Sextus Empiricus in the *Outlines of Phyrronism* defines skepticism as the:

Suspension of judgment on all matters in as much as conflicting judgments are equally probable. The suspending of all judgment is a state of “mental rest” whereby nothing is affirmed or denied. He characterises the method of skepticism as that of ‘opposing to every proposition an equal proposition’. This involves the raising of considerations that no member of a set of conflicting propositions takes precedence in virtue of superior probability.⁹¹

In this state, the skeptics are not able to affirm the existence of any reality by virtue of the fact that there are counter-examples of the same affirmation. The skeptic raises questions about the various dogmatist characterizations of the external world and about their account of how man achieves knowledge of it. By so doing, they hoped to achieve mental peace and calmness by determining truth from falsehood. Their assumption was that reality as such could not be grasped since philosophers had given various accounts and counter-examples of the same reality. The skeptics do not dispute whether the external object appears to be this or that but rather about whether it is such as it appears. In ‘chapter 15 of book 1’, Sextus presents the regress argument in support of scepticism. Any argument needs the support of another argument *ad inifintum*. Therefore, one should suspend judgment on all matters since there is no starting point for a convincing argument. The only way is regress by circular reasoning which is objectionable.⁹²

Unable to resolve the anomaly between *phenomena* and *noumena* as the study highlights later, the skeptics considered suspension of judgment about reality as a solution. 'This suspension is not only of contingent statements on existence and attributes of external objects such as wine is sour but also as to whether for instance, there is divine providence, or children should be cared for, or homicide is wrong.'⁹³ This hints to the notorious problem of the criterion of truth that people should not make any judgment about any reality since they are likely to be wrong. Such a position would ultimately make life very difficult and the resulting effects would be a stagnation of any theoretical or practical advancement of knowledge.

The criterion of truth refers to the technical standard of apprehension of truth. At this juncture, the sceptic defines further the critical problem by questioning the means by which one arrives at a judgment that it is really the case or not. For the skeptic then, there is no criterion of truth, which is, one cannot account for the existence or non-existence of the eternal world, reality or nature since for every example, there is a counter-example. According to him/her, one does not even know the criterion of truth since it does not exist in the first place. Thus suspension of judgment is a way of life for the skeptic. They instead accuse the dogmatist-Aristotle, Epicurus and the Stoics for claiming to arrive at the truth.⁹⁴

Skeptics hold that there is no criterion by which man can know whose judgment is true since men judge differently about the same object. In 'chapter four of book 11', Sextus states that 'in order to decide whether a criterion of truth exists, we must possess an accepted criterion by which we shall be able to judge and settle the dispute. The dispute reduces to a form of circular reasoning, the criterion of a criterion of a criterion, *ad infinitum* forcing us to circular reasoning. Therefore, a criterion of truth is practically impossible.'⁹⁵ This claim shapes the core of the critical problem as to whether indeed man is capable of knowing truth, going beyond himself to know and independent reality that exists in itself.

The answer presupposes a circular argument according to the skeptics. This position is disputable since for them, the fact that one cannot obtain objective truth is an absolute truth which contradicts their very claim. The question is whether indeed it is psychologically possible for any ordinary man to live with suspending judgment be it objective or subjective. The claims of the skeptic downplay any attempt to state the validity of the cognitive power of the human mind. As a major concern, the skeptic questions how man knows whose judgment is right leading the skeptic to conclude that judgment ought to be suspended.⁹⁶ This conclusion is fatal not only concerning any body of knowledge but also humanities very essence to rationally explain, understand and experience the world.

The question nonetheless remains legitimate in establishing the extent to which judgments are either subjective or objective and how they lead man to knowledge of reality. It is crucial at this point for the study to develop a criterion of truth through an epistemological understanding of judgment. In so doing, we seek to answer the skeptic with a solid un-circular criterion. As a result of skepticism, subsequent philosophers made a turn towards theological explanations to objectively validate our knowledge through the belief in God who is eternal, never changing and intelligence Himself.

2.5 The Search for Meaning from a Theological Perspective

Mediaeval philosophy thrived from the 5th century to the 16th century. During the late antiquity, the quality of life was felt to be insufficient and many people began to seek a religious answer which was reawakened by Neo-Platonism and late Stoicism.⁹⁷ This period highlighted the end of Greek Philosophy. It was marked by the desire to merge faith and reason and consequently, philosophers attempted to attribute the properties of a deity in their theories concerning knowledge. Reason was regarded as an aspect that on its own insufficiently explained reality thus revelation could answer what reason could not. Where reason failed, revelation stepped in to explain by faith derived from the gospel what philosophy could not explain. For example, the notions of salvation and sin gained ground at the expense of traditional Greek view of

morality such as virtue and the realization of the good life.⁹⁸ The needs for this period subsequently influenced the philosophies that emerged. This is exemplified in Augustine, Anslem, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Albert the great, Dun Scotus Erigena and William of Ockham.⁹⁹

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-530) is credited with his theory of divine Illumination as the means by which man knows eternal, immutable truths. After his conversion, he attempted to confront the problem of knowledge in two folds; whether man knows truth and how he/she knows the truth. 'The response to the first problem is a severe critique of scepticism. The response to the second is the doctrine of illumination which substituted the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence and the Aristotelian doctrine of Abstraction'.¹⁰⁰ Just as his predecessors, he attempted the epistemological critical problem but approached it in terms of divinity.

In response to the skeptics, 'Augustine in the *Contra Academics* shows that man knows some truths with certainty , such as the principle of non-contradiction and his own existence because doubt itself is proof of existence “ *Si fallor sum*”, that the fact that he doubts is self- evident proof that he exists.’¹⁰¹ Augustine’s response insinuates that objective truths exist such as existence and non- contradiction, that do not rely on sense experience. These truths are known to man through divine illumination where God reveals them to him/her and which reach the greatest heights of reason.

In the words of Mondin Battista 'Augustine is convinced as Plato that eternal truths cannot come from experience both because of the contingency of the known object and the contingency of the knowing subject.’¹⁰² Therefore, Augustine reaffirms the position that sense experience is unreliable and the human mind cannot thus grasp an eternal truth unless through divine illumination. The challenge with Augustine is that he does not elaborate the nature of this divine illumination, its occurrence and identification. 'It is a persistent difficulty to know the nature of these immutable truths, they cannot be creatures because creatures are mutable and truth is mutable and

neither can they be God Himself or His Ideas because God cannot be seen.’¹⁰³ However, Augustine’s interpretation of divine illumination other than revealing eternal truths shows the truth of judgments at least according to Gilson Etienne as stated by Armand.

His theory of divine illumination led to the problem of the origin of ideas which later mediaeval philosophy would be interested in exploring. The subject was later picked by William of Ockham stating that immutable ideas exist only in the mind and do not have any relations with real things. This school of thought is known as nominalism. It denies the objective value of the intellects concepts and reduces them to names, that is, symbols or signs which have a function analogous to the function of words in language.¹⁰⁴ For William, experience played a minimum role in the attainment of knowledge a view similar to Augustine.

Augustine is regarded as ‘not interested so much in the origin of ideas, or the distinction between ideas and judgments involving them but how we, contingent and mutable creatures, can make necessary and immutable judgments.’¹⁰⁵ The divine illumination therefore explains the immutability and necessity of true judgments through coming in contact with God’s mind that enables man to see divine ideas. Though he upholds universal, eternal and immutable truths over the contingent, mutable and particular, he admits that both the objective and subjective functions are necessary to man. While St. Augustine takes the debate on the critical problem back to objectivity, his theory of divine illumination is unattainable. The tensions between the two elements (subjective and objective) at this junction are similarly hinted to be unrelated and thus St. Thomas Aquinas takes up the defence of this point.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), also known as the Doctor of the Church abandoned the Augustinian theory of illumination and took up Aristotle’s theory of abstraction to explain the origin of intellectual knowledge. He does not base the truth of knowledge on certainty on a subjective disposition as Augustine and (Descartes later) but on the

evidence of being, an objective condition. St. Aquinas theory of knowledge is such that it opposes those who energetically accept that human knowledge is false and vain because of the disproportion between universal ideas and particular objects. He alludes that the intellect has three operations (experience, abstraction and judgment) by which it abstracts the universal from the particulars such that humanity is derived from the particularity of Socrates being a man. Furthermore, he considers the particulars and universals as created by God. In the same way that sense experience and thought are both God-given cognitive abilities in man, both things and concepts have a common origin in God.¹⁰⁶ It is here that the study finds his theological inclination towards the critical problem. The cognitive faculties are considered given to human beings by God.

He opines that 'it was precisely the inability to distinguish the mode of being of thinking in the mind from the mode of being in the natural state which led Parmenides, Plato and other philosophers to support inadmissible theories such as the uniqueness of being (Parmenides) and the subsistence of Ideas (Plato).'¹⁰⁷ This perspective brings forth a new dimension concerning the object as it is found in itself and as it is found in the subject. Here, the intellect plays a central role in understanding the object and judging the object. In the former, one grasps the proposition as a synthesis of terms and in the latter; he/she grasps judgment as a posting or affirming of the truth of that synthesis.¹⁰⁸ According to St. Thomas then, Knowledge consists in intentional grasping of things in an immaterial way to form ideas.

After the mind has formed ideas through the abstraction process, the mind can continue formulating judgments therefore the truth will be the correspondence of the mind and the thing in cases where the correspondence considers judgment the proper seat of truth. For Thomas, 'the dependence of the universal ideas on things even if it does not cause perfect coincidences between ideas and things (in so far as the former are universal and the latter particular)still suffices to guarantee objectivity and hence truthfulness.'¹⁰⁹ The implication is that objective claims of knowledge are guaranteed

as a result of the relationship between the object and the subject, a thought St Augustine did not approve of. The relationship between the subject and the object is realistic since for St. Thomas, one can gain knowledge of the world by sense experience and by reflection on what he/she has experienced.

He further asserts that the mind formulates judgments and coordinates them in such a way that a scientific hypothesis or science is created. 'The intellect critically acquires truth not in the moment it receives representations of things but when it declares that these representations have an objective value. This takes place in judgment. It is then that the intellect says something is or is not. This process belongs to the intellect which composes and divides.'¹¹⁰ Therefore, for St. Thomas Judgment is the seat of truth where essence and being are differentiated, where being precedes essence and therefore, the root of doubt is the lack of adequate means to discover this truth.

His understanding is expressed better by Jaques Maritain who states that "knowledge consist neither in receiving an impression nor producing an image. It is something much more intimate and profound. To know is to become; to become the non-I (it is not to lose one's being and be absorbed in non-things). It is a genuine unity beyond matter and form that involves an immaterial becoming and identification."¹¹¹ This view helps the study understand and show the type of union that can be found between the subject and the object without regressing to solipsism. To this extent, there is hope in finding a solution in the subject object relationship of the critical problem through judgment.

Aquinas's existence of objects finds its logical expression in judgment. This leads him to his theory of correspondence whereby truth rests in the correspondence between theory and reality, thoughts and things, the object and the subject. This happens in the act of judgment. St Thomas's theory of correspondence however, insufficiently expounds on the nature of the correspondence of the being with the mind. Though he states that a false correspondence is an activity of the passions, his correspondence

theory further complicates the tension between the object and the subject especially because the representation of the object in the mind is not the same as the object in itself as he claims. The study observes at this juncture that the first attempt to bring closely the knowing subject and the known object as interrelated other than diametrically opposed as with his predecessors. Through his emphasis on judgment as the criterion of truth, the study shall in the subsequent chapters, determine the extent it can reconcile both objective and subjective claims of knowledge.

William of Ockham like Thomas Aquinas also admits that a universal concept exists in the mind but exclusively since they have no relation with things. They have pure concepts. He is sceptical regarding the cognitive power of the human mind. For him there are two kinds of knowledge which are complex and incomplex gained intuitively and abstracted by one's mind. Like Augustine, he believes that the knowledge of external world begins with sense intuition or perception followed by intellectual intuition of the same object therefore one has intellectual experience of intelligible objects without any previous sense perception.

Intuition for him is an absolute reality really distinct in place and subject from its object i.e. my vision of the star is really distinct from the star itself. Though this view is incomplete, his theory does form fundamental theories of logic.¹¹² Thanks to the problem of universals that referred to the debate on whether universals concepts exist and if they do, what form of existence do they have? This raised further questions concerning the identity of the object as perceived by the mind. The conservative approach was that universals exist only in the mind while the realist approach was that universals first exist in reality and are derivable through abstraction. At this point, the critical problem persists as problem whose solution lies in an external force, being or deity.

The debate of human knowing advanced further when William insists that logic is the only means by which man can attain truth. The debate further leans on objectivity at

this point rather than subjectivity as the pace was set by Thomas Aquinas in his theory of knowledge. This was to prevail within the medieval period as other philosophers lay emphasis on a divine interpretation of human knowledge. However, coming to the end of this period, the Renaissance dominated the need to rediscover and ground the nature of human intelligence through science and mathematics and not in through the marriage of theology and philosophy.

Paul Morser succinctly summarizes the mediaeval period that:

.....the decline in credibility of Greek religion was the occasion for the platonic initiative, an initiative consolidated by Aristotle and systematized in his classical theory of science. By the late 16th century, a new tradition had formed out of Hebraic and Christian as well as Hellenic sources. It attempted to synthesize theological beliefs of the Christian religion with cosmological and metaphysical theories of Aristotle. The stability of this synthesis was shaken by the protestant reformation and occurrence of scientific revolution. Neither the Christian Church nor the Aristotle ever again held such authority.¹¹³

As the influence of the churches and appeal to faith and reason dwindled, science gradually replaced the authority of faith by reason and empirical observation. The centrality of the object over the subject, which for a long time occupied scholastic philosophy, was replaced by the subject. The subject was to take central stage in the discovery of nature such that subsequent philosophy paid less attention to either Aristotelian or Thomistic philosophy. This was the ideal of the Enlightenment era and the end of the mediaeval and theological assessment of the critical problem.

2.6 The Return to the Subject

The mediaeval period ended in the late 16th century and ushered in a new phase of philosophy where mankind no longer prescribed to deity as the ultimate knowledge or source of knowledge. 'Once again, philosophy offered itself a secular replacement for theology and religion. But the originating spirit of the modern thought was critical rather than conservative. Representatives of the new science actively sought liberation from ecclesiastical and scholastic authority. They began to shape an independent

cultural realm governed by reason rather than faith and tradition.’¹¹⁴ Epistemology then grew its roots from this time deeply penetrating the minds of philosophers as to what exactly was the nature of knowledge. Is knowledge objective or subjective and what the role of the subject and the object?

The debate takes an interesting turn as this is when philosophical terms are developed to address the problem of human knowing. At this point, human knowing becomes a fully-fledged subject of its own with the central tenet being the dichotomy between the subject and the object. Modern philosophy becomes wholly responsible for the decision that philosophy should be cultivated for its own sake apart from theology and independent of revelation. This period is associated with Rene Descartes (1596-1650). Indeed, the father of modern philosophy anxious to develop a philosophy that would enjoy the same certainty and acceptance as mathematics and physical sciences, Descartes set out to devise a method in philosophizing that would be universally accepted. He sought to resolve the perennial philosophic problems of the nature and origin of knowledge, truth and certainty.¹¹⁵

In order to do so, Descartes in his *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* 1641, developed the Cartesian Doubt which reroutes the subject as the foundation of all objective truths. The fact that skepticism exists can only affirm one's existence since one can not doubt unless they are alive. In this way, he differed from his predecessors by reaffirming the existence of the subject and the role played by the subject in the process of knowing. ‘Descartes shifted the idealistic value Plato had assigned to the object of science to the cognitive subject and process of cognition. He removed mind entirely from the natural world and located its operations and ideas in the realm of such epistemic privacy that no one but their individual subjects could observe them.’¹¹⁶ In doing so, he hoped to make skepticism a gone case.

Descartes’ obsession with mathematical and scientific certainty led him to declare that the mind was the locus of epistemic indubitability, a constructive doubt that was

meant to silence the skeptic. His epistemological thesis further contended that 'individual mind provide for its subject a realm of ideas in which error is impossible. When the mind refrains from judgments about external realities and confines its intention in its own operation and ideas, it cannot be deceived.'¹¹⁷ In other words, through introspection, he needed not to rely on sense experience since it was deceptive to arrive at clear and distinct ideas, a view echoed by Plato. Descartes theory then was accepted for some time as a paradigm in philosophy. However, the conclusions of his thesis were soon to be highlighted as vulnerable to the familiar criticism that sense experience does play a critical role in the acquisition of knowledge. While he did provide the skeptics with an answer that indeed there were universal truths despite individual perceptions and judgments, he did not explicitly state the nature of his methodic doubt.

Descartes, the pioneer of Modern philosophy played a big role by reinventing the role of the subject. He is characterised as a classical rationalist since for him, man begins with *a priori* knowledge of certain propositions and concepts that are innate i.e., he/she possesses them from birth and can therefore judge *a priori* how they are related to reality. For example, event, cause, location, time, extension, self, substance, quality, unity, plurality, negation, necessity, perfection.¹¹⁸ His invention of such a proposition is his 'I think therefore I am: *Cogito ergo sum*' as a clear and distinct innate idea: a direct object of apprehension whose understanding did not depend on other ideas or judgments. In other words, it was an obvious truth. However, it is worth noting that distinct ideas are necessarily clear ideas while clear ideas are not necessarily distinct. On the contrary, 'while clearness and distinctness are not themselves entirely clear, they have proved influential notions for the thinking of many later philosophers who were rationalists in epistemology particularly with respect to the problem of distinguishing those ideas that may constitute knowledge.'¹¹⁹ The rationalist advanced Descartes assessment of clear and distinct ideas as only those ideas that arise from reason thus constitute what they consider genuine knowledge. The empiricists argued otherwise.

Descartes' critics John Locke (1632-1734), George Berkeley (1685-1753) and David Hume (1711-1776) were to later emphasize the role of sense experience. This led to the clear distinction between the rationalists and the empiricist philosophers. The rationalists such as Descartes asserted that there were truths independent of sense experience and the empiricists asserted that truth was founded in sense experience. The proponents of empiricism, Locke for instance, attempted to demonstrate that rationalism was superfluous by arguing that the human mind is a *tabula rasa*, that is, an empty slate that cannot know anything immaterial unless it comes into contact with material things similar to Aristotle's view.

This is made possible through primary and secondary qualities whereby the primary is reliable, independent of the senses such as solidity, motion, extension, number and the secondary qualities are unreliable and imposed on the subject by the object such as colour, tastes and sound. The secondary qualities are thus a source of error and subjective since they vary from one person to another while the primary are stable and objective. This view is referred to as classical empiricism whereby for Locke, meaningful statements are reducible to conservational propositions only if they have empirical content and can be supported or falsified through sensory experience.¹²⁰ Objective validity of knowledge therefore depends solely on empirical justification. For Locke, the primary qualities subsist in the substance which cannot be sensed but is abstracted by the mind. In this way, the primary qualities remain objective as seen in modern science. He takes a radical position that modern science is objectively achieved through the notion of cause and effect, the means by which man moves from secondary impressions to primary impressions. The object causes an effect on the mind of the subject. The result of this viewpoint is that one does not know the objects of experience directly but knows the effect on him/her which he/she refers to as ideas or sensations.¹²¹ He represents the school of thought of critical virtual realism where sense experience is directly objective. This position is subject to the critique that sense experience ought to be questioned and justified to pass the test of objectivity by overcoming subjectivity.

Locke hopes to respond to Descartes suspicion of sense experience. ‘He has reduced Descartes revolutionary approach to knowledge, that of beginning exclusively with the subject, as unsound and unnecessary.’¹²² Locke’s position deliberately attempts to bridge the dichotomy between the subject and the object, sense experience and innate ideas through the relationship between cause and effect. The fundamental question raised here by Berkeley as well is whether the distinction between primary and secondary qualities can be made on an empirical basis. This question attacks Locke’s foundation by supposing that even primary and secondary qualities are differentiated by the simple fact that there exists an innate idea of what the substance/substratum is in itself based on a rationalist perspective.

Berkeley’s general idea in his two most important works *A Treatise Concerning Human Knowledge* (1770) and *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonus* (1713) is that reality is that which is perceived by the mind. This is in reaction to Locke’s empiricism on the ground that theories which persist in distinguishing the real nature of things from the experiences of the senses leads to skepticism and paradoxes leaving philosophers doubting those things which other men evidently know. For Berkeley, qualities perceived by the senses do not exist without the mind so that Locke’s primary qualities also exist in the mind just as the secondary qualities.

On the contrary he holds strongly that ideas exist in the mind of the subject so that actual qualities of external material objects such as extension, motion and gravity do not exist outside of and independent of the mind. This leads him to the conclusion that “*esse est percipi*” to be is to be perceived meaning that all that man experiences or sees or perceives is a set of ideas that do not exist apart from the minds that perceives them. In short, all that man knows is what he/she perceives. This school of thought is known as idealism whereby the subject knows only the reality that is seen in his/ her mind. The object therefore becomes incognito as an independent existing thing on its own. The rest are pure fiction.

The implication of Berkeley's argument to philosophy is that knowledge is subjectively dependent on the knower so that the object has no role to play. This view is philosophically untenable since it means the objectivity of science or any other body of knowledge is compromised. It is a hindrance to the possibility of cognitive self-transcendence. David Hume picks on with the response towards the debate by declaring assertively that knowledge is a mere association of ideas and experience as a matter of habit and nothing else. Hume's position was based on his sceptical attitude towards philosophers' ability to gain knowledge of reality.

He rejected the Cartesian dualism (the separation of mind and body) and Lockean empiricism. 'No object discovers by the qualities which appear to the senses, either the causes which produced it, or the effects which will arise from neither it; nor can our reason, unassisted by experience, ever draw any inference concerning real existence and matter of fact.'¹²³ For Hume, there are no clear and distinct or innate ideas, nor secondary and primary images. Therefore, there are no universal ideas. Knowledge is but a matter of mere probability since there is no necessary connection between the subject and the object since the subject is not able to distinguish between those two. Since cause and effect are necessary truths, Hume denies this by claiming that cause and effect are a result of habit and custom therefore there are no universal truths. This position is well articulated by Logical Positivists. They, like Hume, sought to eliminate the gaping Kantian split of the mind and the thing by emphasizing wholly on aspects of sense experience that could be verified. Just like Hume, they conclude that universal ideas and principles are mere human constructs.¹²⁴ This stance alludes that the meaning and criteriology of objective truths such as metaphysics, religion and ethical principles can not be determined. It is upon the subject to rely on sense experience to verify truths, a catastrophic conclusion that undermines the development truths beyond sense experience.

Hume therefore 'cannot ascribe any true meaning to / the subject of impressions, for the totality of his experiences must be reduced to what he actually experiences. To argue that there is a subject underlying the experiences or impressions would once

again lead to Hume admitting to the validity of the principle of validity.¹²⁵ Therefore, his position on universal skepticism further decentralizes objectivity of knowledge by over emphasising on the subjective element of knowledge. Hume has no option since subsequent thinkers would have to question his premises or embark on an altogether different pattern of philosophical inquiry into the nature of human intelligence. Due to his denial of universal truths, his follower Immanuel Kant was challenged by his ideas to validate universal truths. Kant embarked on a philosophical journey that would further determine the response to the critical problem.

2.6.1 The Beginning of Transcendental Philosophy

The study turns to Kant's attempt to reconcile objective and subjective claims to knowledge by use of a systematic inquiry into the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of knowledge. He calls attention to the *a priori* element of knowledge as universal and necessary and found in the subject. The German philosopher, Kant managed to revolutionize philosophy in a manner akin to the Copernican scientific revolution in history. The best known and most prolific philosopher of the 17th Century, he belongs to the age of enlightenment, the age of reason. Kant is profoundly impressed by the progress of modern science (Galileo and Newton) as well as previous development in logic and mathematics. He seeks to critique all dogmatic philosophy to restore the legitimacy of metaphysics as a science.¹²⁶

Kant made a radical shift of thought to deal with the fundamental questions of epistemology. 'Thought cannot turn toward the world of external objects without at the same time reverting to itself , in the same act it attempts to ascertain the truth of nature as its own truth. Kant was by no means the first to raise this question; he merely gave it a new formulation, a deeper meaning, and a radically new solution.'¹²⁷ Kant says he was awakened from his dogmatic slumber by Humean skepticism. He therefore vowed to restore the certainty of human knowing by attempting to reconcile empiricism and rationalism to establish solid foundation for scientific and mathematical truths. In so doing, he hoped to solve the critical problem.

He claimed that knowledge was both *a priori* and *a posteriori*, where the former depended on reason as with Descartes and the latter were truths that depended on sense experience like in Locke therefore, knowledge was a synthesis of the two. The *a priori* is demonstrated through scientific knowledge, produces concepts captured in natural law and is universal and necessary. It applies to all other particulars. *A posteriori* on the other hand only contributes to the particulars, the contingent truths that are arrived at through sense experience. Consequently, the *a priori* represents the objective like space and time and *a posteriori* the subjective, the things man observes in space and time.

Kant further claims that the link between the subjective and the objective is enabled through the transcendental properties of being which are in one's mind. These transcendentals are categories that set conditions of the possibility of knowledge. He quotes 'I call all cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but rather our mode of cognition of objects in so far as this is to be possible *a priori*. A system of such concepts is called transcendental philosophy.'¹²⁸ Kant's core theory was that knowledge of objects was determined by the categories in the mind. These categories were responsible for what one claimed to be knowledge. The process by which we arrived at such knowledge is called transcendental method. 'Kant maintains that objects of knowledge do not appear of their own accord but must be brought to appearance by the (transcendental) subject.'¹²⁹ Additionally, Kant states that the only bridge between the mind and reality is empirical intuition. This means that experience is what connects the mind to reality even though nature is determined by mind.

In Kantian epistemology unlike in Aristotelian epistemology, the subject revolves around the object. Truth is conformity of object in mind and not vice versa. He puts it thus in the *Critique*:

Up to now, it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about the *a priori* through concepts that would extend our cognition have on this presupposition come to nothing. ...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 of the objects before they are given to us.¹³⁰

For Kant then, knowledge is redefined anew as no longer conforming to the object but to the subject. The mind has within it, *a priori* concepts about the object. In addition, Kant claims to achieve in the critique of pure reason more than a refutation of metaphysical theories. He overcomes not only rationalism, empiricism and skepticism but above all, he establishes a new relationship of the subject towards objectivity.¹³¹ He holds that scientific knowledge is characterised by universality and necessity which are not found in empirical data or phenomena since they are particular and contingent. He concludes therefore, that the two principles reside in the subject. In his view, Kant has come to a solution of the epistemological problems of his time thus solving the critical problem. However, Kant's greatest undoing was that he took upon the *Critique of Pure Reason* to validate reason as an autonomous and free act of the mind while at the same time doubting the capacity of the mind using the same reason.

He stated that man could not know *noumena*, reality as it is in itself except for *phenomena*, reality as it appears. He explicitly declares that 'appearances, to the extent that they as objects are thought in accordance with the unity of the categories are called phenomena. If however, I suppose there to be things that are merely objects of the understanding, that nevertheless, can be an intuition, although not sensible intuition, then such things are called *noumena (intelligibilia)* in the world of senses (*mundus sensibilis*) and understanding (*mundus intelligibilis*) as are and as they appear.'¹³² The implications of such an assertion are that by its very nature, reality cannot be known in its essence since its actuality is pre-determined by the mind. The Humean skepticism unfortunately catches up with him.

This school of thought is at times referred to as nativistic empiricism. This explains Kant's position that some concepts are innate; therefore, man can affirm propositions involving just these concepts *a priori*. Logically, it means that there are innate concepts and some beliefs are therefore *a priori* even though these beliefs do not

constitute knowledge of the real world. For instance, every cause has an event is a case of belief, even knowledge but they are not knowledge of reality.¹³³ This perspective aptly point out Kant's shortcoming. Kant eliminates the very reason he seeks to establish. He is thus locked up in subjectivity.

Kant presents a new dilemma as to whether indeed what is necessary and valid is only a matter of the internal make up of the mind. His school of thought on the other hand is much celebrated in the history of philosophy as an elaborate attempt to address the fundamental problem of subject-object relationship. It is instructive to emphasize at this point that the discourse on knowledge takes a new twist from the Kantian perspective whereby consequent philosophers take on explicitly re-establishing the nature of metaphysics, knowledge of the essence of reality, of being, of the object, of the world as it is in itself. The attempt to reconcile the subject and the object becomes an intellectual futility leaving the problem unresolved centuries down the line.

2.7 The Return to the Object

Post Kantian philosophy was characterized by a re-emphasis on the object. This was after Kant had concluded that man cannot know the object in itself, he/she can only know the appearance therefore, man's mind is forever barred from it. The fundamental question here is whether objectivity is attainable given Kant's conclusion. German idealism was the school of thought that represented the view that what man knows is what is. This belief was held by the likes of Georg Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831), Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) and Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling (1775-1854). 'To avoid the inconsistency of affirming that a world exists that cannot be known, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel all repudiate the dichotomy that (introduced by Kant) between mind and thing proclaiming them to be different aspects of one and the same reality.'¹³⁴ For the German idealists, the object does not exist independent of the subject. What is in the mind is therefore, a fusion of both the subject and the object.

Reality for the idealists is all what is projected by the mind. Hegel observes that all reality is constantly progressive and develops rationally in a dialectical manner. He considers human reasoning as movement between affirmation (thesis) and negation (antithesis) in order to reach a firm judgment (synthesis) of philosophy. He therefore asserts that 'every reality is rational and that the rational is real. The idealists therefore conclude that all objects of knowledge, and indeed the whole universe are the products of an absolute subject and Absolute Mind.'¹³⁵ Therefore, universals and categories do not exist independently of the knowing subject. Experience and thought are one and the same.

Hegel's philosophy was quite instrumental in shaping the debate of the critical problem. 'He acknowledges the subjectivity as a category from which objectivity can be deduced. Hence the existence of the self (subjectivity) implies that of a non self (objectivity). The synthesis of these two (the subject and the object) is what he calls the Idea.'¹³⁶ Hegel presents the study with a close idea of how the dichotomy of the subject and the object can be resolved. The study will, in the next chapter explore further how this synthesis can be better explored. However, his shortcoming together with other idealists is that they are unable to account for the material aspect of reality. Idealism's attempts to put together subject and object as one but in the process still ends up in subjectivity.

Other responses that emerged later in the 19th to the 20th century were to take up variations between the subject and the object, the mind and the thing, rationalism and empiricism, universal and particular, idealism and realism. The Viennese circle or the Logical Positivists as mentioned before came up with the school of positivism which reasserted the role of sense experience at the expense of the abstract. They were preoccupied with concept empiricism which hold that all concepts (simple and complex) are evidently acquired through direct sensory experience for example, purple, sweet, cat, curved, house, orange juice, electricity, star, government, god, unicorn, atom though not directly from sense experience but consist of parts that are entirely acquired. Concept empiricism strongest version is Logical Positivism whose

central tenet is the verification principle. A nonanalytic proposition is meaningful if and only if it is verifiable or falsifiable solely on the basis of sensory experience. The meaningfulness of propositions consequently is a matter of logic or the rules of language rules.¹³⁷

Logical positivists reject statements devoid of meaning such as metaphysics, religion and ethics. For them, universals were mere human constructs, conventions and probabilities that did not matter since sense experience varied from one person to another therefore the objective was what could be verified through sense experience and so there are no universal and necessary truths. The implication of this perspective to the critical problem is that subjectivity became the measure of objectivity, a contradiction that led them in denying the validity of metaphysical, ethical and religious truths. Therefore, there is no right answer to metaphysical, ethical and religious questions. The proponents were Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and A.J Ayer (1910-1989).

Other schools of thought were the naturalists, physicalists and analytic philosophers. They are represented by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), John Dewey (1859-1952), Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), Gilbert Ryle (1900-1976) and Willard Van Orman Quine (1908-2000) and Richard Rorty (1931-2007) among others. The central tenet in their philosophies is that whatever man calls knowledge has to first of all appeal to him/her through sense observation. Since human sciences did not appeal much to them because their truths can not be verified by sense experience, logical positivist and German idealists had little to do with the human person. 'Because of the impersonalized and depersonalized analysis of knowledge of reality, other thinkers of the nineteenth century opted for a highly personalized, highly individualistic philosophy.'¹³⁸ This school of thought is classified as existentialism; it was prominent in Europe especially France and focused on the uniqueness of each human individual as distinguished from abstract universal human qualities.¹³⁹

On the other hand, existentialist philosophers re-examine the role of the individual and append subjectivity to all forms of knowledge. The main idea is that the subject becomes the centre of the universe therefore individuality is appended much more importance than the abstract universal and necessary realities. The father of existentialism Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), together with his fellow existentialists Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Gabriel Marcel(1889-1973) and Jean Paul Sartre(1905-1980) were opposed to objectivism and idealism and held that all knowledge has to transcend and go beyond the subject to the object.

Existentialism however separates the entity of the object and subject unlike idealism which unifies them. It gives meaning nonetheless to subjective truths that are a result of one's own appropriation of reality.¹⁴⁰ Phenomenologists, just like existentialist, hold that consciousness of the subject is the most important element in coming to know the object. This means that the subject has to bracket all his/ her prejudices and focus on the given that is the object. In this way, the subject is able to 'uncover the pure essences of things as they appear in the consciousness.'¹⁴¹ They too refer to the *Transcendental I*. Phenomenologists are represented by Max Scheler (1874-1928), Maurice Merleau –Ponty (1908-1961) and Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005).

They argued that 'objectivity did not constitute the categories proper to the intellect but it is not as a result of the activity of intellectual understanding upon the external world, nor as a result of an activity upon already given mix of sensations of affections but they show themselves as they are.'¹⁴² Their ideas were borrowed from Descartes and Kant but with an emphasis on a methodology that would discover the pure essences of things. For both phenomenologists and existentialist, truth is necessarily determined by the subject in its relation with the object. The study observes so far that debate on the critical problem keeps shifting emphasis either between the subject and object or a combination of both the subject and the object. It is instructive to argue that since Descartes, the discourse of the critical problem manifested itself in theories that eventually have the subject at the centre ultimately leading to subjectivism.

2. 8 Recent Developments

The twentieth century philosophy and twenty first century philosophy have epistemological concerns that emphasis less on the subject and object composition but which manifest the debate in different ways. 'The spirit of thought in nineteenth century philosophy is different from the twentieth century philosophy which has made a fresh encounter with religious studies and theology, and engaged in dialogue with science but not dependent on science. Philosophy no longer believes it can understand everything but can give a speculation that attempts to penetrate reality in the deepest possible means.¹⁴³ However, epistemological concerns still carry the light of the day.

The traditional view of knowledge is criticised by one Edmund Gettier. The Gettier problem with traditional conception of knowledge is that of finding a modification of, or an alternative to the traditional justified true belief analysis that from his counter examples. He says that there are instances where one has justified true belief that is not necessary knowledge. For example, one may have justified true belief that it is three o'clock by looking at a non-functional watch yet in reality, it is exactly three o'clock in the day. He happens not to know that the watch is non-functional. That is an instance of luck and not knowledge.

He proposes that propositional knowledge requires a fourth condition beyond the justification, belief and truth conditions. The fourth condition according to him consists of a 'defeasibility condition' requiring that the justification appropriate to knowledge be undefeated.¹⁴⁴ Gettier introduces a new perspective in shaping the critical problem; search for justification that is beyond any form of defeat. Philosophers react in different ways some proving the defeasibility condition as external, outside the object and others as internal, within the object. These different notions have led to the establishment of the critical problem by attempting to justify knowledge in a manner that further builds the dichotomy between the object and the subject.

New schools of thought have emerged in the process such as philosophy of the mind which attempts to study consciousness accompanied by materialism which attempts to explain what happens within the brain on the basis of one's experience in the environment. This has led to the cognitive experience being reduced to scientific mechanisms. The mind is understood as a thing. In other instances, it is understood as relational with other minds. However, other philosophers such as Kwasi Wiredu (1931-) seem to claim that one can only know the world from their point of view therefore knowing the world from a neutral point of view is impossible. For him, the concept of truth is generally recognizable among different cultures. The question is what criteria of judgment should be applied to assess the cultures.

2.8.1 African Philosophy Perspectives of the Critical Problem

Recent developments in African philosophy consist of contemporary explanations of Epistemology. According to Didier and Jeanette, epistemologies main focus is to analyse and evaluate claims to know which apply to all humans in so long as they are rational as is universal regardless of culture, tribe or race.¹⁴⁵ An African epistemology is thus an African worldview constructed within the possibilities of cultural contextualization, that is, ethno-philosophy, philosophic sagacity and politico-ideological philosophy. The understanding and meaning of an African Epistemology is that it seeks to answer questions regarding how Africans know what they claim to know, what are their basic assumptions on the nature of things and what methods must they follow in order to arrive at what Africans accept as trustworthy knowledge of reality.¹⁴⁶ These questions are based on the assumption that although epistemology as the study of knowledge is universal, the ways of acquiring knowledge vary according to the socio-cultural contexts within which knowledge claims are formulated and articulated.

Given the above perspective, what is the African perspective of the Critical Problem and how does it shape the debate? According to Senghor, Negro-African Epistemology starts from the premise 'I feel therefore I am.'¹⁴⁷ This view however can be criticised from the view point that feelings provide no objective validity to

determine what one knows since feelings are relative to all persons. For others, the starting point of African epistemology should be traditionally speaking the premise “We are therefore, I am.” This means that the ‘I’ presupposes the ‘We’ and is contingent upon the collective mind. Hence, the epistemological view of the traditional African is constant with the metaphysical view of being as ‘that which is force’ or the thing in so far as it is force- supreme force, supreme agent of motion or God. This is in contrast with classical epistemology in which knowledge of reality is the enterprise of the self of the subject and being is ‘that which is’ or the thing as it is in itself.¹⁴⁸

Other points of departure from western epistemology claim that in African tradition the constant assessment and reassessment of the critical problem calls for the participation of the subject which is hardly in contradistinction with the object. For African epistemology, the subject and object are inseparable and are fused in the existential predication. They are not separate entities as in Cartesian dualism. This position emphasizes that man and nature are one inseparable and continuum of a hierarchical order. The ego is central in the cosmic scheme under a unified coexistence. The implication is that the subject can only know the object if it is attached to it and not detached therefore, the subject is perpetually involved.¹⁴⁹

The theory states that the self of the subject and the objective world outside of the self are in reality one whereby the role of the self is to animate the other. In addition, this self claims dynamism since it is a unitary process of matter and mind and manifests itself in politics, economics, religion, art, education, science and morals.¹⁵⁰ The gist of this argument is that there is no need to dichotomise the subject object relationship. While this view negates the critical problem by claiming the self and object are one and the same, it does not express the nature of the unified knowledge as objective or subjective. It also overlooks the introspective nature of the self since it does not clarify the nature of this union. In this case then, experience, understanding and judgment become one. Nonetheless, this view contributes in the affirmation of the possibility of the subject and object being one reality.

Other philosophers such as Michael Polanyi (1891-1976) and Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984) have justified personal epistemology as an authentic source of knowledge and affirmation of the real since one can only know what the human mind can possibly know. The person therefore is the determining factor in all cognitive developments therefore, understanding the human person reveals to the study the cognitive power of the human mind in relation to its objects. For Lonergan, the question of self-transcendence is misleading since it is not possible for the knower to know himself and yet, ask how he can know anything else. The knower first makes the critical affirmation or judgment “I am” through experience, inquiry and reflection which leads to knowledge of other objects both as beings and as being other than the knower.¹⁵¹ For Lonergan, the subject and the object have positive differences which are all aspects of being and which are arrived at through correct judgments. It is in an analysis of judgment that the study seeks an alternative solution to the epistemological tension between the subject and the object.

2.8.2 Critical Remarks

The historical antecedents of the topic indicate that the nature of knowledge has had different meanings at different times. Special reference to the critical problem has gradually developed over the years from the simple and innocent enquiry of the Milesians into the nature of reality to the Socratics, medieval, modern and contemporary philosophies. An examination of the human knowledge and its relationship with the extra mental world of beings has yielded to systematic inquiry into the certainty man claims to have. In the process, the study has critically evaluated the weaknesses of subjectivity and objectivity. One thing remains constant. The critical problem is a question addressing the skeptic concerns. It specifically addresses the problem of justification, value and extent of knowledge. It is the search of the undefeasible criterion of one’s judgment about reality.

2.9 Conclusion

Ancient philosophy is bedevilled by two different fallacies. Both of them generated by a misunderstanding of the truth that whatever is knowledge must be true. This

fallacy haunts the classical epistemology up to the time of Aristotle. The other fallacy that whatever is knowledge must be true, then that knowledge must be the exercise of a faculty that cannot err. This haunts Hellenistic and imperial epistemologies.¹⁵² Ancient philosophers while seeking for truth confused truth with knowledge by maintaining that all that man knows is truth. It is not necessarily the case that what man claims to know is truth though whatever is true is knowledge or known. At the same time, man's capacity of knowing the truth is fallible therefore, it is erroneous to insist as they did that no act of cognition is prone to error. The fact that subjective knowledge leads man to error and objectivity is absolute leaves cognitive elements undefined since the two are distinct yet relational but unaccounted for.

What remains apparent is that the critical problem is the problem of criterion (the value, scope or limits of knowledge. Two issues emerge, knowledge Skepticism whereby no one knows anything and Justification Skepticism whereby no one is justified in believing anything. Two general questions generate the problem concerning the extent of man's knowledge (what do he/she know)? And how do he/she know it (the criteria by which man arrives at knowledge). The dilemma is that without the answer to the former question, the study cannot answer the latter question and without the answer to question later question, the study cannot answer the former question.¹⁵³ Contemporary epistemology lacks a widely accepted reply to the problem of criterion and that's why the study proposes that Lonergan's approach offers a substantial alternative.

It is critical to note that the contributions of philosophers mentioned to the discourse can not be underestimated. This is because as argued by African epistemology, theories of knowledge are informed by socio-cultural contexts within which one finds himself/herself. This claim can be traced from the social milieu of the Milesians that influenced their desire for a rational explanation of reality to the Kantian dogmatic slumber, existential philosophy and recent developments as put forward by African philosophy. Even though reality was for them socially constructed, the same reality has to be subjected to a criterion of truth. Such a claim would entail that social

constructs are subjective hence can not be objectively validated. This is a form of relativism and pluralism that further advances the critical problem in a way that cognitive self transcendence is socially determined therefore; all objects of knowledge and ways of acquiring knowledge are subjectively determined by the socio-cultural context. The basis of objection to such a claim would be that truth itself transcends time and place, and for that reason, whatever is socially constructed must aim at the universality of truth.

It can be observed at this point that throughout the philosophical debate, both the subject and the object have been an issue of concern to philosophers. In their affirmations and denials of the same, they have either neglected or over emphasised one over the other. The assumption here is that philosophers have not understood the cognitive element by which the two-polars become one therefore multiple theories overlooking both aspects. At this point, understanding the meaning of judgement is indispensable in the philosophical investigation of the critical problem.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATURE OF JUDGMENT AS A RESPONSE TO THE CRITICAL PROBLEM

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study examined how the critical problem has manifested itself throughout the history of philosophy and the responses that arose therewith. In this chapter, the study inspects the nature of judgment and how it can offer an alternative plausible response towards the problem of subjectivity and objectivity of knowledge as projected by different philosophers but with particular emphasis on Bernard Lonergan.

3.1.2 The Nature of Judgment

David Bell in *Frege's theory of Judgment* notes that since the beginning of the twenty first century, 'the notion of a 'theory of judgment 'has fallen, if not into actual disrepute, then at least into desultory.'¹⁵⁴ He means that theories about judgment have taken a rather haphazard approach since philosophers have been least interested in its dialectic. His reasons are that firstly, judgment no longer occupied a central role in the works of philosophers such as Bradley, Moore or Russell nor the classical German idealists such as Kant. Such neglect was according to him triggered by:

The theory of judgment in post-Kantian philosophy was too often monolithic, revisionary and often idealist metaphysical system. Judgment, it was urged is the primordial act in terms of which we make sense of the world. But too frequently, in the account given of judgment, no possibility was allowed of its making contact with reality as it is in itself, independently of the judgments we make about it. And so, judgment became not merely that act by which we make sense of the world, but the means by which we 'constitute' or 'construct the world.'¹⁵⁵

Post Kantian philosophy was concerned more with idealism in reaction to Kant's denial of the existence of metaphysics. This led Post-Kantian philosophers to absolute idealism in the search to ground metaphysical reality leading to a rigid understanding of judgment as means composing metaphysical realities. Bell observes that these positions were refuted by twentieth century philosophers who have been antithetical

to such idealist metaphysical systems and the theory of judgment has suffered neglect partly by being associated with them.¹⁵⁶

Second, the most important reason according to Bell for this neglect is that ‘legitimate functions of the theory of judgment have been performed by the theory of meaning in philosophy of language.’¹⁵⁷ Hence, the philosophical examination of the notions once central to judgment such as *concept, thought, meaning* and *truth* has come to be conducted by employing their linguistic analogues.¹⁵⁸ In this case, a linguistic interpretation of judgment has overridden the epistemological interpretation leading to philosophers overlooking the theory. Bell’s claim is partially right though twentieth century philosophers such as Bernard Lonergan have attempted to give a constructive understanding of judgment in a similar but epistemologically different perspective from his predecessors.

Third, the discipline of logic has undergone significant changes from the doctrine of terms, propositions and syllogisms since such doctrines are ‘not able to easily account for what truth there is in the claim that what a term means is what it contributes to the meaning of the propositions in which it occurs.’¹⁵⁹ The suggestion is that there is a point of departure from the logical account of judgment to a purely linguistic understanding. The epistemological analysis of judgment is hence overlooked by most philosophers as a linguistic function. Therefore, meaning and judgment become one and the same without reference to the truth or falsity of the meaning of the judgment. In order to better understand the judgment, the study attempts to analyse the meaning of judgment in itself by exploring different definitions provided by various philosophers.

3.13 Definitions of Judgment

Philosophers grappled with maintaining knowledge to be objective and again, in a certain sense, ending in subjectivity. This has demonstrated that neither of their claims are wrong in what they affirm and right in what they deny. While knowledge is both

subjective and objective, both claims are attained through judgment. But what is judgment? The *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* states that:

Philosophers have at different times expressed their concern with the nature of judgment in different terms: the investigation maybe called the theory of content, of belief, of probability, of propositions *et cetera* depending on which aspect of the matter is taken to predominate. The central problem is that of understanding the capacity of the mind to form, entertain and affirm judgments which are not simply strings of words but items intrinsically representing some state of affairs, or what the world is or maybe.¹⁶⁰

From the above definition, judgment, one can say, whichever way it is conceived, is first and foremost a cognitive act comprised of notions about content, belief, probability and propositions. Conversely, affirmation is the feature that stands out. According to Kenneth Gallagher, it is only in judgment that man reaches existence through affirmation. Concepts such as grass, wicked, cold, poison acquire meaning in an existential context when advanced in judgment, such as 'The grass is green,' 'this man is wicked,' 'It is cold out there,' and 'Poisons are dangerous.' Until the affirmation "Thus it is" is made, the mind has not reached existence.¹⁶¹ Therefore, affirmation implies the existential aspect of the concepts within a judgment. He is quick to point that it is only in judgment that the distinction between essence and existence is made. This is because not all ideas (mental reference) are referential in the same way. It is not the case that all instances of reference are a judgment. Therefore, judgment plays a functional role in the recognition that ideas do not reach existence except in judgment. Judgment re-attaches the concept of existence in the ideas. For example "this man is wicked is not a comparison of the ideas 'this man' and 'wicked.'¹⁶² While one can make a reference to 'this man' in itself, it is not a judgment but a concept. The justification is provided by Vincent Potter.

Potter holds that sensation and conceptualization are aspects of human knowing though incomplete. Sensation and perception simply provide materials for knowing and conceptualization allows man to understand and classify the essence of reality tentatively or hypothetically. In order that the classification of conceptualization be

deemed correct, it requires verification through sufficient evidence to warrant the assertion "it is so."¹⁶³ Hence, judging is the act of the mind by which a proposition is grasped as virtually unconditioned, that is, as having sufficient evidence for its assertion as true.¹⁶⁴ This view is heavily borrowed from Lonergan whom the study explores how he further develops the idea of virtually unconditioned. Gallagher and Potter however, echo the idea that the search for the unconditional is the search for certitude whereby one affirms unconditionally his/her right to affirm. This is because the mind has an intrinsic search for the absolute which Lonergan refers to as the *a priori* heuristic of pure desire to know.

Another view is that of Brian Cronin who acknowledges the pivotal role of judgment by describing it as the central point in the transition from thinking to knowing, from fiction to fact, from bright ideas to verified ideas, from the world of fantasy to the world of the real, from subjectivity to objectivity.¹⁶⁵ He also emphasises that judgements are not ethical or religious but simply an affirmation or denial of what is true or false. Judgments are not choices or decisions people make neither does he refer to judgments as aesthetics, that is, judgments passed on paintings, poetry, literature *et cetera*.¹⁶⁶ This brings the study to its scope and limitation of the study in the aspect of judgment as an affirmation or denial of reality, being or the world in the epistemological realm of propositional knowledge.

The study can from the above elucidations deduce that a judgment is the nature of the intellect whereby it acknowledges the source by which it knows either by affirming or denying the state of affairs, reality, thing, object, world or being. That is, the intellect knows that it knows through a judgment. The perception of judgment may vary from one philosopher to another depending on their theory of knowledge. For instance, for the rationalists, judgment will be based on a purely *a priori* content while for the empiricist philosophers, judgment is that which affirms or denies the content of sense experience as objectively valid. This chapter will highlight the attempts by philosophers to define and interpret judgment with a special focus and emphasis on Bernard Lonergan's notion of judgment in relation to the problem of objectivity and

subjectivity of knowledge. To have a comprehensive account of judgment, it is key to understand the logical and linguistic dimensions of a judgment.

3.2 The Logical Analysis of Judgment

Though ancient philosophers were not keen enough on the nature of judgment, they however implied it in their logical theories concerning the world and all that it entails. Logic is the branch of philosophy concerned with rules and principles of correct reasoning.¹⁶⁷ Aristotle was the first philosopher to attempt a systematic and theoretical philosophy using the logic of propositions and arguments. His point of view on judgment is clearly elaborated by Michael Spangler O.P in his book *Logic: An Aristotelian Approach* in the chapter on 'The second act of the mind; Judgment'. Aristotle defines judgment as the logical implications of two inferences.

He explains that the human intellect has three operations which are simple apprehension, judgment and reasoning whereby in simple apprehension, the mind grasps the whatness (essences) of things then judges whether or not the concepts of these various simple realities belong together and finally reasons to a valid conclusion as a result of seeing the connection between certain judgments.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, he emphasizes that 'these three acts of the human intellect work harmoniously together building slowly but surely the vast edifice of the arts and sciences so that the intellect does not reach the fullness of knowledge in one operation . Rather, it has three acts which working together, forms a strong chain enabling the human being to lay hold of the causes of things.'¹⁶⁹ The three acts are distinct but complementary and incomplete without the others. Together, they all form the bodies of existing knowledge.

Examples of judgments one makes daily include 'Kenya is a republic', 'the *matatus* (Public Service Vehicles) disobey traffic rules', 'the general elections were free and fair' or 'the weather is hot.' These and many other judgments are made on a daily basis about man's surroundings and circumstances. Spangler proceeds to define judgment as 'the mental process which obtains the proposition by combining or

dividing the concepts or simple realities. The proposition if conformed to the real world is true, if not, it is pronounced false.’¹⁷⁰ This view is also shared by Thomas Aquinas who says that truth is found in the intellects mental synthesis of composing (affirming) or dividing (denying) correspondence of mental states with reality.¹⁷¹ According to Brian Cronin, Aristotle’s *compositio* (composing) or *divisio* (dividing) which is inherited from Aristotelian terminology is a good grasp of the difference between a proposition affirming or a synthesis of terms and a judgment as positing or affirming of the truth of that synthesis.¹⁷² This means that for a judgment to take place, there in need to ground the judgment through reflective understanding that seeks the evidence and further commitment of a personal affirmation of the judgment as true. Mere synthesis thus is not a guarantee of truth until the synthesis is assented to as true in the light of sufficient evidence.

But what are these judgments composed of? The content of a judgment consist of propositions. ‘A proposition is a sentence that is either true or false, that is, it has a truth values. For example, ‘The University of Nairobi is in Kenya’. So a proposition is a declarative sentence as opposed to interrogative sentence (question), exclamation, imperative sentence (commands), suggestion and performative sentence.’¹⁷³ Hence, a judgment is comprised of propositions which can be proved to be true or false for example, the proposition ‘University of Nairobi is in Kenya’ will be true if in reality it is the case, that is; ‘an outright judgment an individual might make is subject to comparison with the actual state of affairs, thing and the immediate pronouncement as true or false.’¹⁷⁴ That means that such propositions are immediately evident. Similarly, such propositions according to Lonergan are the content of an affirming or denying, an agreeing or disagreeing, an assenting or dissenting.¹⁷⁵ Truth and falsity necessarily includes an assent or dissent of the proposition at hand.

Spangler further demonstrates that ‘the basic elements resulting from a proposition consist of a predicate and a subject whereby the simple reality stands as the subject (that which is placed under, the base) and the simple reality which is predicated of this subject (Predicate). The predicate is what is said or asserted of the subject, the reality

to inhere in the subject.’¹⁷⁶ For instance, ‘Aoko is beautiful’ whereby ‘beautiful’ is the predicate and ‘Aoko’ the subject. The study observes that ‘Every logician from Aristotle to Mill held that the basic form of simple proposition, sentence or judgment requires two concepts, terms or ideas, a subject and a predicate to be suitably joined together to form a judgment.’¹⁷⁷ This was the trend among philosophers except for Brentano as the study highlights in the process. Predicates are further classified into ten categories of substance, quantity, quality and relation. The subject is joined with the predicate by the verb ‘to be’ or ‘is’ which acts as the copula (Latin word for link or band).

The link could be equivocally used to indicate time or existence. For example the sentence ‘my mother is a physician’ (to indicate link) and ‘I am therefore you are’ (to indicate existence). The result therefore, of the ‘minds second act of judgment is the logical proposition called categorical proposition.’¹⁷⁸ According to logicians, ‘a categorical proposition is one that asserts that the subject class is either wholly or partially included in or excluded from the predicate class.’¹⁷⁹ Depending on the extension of inclusion or exclusion, the categorical propositions can be classified into universal or particular, affirmative or negative. These are also further clarified into universal affirmative in the form of “All S are P”, universal negative in the form of “No s are P”, particular affirmative in the form of “Some S are P” and particular negative in the form of “Some S are not P”.¹⁸⁰ Logicians regard this as the basic component of a judgment.

Brentano disagrees with the logicians from Aristotle to Mill on the basic content of a judgment, sentence or proposition containing a suitably joined together subject and predicate.¹⁸¹ He denied the copula ‘is’ to be existential but rather linguistic whereby there was no new meaning attached to the subject through the predicate. The copula ‘is’ for Brentano is purely linguistic but was confused to be thought by logicians whereby they overlooked the relation between the subject and the predicate. ‘In short, predicates are modified for logic and philosophy of language whereby the linguistic transformation of I (Some S is P) and O (Some S is not P) statements into existential

propositions results in psychologically different but logically equivalent propositions.’¹⁸² For him, predication is not the essence of every judgment. For example, sentences like “It is raining” or “There is no water in the moon” need to be paraphrased into subject-predicate forms along the lines of “The weather is rainy” or “The moon is lacking water.”¹⁸³ The statements when paraphrased only bear a linguistic tone but not a new thought. For Brentano, ‘the fundamental logical form of judgment wasn’t that of a subject bound to predicate as everyone held since Aristotle but of affirmations or denials of existence, a reflection of his psychological analysis of ideas and judgment.’¹⁸⁴ Though he is known for his denial of the subject-predicate association in logical propositions, he ends up emphasizing more on the linguistic value of judgment. Lonergan holds a contrary opinion concerning the analytic perspectives. The study reviews his opinion in the next section.

On the other hand, traditional/Aristotelian Logic further defines the truth value of the categorical proposition as the conformity or correspondence between reality /thing and intellect. The categorical proposition therefore consists of an external reality, the judgment of the intellect about such reality and the conformity or non-conformity. Subsequently, ‘the intellects consciousness of conformity occurs in the second act of judgment rather than simple apprehension.’¹⁸⁵ At this juncture, judgment comes in as that critical act in which the mind (subject) corresponds with the reality (object). Two reasons in Aristotelian epistemology account for this occurrence. The first is that ‘human senses and the intellect have the likeness (whatness) of the real thing through simple apprehension and are therefore pronounced true or confirmed to the real object. Secondly, while the senses are not aware of such conformity with reality, the intellect is aware of it.’¹⁸⁶ This implication is that there exists a relationship between an object, concept and intellect through the subject.

This means then that the role of judgment is strictly to reflect upon the simple realities of simple apprehension and therefore consciously separate them or combine them as far as logic is concerned. If one states, for example that Kipyego is a javelin champion (yes), No culture is not subject to criticism (no), then one can actually go back to the

records to provide evidence to confirm the actual state of affairs. This view is also upheld by Lonergan as well as Brentano and Frege.

Lonergan's position concerning the logical analysis of judgment is that logic is the effort of knowledge to attain the coherence and organization proper to any stage of its development. It enables the cognitive process of experience, understanding and judgment to undergo a radical revision of its postulates to pursue the logical ideal.¹⁸⁷ However, the revision of the cognitive process, even from a logical perspective, is subject to the same cognitional process. Hence, the judgments are not in a vacuum but are contextual whereby the past, present and future judgments are intimately related each forming a building block of the other that eventually contributes to the whole of knowledge. Logic accordingly, helps one to arrange his/her judgments in a coherent manner. Coherence presupposes a particular structure of judgment. This structure is seen in different types of judgment. To that effect, the study elaborates different types of judgment.

3.2.1 Types of Judgment

Judgments are classified as categorical and either as affirmative, negative, particular or universal. Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* in the Chapter 'The Analytic Concepts; on the 'logical use of understanding in general,' breaks down judgments according to quantity, quality, relation and modality. Under quantity, he places universal, particular and singular propositions. Under quality, he places affirmative, negative and infinite propositions. Categorical, disjunctive and hypothetical propositions are placed under relation while problematic, assertoric and apodictic are classified under modality.¹⁸⁸

He distinctly explains the difference between analytic, synthetic and synthetic *a priori* judgments. Analytic judgments are judgments of clarification while synthetic judgments are judgments of amplification. By this he means that analytic judgments are those in which the predicate is contained in the subject such as 'all bachelors are

unmarried'. They are necessarily true by logical syntax or definition of terms. The concept unmarried is already contained in the subject 'bachelor' *a priori*, while in synthetic statements, the predicate is not necessarily implied. An illustration is 'all bachelors are ugly'. The concept ugly is not necessarily contained in the concept bachelor.¹⁸⁹ It is *a posteriori*. 'For analytic judgments, no amount of particular experience is sufficient to establish universal and necessary validity of these judgments.'¹⁹⁰ He accounts for the troublesome judgments according to him which do not have objective existence and the mind cannot comprehend. These judgments for Kant manifest the limitation of reason, for example, the ontological existence of God. Such judgments are what he referred to as synthetic *a priori*. They are the judgments that lead him to the denial of metaphysics and objective knowledge.

Kant's classification of judgments is inspired by his theory of knowledge whereby reality conforms to the human mind. Therefore, any judgment about reality shall be according to the interpretation of the mind. Such judgments, according to Kant contain the synthesis of the representation of the object and the *a priori* principles that make understanding possible. He states in the *Critique of Judgment* that 'judgment is the middle term between understanding and reason and contains an *a priori* of its own which affects the transition.'¹⁹¹ A judgment therefore comes from the subject and is the pivot point between understanding and reason for Kant.

Other types of judgement according to Lonergan include 'concrete judgments of fact which are contingent true affirmations of some event or state of affairs in the world. These are events that we experience based on the data of sense which are perceived or remembered such as 'my house is burnt.'¹⁹² Besides concrete judgments of fact based on senses, there are judgments of fact based on consciousness such as "I am a Knower."¹⁹³ I am a knower if I posit certain kinds of act such as perceiving, thinking, conjecturing, believing, judging and willing. As a subject, I am conscious of these activities and any denial of these activities presupposes that I am a knower.¹⁹⁴ This opinion is similar to Descartes *cogito ergo sum* and Augustine's *si fallor, Sum*. Probable judgments on the other hand fall between absolute affirmation or denial

based upon availability of sufficient evidence. They arise from an incomplete state about knowledge of a situation. An example of such judgments is empirical sciences which often raise further pertinent questions.

3.3 The Linguistic Analysis of Judgment

Judgment can be classified as the theory of content or belief or representation depending on the point of focus. Phenomenologists will therefore base their theory of judgment on the phenomenal presentation of the object; idealists will perceive it as an object of the mind and not the senses. Brentano is classified as a methodological phenomenologist who looks into psychology from a first-hand perspective thus his book *Psychology from an Empirical Stand point*. He looks into judgment as a mental act that accumulates to knowledge. He says that 'what is certain is that knowledge frequently accompanies mental phenomena. We think, we desire something and know that we think and desire. But we only have knowledge when we make judgments. It is beyond doubt, therefore, that in many cases along with the mental act, there exists in us not only a presentation which refers to it but also a judgment about it.'¹⁹⁵ Thought and desire for him are always accompanied by judgment. The judgment then is the language by which man communicates his/her thoughts and the desires.

He asserts that there is an inseparable association among the content of judgment other than a specific combination of attributes. This judgment is always accompanied by belief. He also quotes J. S. Mill in his *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human mind* (2nd ed, chap.IV, sect.4.1162f.f) that 'the characteristic difference between an assertion and any other form of speech is rather that it not only brings a certain object to mind, it also asserts something about this object, it not only calls forth a presentation but a belief in them, indicating that this order is an actual fact.'¹⁹⁶ According to Brentano, judgment cannot be resolved into mere presentation neither can it be made of a simple combination of presentations. This is because it entails factual information that goes beyond simple utterances and entails belief. A judgment therefore is for him an expression of the actual state of affairs.

The transformation of simple apprehension to judgment does not take place without change of meaning. While the thoughts remain psychologically different, the logical implication remains the same. Therefore, judgment for Brentano ends up being a linguistic function. He emphasizes that 'the compounding of several elements believed to be essential for the universal and specific nature of judgment , the combination of subject and predicate , of antecedent and consequent *et cetera* , is in fact nothing but a matter of linguistic expression.'¹⁹⁷ This is in contrast to logic whereby the subject and the predicate play a synthetic role in judgment in order to make possible affirmation or denial.

Given that for Brentano, judgment is not only psychological and logical as well as linguistic, it will be in tandem to highlight the characteristic nature of judgment as linguistic. Linguistic philosophers also called analytic philosophers were concerned with the nature of language in expressing truth by analysing the meaning of words. This aspect is better highlighted by Friedrich Ludwig Gottlob Frege (1848-1925) and Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). According to Frege, human thought and language go hand in hand. In his theory of judgment, he ends up significantly displacing judgment to pave way for linguistic concerns such as sense and meaning. This is because he disagrees with the classical logical interpretation of judgment as the second mental act.

Frege poses the threat that if man's judgments are composed of his/her ideas (mental entities existing only in his/her consciousness, then judgment is in danger of becoming a solipsistic act since man's judgment about the world will be merely his/her ideas. He refutes the position that simple apprehension is the link between objective reality and sensory experience since for him, the origin of one's ideas account for the objectivity of our judgments.¹⁹⁸ Simple apprehension thus should not be interpreted as the means one constructs ideas in his or her mind. Judgments have to look for meaning outside one's mind. Frege's concern is quite critical since it manifests itself in the various attempts to account for the origin of knowledge which indicate the nature of judgment.

He at once highlights the defective effects of such a nature of judgment. His reasons are that if sense experience is the source of one's ideas and judgment the connection, then the only difference between sensations and judgment will be in the degree of complexity. The more complex a sense experience is, the more complex a judgment is. Such an assertion about judgment is unrealistic if not absurd since sense experience is itself a complex process. Secondly, the theory cannot account for the unity of judgment and thought whereby judgment is not merely a string or sequence of elements but a combination and construction of parts into a whole. For example 'Simon Martini did not decorate the town hall'. This combination possesses a unity that is different from the ideas Simon Martini, town hall, negation decoration etc, yet it possesses a completeness and internal coherence.¹⁹⁹ A judgment therefore can not occur into a coherent whole unless different elements are combined to express the relationship within the elements.

In response to the above fundamental questions, Frege's theory attempts to give answers while borrowing heavily from Kant and Ludwig Wittgenstein. His position is that judgments come prior to concepts and that words only have meaning in the context of a proposition. For Frege, judgment is recognition that a thought is true. The judgment stroke is *sui generis* that is, it belongs to a kind of its own. For Brentano, in judgment, does not necessarily advert to the notion of truth. Nonetheless, it is in making a judgment that we experience the truth values. In his case, the truth values are *sinn und bedeutung* (sense and meaning). Without allusion to judgment, there is no way of distinguishing the two since anyone making a judgment and holds it to be true must tacitly recognize them.

Frege's view of judgment is developed from a semantic theory perspective whereby a sentence does not have truth value unless capable of being used to make an assertion. Thus he repeatedly asserts that one can grasp a thought without judging it to be true but one cannot grasp a thought without knowing what judgment is, because then, none would have a notion of truth. He means that understanding a thought does not

necessarily mean judging it to be true or false but in order that one asserts the truth or falsity of a thought, one has to know what judgment is. Without the knowledge of judgment, one cannot grasp a thought to be true. His reason is that if one starts with thoughts considered as merely expressed and not asserted, judgment becomes mysterious and inexplicable. He concludes that it is better to start with sentences which constitute assertions and explain the expression of unasserted thoughts in terms of them. Frege is perceived by critics as not being able to separate assertoric force from sense. Nonetheless, analytic philosophers agree that objectivity is found in the logical clarification of thoughts and analysis of language.

With the linguistic philosophers, that study pays attention to a new challenge of finding meaning in judgment without losing its affirmation or denial properties. In the study of the critical problem, the implication is that the subject can give meaning to its interpretation of the object without positing it as true or false. This criticism is best captured by Lonergan's response to Brentano's and Frege's linguistic assertions. Lonergan disagrees with the linguistic analysts concerning the meaning and affirmation of analytic judgments. For him, there is a difference between what is meant from acts of meaning and from sources of meaning. He clarifies further that any cognitional activity is a source of meaning such as conceiving, judging and uttering and as such are different acts of meaning.

These sources of meaning lead to acts of meaning and acts refer to terms of meaning.²⁰⁰ Meaning is considered from two perspectives, first as what is affirmed or denied and secondly as a mere supposition, definition or consideration. Therefore, in criticism of the linguist, linguistic propositions are sterile except for the affirmation that linguistic propositions are analytic.²⁰¹ Consequently, some form of validation is required. This form of validation can only be found in the cognitive acts of experience, understanding and judgment which Brentano and Frege systematically rule out by stressing that truth is a preserve of logic. Therefore, linguistic expression is not by itself a significant increment in knowledge.

In looking for a plausible theory of judgment, the study carefully observes that the linguistic analysis does not address the study's concern. The logical perspective remains a product of the mind to construct laws of reasoning and not how man makes judgments. While the study acknowledges the various existing theories of judgment explored, it notes that the theories do not adequately address its epistemological concern since the emphasis is on the rules of logic and the analysis of language without consideration of the different and relational cognitive acts, their roles and content. In the process, the relationship between the subject and the object is overlooked. However, both bring out important aspects of judgment. In logic, judgment has a coherent structure and with linguistics, judgment is the means by which one expresses a reality. Both assertions are equally important. The study shall proceed to a non-logical explanation of judgment that is based on an epistemological and metaphysical interpretation on reality.

3.4 The Epistemological Analysis of Judgment

The study challenges the common perception of judgment as a linguist expression and as a logical structure to determine a more epistemologically relevant view on how a judgment is made and its importance. From the anthropological view, man is viewed as a rational being capable of intelligently understanding reality. This intellectual knowledge is 'documented by the capacity to judge and reason. Man formulates judgments, universal propositions and general laws, such as "heavy objects fall", "fire burns", "glass, though transparent, is impenetrable". By reasoning, he/she arrives at certain ideas reflecting on others and the existence of certain things from the existence of others.'²⁰² It is through judgment and reasoning that man can account for the existing bodies of knowledge.

Reichmann defines judgment philosophically as 'that phase in the process of human understanding when the intellect judges, or acknowledges, the source of that by which it knows. The intellectual act of judgment is the intellect's coming to a full appropriation of its own act of understanding, whereby it pin points exactly what is known.'²⁰³ Through judgment, the intellect rests its claim to know. He further declares

that it is in the act of judgment that the intellect completes its act of knowing and arrives at full knowledge. Therefore, judgment is that act that has to do with the finalization of human knowing.

According to Aquinas, judgment is the act by which the intellect understands its own understanding. Here, the intellect knows the truth and nothing but the truth. From the above explanations, the study can conclude that judgment is indeed the expression by which human knowledge comes to its full articulation be it subjective or objective. 'It is the completion of the cognitive act. With judgment, consciousness and the subject's assimilation of the object reach their highest point. The subject becomes conscious of this new possession of an object and states to him/herself what this new reality is which he/she has acquired.'²⁰⁴ It is worth exploring how the subject object synthesis is realized in judgment. From the logical and linguistic analysis, the answer is not evident. It is in the interest of epistemology to reveal the essence of this act. Lonergan takes it upon himself to demonstrate how this finality is obtained. The study critically explores his claims in the next sections.

3.5 Judgment According to Lonergan

Bernard Joseph Flanagan Lonergan was a Canadian born in Québec in 1904 and died recently in 1984. He was a Jesuit priest and a contemporary philosopher and theologian though little less known. 'Of all contemporary philosophers of the very first rank, Bernard Lonergan has been up to now the most neglected.'²⁰⁵ His famous works include *Insight: a Study of Human Understanding* (1957) and *Method in Theology* (1972) among others. In his philosophical endeavours, he aimed to reach up to the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas who was heavily influenced by Aristotle.

He was also influenced by the on goings in the world during his lifetime such as Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. He says in *Insight* that 'there are those that date the dawn of human intelligence from the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859.'²⁰⁶ Darwin paid fresh attention to the world around him and saw what other

scientist did not see. Darwin observed that instead of having a fixed essence, humanity evolves. He brought into new light the historicity of reality which marvelled intellectuals across the board. His attentiveness to his environment brought him to the conclusion that species evolve and only the strong survive. Such was an inspiration to Lonergan whose work on *Insight* and sought an exploration of the consciousness of the human subject. He rediscovered the fundamental process of human knowing in St. Thomas's work of *Verbum* and by his own personal experience as his contribution to the development of the human mind in mathematics, science and philosophy.

Lonergan's aim in *Insight* is to establish a dynamic structure of human knowing which unlike other previous epistemologies considers not only the object and the subject but also the changes that occur in the subject in the process of knowing. He differs from the rationalists and empiricist who only singled out one aspect of human knowing, emphasized on it and neglected the rest by pointing out that all philosophies are interrelated and all unite to form a single body of knowledge. It appears as a result, that in his entire work, the act of human knowing is natural to man such that it is driven by the desire to question and enhanced by the recurring accumulation of insights. Because knowledge involves both the particular, subjective and universal abstract ideas, the act of knowing is hence an integrated process that invokes experience, understanding and judgment. Cognitional consciousness is thus made up of empirical consciousness, intellectual consciousness and rational consciousness. He also constantly refers to those three as corresponding to the level of presentations, intelligence and reflection respectively.²⁰⁷

Lonergan explains that the three levels of cognitional theory operate in two modes which include data of external experience (colours, shapes, odours, tastes, hard, soft, hot, cold, wet, dry) and data of consciousness (acts of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, judging).²⁰⁸ Through experience, one gets in touch with data and asks the question what is it? This question is the beginning of inquiry. External experience involves the acts of seeing, touching, hearing, smelling, tasting which are the

connecting bridge of the subject to the object. Understanding consists of inquiring, imagining, insight, conceiving and formulating. Here, man asks the question why? Judgment follows with reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence and finally judging. Lonergan conceives yet a higher level of deciding whereby man deliberates, evaluates, decides, speaks and finally writes.

Such, according to him, are the operations of the human mind. They are recurrent, cumulative and yield progressive results. It is a basic pattern of operations that he calls the transcendental method that are employed in every cognitive enterprise. It is known through introspection which he terms as the 'objectification of subjective experience.'²⁰⁹ Through experience, the mind is actively engaged with phenomena. In understanding, the mind grasps the relations between phenomena and in judgment, it verifies if indeed, that it is the case. This threefold structure is dynamic, operational and functional and yields the bodies of knowledge. It is in judgment that human knowing comes to finality, in other words, knowing comes to term with judgment. Therefore, knowing of the external object (universe) is an activity of the subject and that knowledge culminates in judgment. The three levels while distinct are related. This relationship occurs when the level of presentations which is the realm of common sense and the beginning of inquiry provides raw material (empirical data) to the level of intelligence which operates on the empirical data. The level of intelligence is portrayed by insight into the empirical data.

3.6. The Role of Insight in Bridging the Subject and the Object

The level of intelligence is characterized by insight which understands, formulates concepts, definitions, objects of thought, suppositions and considerations. It is critical at this level to analyse the importance of insight in Lonergan's work. For Lonergan, insight is the 'supervening act of understanding.'²¹⁰ It is the main and pivot point off all intelligent human activity. 'Insight pivots between the concrete and abstract. Thus, by its very nature, insight is the mediator, the hinge, the pivot yet, what insight adds to sensible and imagined presentations finds its adequate expression only in the abstract and recondite formulations of the sciences.'²¹¹ It is the source of all new knowledge

and the principle of all progress in science and philosophy. Without insight, Lonergan's work is incomplete since it is an insight into insight. Without insight, intelligence is vague. This is the crux of Lonergan's epistemology and the possibility of addressing positively the critical problem. Therefore, to understand Lonergan's concept of judgment, one has to grasp his understanding of insight. For Lonergan, insight is the second act of the mind after experience. It is an act of understanding by which the mind grasps intelligible relations in the data provided by sense experience. It is the act of direct understanding unlike reflective understanding which corresponds to judgment. It is the grasp and source of all meaning as found in the object of sense experience.

There are three types of insight. First, is common sense insight which grasps the relationship of things to man, or things for man, for example, water is colourless. Second, is theoretical insight which grasps the purely intelligible relationships of things to one another, for example the occurrence of the lunar or solar eclipse. Third, is the symbolic insight which discerns the relationship between a sensual or empirical object and another hidden, invisible or transcendent reality for example, the fountain of knowledge at the University of Nairobi which symbolizes the flow and exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Insight is characterised as a release of the tension of inquiry which begins with asking questions, comes suddenly and unexpectedly, depends on inner conditions rather than outer circumstances, acts as a pivot point between the concrete and the abstract and finally passes into the habitual texture of the human mind.²¹² This means that it mediates between the material/empirical knowledge and the intellectual knowledge. This is the beginning of the reconciliation of the subject and the object in the critical problem. Through insight, the subject and the object are joined. Therefore, both play a critical role in the process of knowing since without the object, the subject would not come into touch with reality. Again, without the subject's experience of the object, the object will not be understood.

Due to the extreme empiricist and rationalist conceptions, the subject and object were diametrically opposed. Insight forms the meeting point of empiricism and rationalism. It also solves the classical problem of the universals or origin of ideas (abstract universal concepts from the concrete and particular presentations. This is because insight participates both in the concrete data of sense and the abstract ideas of the mind by grasping meaning through understanding in accord with ideas yet it occurs into the concrete presentations of sense imagination. Since insight belongs to the act of understanding, it is divided into three levels; the acts of asking questions, the act of insight and the act of conceptualizations.

Conceptualization is the act of abstraction which Lonergan borrows heavily from Aristotle and Aquinas. In both philosophers and as in Lonergan, abstraction is the process by which one moves from the meaning grasped by insight in the concrete data to a meaning that is expressed in abstract universal terms. This is where the empiricist err in their assertion by claiming that from experience, one directly derives concepts. In this way, they are trapped in subjectivity since the movement presupposes that one moves directly to imagination which is incomplete in itself. It is incomplete because the intellect constantly strives to know the absolute which is applicable and can be useful at all times and places. In order to do so, insight is not sufficient without the affirmation of the concept. It remains a hypothesis, a supposing or consideration. This level is incomplete but complemented by the level of reflection since man demands more than just formulated concepts.

He quotes that:

.....every answer to a question for intelligence raises a further question for reflection. There is an ulterior motive to conceiving and defining, thinking and considering, forming suppositions, hypothesis, theories, and systems. That motive appears when such motives are followed by the question 'is it so?' We conceive in order to judge. As questions for intelligence, 'what and why and how often?' stand to insights and formulations, so questions for reflection stand to a further kind of insight and to judgment.²¹³

This desire to want to know more is a thought shared by Aristotle who once said that by nature, all men desire to know.²¹⁴ This desire is reflected in questions of intelligence. It is unlimited. It has no boundary. It is because of the need to judge that man goes beyond mere understanding. This is a contradiction and a reminder of the impossibility of the skeptic desire to suspend judgement. It is a practically impossible way of life and contrary to the cognitive nature of all men since even the skeptic makes a judgment in declaring that one ought to suspend judgment. Since it is impossible to suspend judgment, the study explores the urgency of the possibility of judgments in the first place.

3.6.1 The Possibility of Judgment

Loneragan is of the view that the notion of judgment is made possible by propositions which are different from utterances. Propositions, just as seen before, are declarative and contain truth values, are either asserted or denied, agreed or disagreed on, assented or dissented to, true or false. Utterances on the other hand are merely imagined (visual, auditory or motored), spoken or written. They can be interrogative, operative or exclamatory. Hence, it is only propositions that contain an object of thought, content of an act of conceiving, thinking, defining, considering.²¹⁵ Therefore, without declarative propositions, one cannot have judgments since one's expressions will be utterances that do not declare any truth or falsity. This view is also reflected by most philosophers such as Kant, St. Thomas and Aquinas as the study has indicated earlier.

Second, judgments are made possible by relating it to questions. 'A question is a conscious search for knowledge.'²¹⁶ Questions demand answers and answers presuppose questions. For Lonergan, there are two types of questions. One is the question for reflective understanding which is answered by 'Yes' or 'No'. Secondly, there are questions for intelligence which are not answered necessarily by 'Yes' or 'No'. An example is the question 'Is there a faculty meeting at the end of the month?' is answered by yes or no, but the question 'What is a faculty meeting?' does not warrant such an answer.

Third, judgments are determined by a level of personal commitment that involves the responsibility of the knower in what he/she affirms or denies. This level of commitment is measured by the ability for one to acknowledge erroneous judgment since 'the question for reflection can be answered not only by 'Yes' or 'No' but also by 'I don't know': it can be answered assertorically or modally, with certitude or only probability; finally, the question as presented can be dismissed, distinctions introduced and new questions substituted.'²¹⁷ This level of personal commitment moves one from merely affirming or denying reality to taking a stand or a position concerning his/her knowledge. It is a deliberate move from subjectivity to objectivity by moving from considering knowing as an activity to actually knowing thus embracing objectivity.

Lonergan means by reflection 'reviewing the process of knowing from the sense data, to the understanding, to the judgment; all these activities are conscious and so one can notice whether anything has been left out. Whether proper procedures were followed etc.'²¹⁸ This provision paves way for the possibility of 'misfortunes and shortcomings of the person answering and by the same stroke it closes the door on possible excuses for mistakes. A judgment is the responsibility of the one that judges.'²¹⁹ Here Lonergan implies that while it is allowed that one will be occasionally mistaken, the possibility or certitude or probability of answers makes the person judging responsible for their assertions and denials as well. This view is quite practical and is arrived at introspectively by Lonergan whereas other philosophers dismiss subjectivity on the basis of personal error which is actually human nature. While an understanding of reality may differ from one person to the other which is normally acceptable, a judgment on the same issue may provoke further questioning. It is critical hence, to demonstrate the difference between understanding and judgment.

3.6.2 The Difference between Understanding and Judgment

Kant just like Lonergan, attempts to unify both the subject and object in the process of knowing by first acknowledging the role of sense experience and understanding. While for Lonergan, understanding is the process by which man grasp's the relations

among the data, for Kant, it is the process by which cognition is made possible through the *a priori* categories of the mind. 'Understanding is the faculty of thought whereby thought is the knowledge of concepts.'²²⁰ For Kant, one's understanding of the world draws on certain fundamental principles which are inherent in the ways in which he/she employs experience to understand the world. Through intuition, one comes into contact with objects after which the mind through its categories, attempts to conceptualize the object.

Since the categories of the mind are given, then man's understanding of the object only occurs as predicated by the mind through the rules inherent in it. Kant's emphasis on the *a priori* is what leads him to the view of judgment as an act of subsumption. The object is represented as one and the same with the subject hence judgment becomes a unity of the two. The object is subsumed under the subject. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he quotes that 'if the understanding in general is explained as the faculty of rules, then the power of judgment is the faculty of subsuming under the rules i.e. of determining whether something stands under a given rule or not.'²²¹ Although he regards judgment as a unity of all higher representations, he goes ahead to claim that understanding and judgment are one and the same 'we can reduce all acts of understanding to judgments and the understanding may therefore be represented as knowing.'²²² Lonergan differs substantially with Kant on this perspective.

The problem with Kant's view is that he is not able to achieve what he set out in the beginning of the *Critique of Pure Reason* since the two acts of knowing, understanding and judgment become one and the same but as dictated by the subjective conditions of the mind. The implication is that knowledge is the same as taking a look (extension of *a priori* to external objects). Once one takes a look, one can claim to know. Such a perception is naïve in how it perceives knowledge. He therefore confines objectivity to the empirical level. Lonergan dismisses Kant on the basis that understanding and judgment while related and complement one another are two distinct acts. According to him, understanding yields concepts while judgment

takes the synthesis of the understanding and posits it in the absolute realm of being. Though Lonergan never rejected the possibility of the *a priori*, (he did not deny that what is known is a product of the mind but) he acknowledged its existence independent of the mind.

He demonstrates the *a priori* through reflective understanding which goes beyond formulation of concepts through abstraction accompanied by the question what is it? This view is also closely shared by Aristotle. 'Aristotle divides questions into four types: (1) what? What is it? (2) Is it? (3) Why is it so? (4) Is it so? 'Is it so?' and 'Is it?' are just factual questions, questions of existence. 'What is it?' and 'why is it so?' are questions for intelligence, questions of some definition of what exists.'²²³ Hence, intelligence, just like judgment and experience, are meaningless without questions. In support of this point, Lonergan says that 'the proper content of a judgment is its specific contribution to cognitional process is the answer 'Yes' or 'No' that is linked to reflective aspect where the yes or no is said to be so certainly or probably.'²²⁴

The question 'is it really so?' therefore, moves one from the level of mere possibility of understanding to the point of reflective understanding where one seeks to reflect on the possibility of certitude. In the quest for certitude, man asks the question 'Are you sure?' which enables him/her to reflect. This reflection is what makes a judgment reasonable. In the event that one does not have clear reasons, the judgments is said to be rash.²²⁵ This means that it is a jump from mere appearance, suspicion, subjective impression or prejudice to an affirmation of reality. Common instances of such cases include instances of mob justice, negative ethnicity and even racism. The opposite of a rash judgment is a rational judgment by which all assumptions are verified. It is only within reflective understanding that man is able to grasp sufficient evidence to make a firm conclusion about reality as true or false.

3.7 Judgment and Evidence: The Search for Certitude

In order to declare a proposition true or false, there has to be sufficient evidence to warrant a declaration. That means that man anticipates correct judgments. A judgment is only probable in the absence of sufficient evidence. Sufficient evidence qualifies the judgment to be rational. Such a judgment is reasonable. This is the case as demanded by logic. Epistemologically, grasping sufficient evidence is the act of reflective understanding. Here, one weighs and marshals the evidence in order to ascertain before he/she conclude that it is or is not the case. In view of the pure desire to know, he/she constantly seeks objective certitude. It is the search of absolute datum given to man through the idea of being; the totality of reality, all that there is and all that there can be (actual or possible). The search for certitude is not limited to neither experience nor to things that are not part of experience even God. Since being is absolutely universal, it provides the fulcrum for absolute certitude by allowing the question of truth or falsity, the question of assertion as expressed in the assertion that something is or exists; the identity of the what (essence) and the that (existence).²²⁶ For Gallagher, it is the unconditional in the order of assertion that makes possible the order of certitude.

Lonergan defines the activity of reflective insight in the assertion that 'to grasp evidence as sufficient for a prospective judgment is to grasp the prospective judgment as virtually unconditioned. The virtually unconditioned involves three elements namely a conditioned, a link between the conditioned and its conditions and the fulfilment of the conditions. Hence, a prospective judgment will be virtually unconditioned if it is the conditioned, its conditions are known and the conditions are fulfilled.'²²⁷ A prospective judgment is a judgment in the offing and is different from the formally unconditioned which is absolute and does not require any evidence to be complete. 'It depends on certain other conditions in order to be true. The term "virtually unconditioned" is used in the sense that the judgment is conditioned 'in virtue of the fact that there is sufficient evidence: It is unconditioned because conditions have, in fact, been fulfilled.'²²⁸ Cronin clarifies that the virtually unconditioned can also be referred to as the 'actually unconditioned' or 'factually unconditioned' or 'verified'. The virtually unconditioned is different from the

formally unconditioned. The formally unconditioned has no conditions whatsoever. It is necessarily true. God for him is a formally unconditioned since his existence is absolute.

A prospective judgment is conditioned by the fact that in the absence of sufficient evidence, it is inconclusive. It is a contingent truth then affirmed necessarily true, highly probable or merely possible depending on the assessment of the evidence and the link between the evidence and conclusion.²²⁹ These conditions can only be met in the event that the evidence provided is sufficient to declare the judgment true or false.

Lonergan expounds further that:

By the mere fact that a question for reflection has been put, the prospective judgment is a conditioned ; it stands in the need of evidence sufficient for reasonable pronouncements: The function of reflective understanding is to meet the question for reflection by transforming the prospective judgment from the status of a conditioned to the status of a virtually unconditioned.; and reflective understanding effects the transformation by grasping the conditions of the conditioned and their fulfilment.²³⁰

An example is, the deductive inference such that If A, then B. But A, therefore B (for instance, if the general elections were free and fair, then the president elect is legitimately in office. But the elections were free and fair therefore, the president elect is illegitimately in office). In order for the president elect to be declared illegitimately in office, the general elections must have not met the technical criterion to be declared free and fair in the light of sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion. The following is an illustration.

1. A conditioned. The prospective judgment that ‘the president elect Mr. X has won the 2013 General Elections.’
2. A link between the conditioned and its conditions. That for one to win an election, it must meet the technical requirements that suffice for a free and fair election.
3. The fulfilment of the conditions. That the elections were indeed free and fair given the evidence of the entire process.

4. The virtually unconditioned. Mr. X won the 2013 general presidential election.

The grasp of the sufficient evidence is what makes the judgment fulfil the conditions that make it indeed true, false or probable. 'Hence, sufficient evidence involves a link of the conditioned to it's conditions and a fulfilment of the conditions.'²³¹ This link is appears before the act of judgment at all times.

The link is present in all types of judgments, scientific, mathematical, concrete judgment of fact and common sense judgments. Hypothetical syllogisms and inductive arguments also follow this criterion. When further pertinent questions no longer arise between the conditioned and it's conditions concerning the link to any of the above judgments, then the insights are said to be invulnerable. Such an insight 'meets the issue squarely , hits the bull eyes, settles the matter so there are no further questions to be asked or further insights to challenge the initial position.'²³² This point is critical as it enables the study to respond to the skeptic on the critical problem by showing that justification of knowledge is indeed possible in the light of sufficient evidence through the virtually conditioned as a criterion of truth.

On the other hand, when the insight is vulnerable, there are further questions to be asked on the same issue. 'The further questions lead to further insights that certainly complement the initial insight that to a greater or lesser extent modify its expression to an entirely new slant on the issue.'²³³ Take for example, if the presidential results of the general elections were disputed, then the insight into the dispute ought not to raise any further pertinent questions concerning the discrepancies. If at all pertinent questions are raised concerning the disputed results, then there could be further insights that could indicate any other possibilities such as the process was constitutional, unflawed or with minor errors that do not warrant nullification of results. An invulnerable insight results to a correct judgment.

Vulnerable insights raise the probability of error in judgment and often, the error is caused by interference to satisfy other drives. Such interferences consist of bias, prejudice, greed and other vices depending on one's background or socio-cultural upbringing. These interferences prevent the way to true knowledge because they hinder objective judgment. Every bias is a prejudice, a pre-judgment or subjective judgment that which makes objective judgment redundant in its own eyes. However, every human being is in danger of bias since it is an unavoidable reality and is rooted in his/her concrete personalities and communities. It prevents man from seeing reality the way it is and instead, he/she want to see reality the way he/she wants to see it. This leads the study to the fact that man truly cannot escape subjectivity since as persons; he/she is conditioned by his/her background as an African, Kenyan, Luo, female and youth for examples. 'Each of us has many different identities: we identify ourselves by our family name, for example we have cultural and ethnic identities: we identify ourselves by our family name as we recognize ourselves as Japanese, French, and Canadian *et cetera*.²³⁴ Because of such identifications, it is difficult to obtain absolute objectivity.

In contrast, judgments always bear the connotation of truth. This implies that the nature of judgment is such that it ought to avoid error. 'If, judgment could of their very nature be erroneous, they would be beyond correction with universal skepticism resulting. The origin of error in the intellectual act is ultimately to be assigned to the will which can move the intellect to assent to a proposition with insufficient evidence; that is without first having fresh insight into experience.'²³⁵ Erroneous judgments are a result of the subjects own will not to transcend their subjective experience which also calls for intellectual honesty from a moral perspective. It is Socrates who first acknowledged the importance of such a dispensation when he stated famously that "I know that I don't know". The acknowledgement or judgment of one's ignorance is an indication of an *a priori* knowledge that presupposes elements of what one anticipates to know. It is a precondition necessary for all judgments.

3.7.1 The *A priori* of judgment

The search for certitude begins with the pure desire to know according to Lonergan. He states thus:

By the desire to know is meant the dynamic orientation manifested in questions for intelligence and for reflection. It is not the verbal utterance of questions. It is not the conceptual formulation of questions. It is not any insight or thought. It is not any reflective grasp or judgment. It is the prior and enveloping drive that carries cognitional process from sense and imagination to understanding, from understanding to judgment, from judgment to the complete context of correct judgments that is named knowledge. The desire to know, then, is simply the inquiring and critical spirit of man.²³⁶

It is the innate ability that enables the subject to reach out to the object and is expressed through critical questioning of reality. This is the same desire that the study has evaluated previously on ancient philosophers questioning Greek mythology in a bid to theoretically understand nature. Because of the subject's pure desire to know, the knowledge one seeks to acquire does not occur in a vacuum but it in the context of the object. Being and knowledge therefore cannot be divorced. Consequently, the knowledge we have is not knowledge of the subject but knowledge of the object as it is in itself.

Lonergan defines being as 'absolutely universal. Everything that exists is comprised by the term 'being', so that apart from the realm of realm of being, there is absolutely nothing. The spontaneously operative notion of being has to be placed in the pure desire to know.'²³⁷ Therefore, all that man seeks to know encompasses the totality of being. The pure desire to know is the 'dynamic orientation manifested in questions for intelligence and for reflection.'²³⁸ Just like hunger is an orientation to food, the desire to know is an orientation to truth.

In every such question, there is an element of the known and the unknown, as aspect of ignorance and a presupposition of what it is that should be known. Hence, the *a priori* is a pure pre-knowledge condition found within the subject that is intercepted in the object. It constitutes the transcendental condition of possibility of the question, and consequently of knowledge itself. This enables man to know the conditions of the virtually unconditioned, i. e the evidence that would warrant the affirmation of a

judgment. It is found in the mind and yet exists in the object. It's function is purely heuristic that is, an *a priori* devoid of cognitional content and designed to help one find that content in the object or a content-objective a priori. It is an *a priori* that is itself a cognitional content which the mind lays on the object. It is precisely the oversight to understand the *a priori* as functional that led to the extreme position of the rationalists and the idealists. Instead, it was viewed as content- subjective whereby objectivity of knowledge deepened on the mind's construction of the subject therefore; judgment is a subjective affirmation of the object. It is necessary hence to look at the connection of judgment to the subject.

3. 8 Judgment and the Subject

It is already stated that judgment takes place within the subject since declaring that I know would insinuate the judgment that 'I know that I know'. Newman expresses the subjectivity of the subject in an interesting way. He says that 'I am what I am, or I am nothing. I cannot think, reflect, or judge about my being, without starting from the very point which I aim at concluding. My only business is to ascertain what I am in order to put it to use. It is enough proof of the value and authority of any function that I possess, to be able to pronounce that it is natural.'²³⁹ The 'I' is the subject of impressions. The 'I' has the ability to know itself; who I am and what I have done. 'The 'I' awareness is possessed by the human alone. Other animals lack an inner awareness of their own personal history. Consequently, they do not study themselves nor do they strive to improve on their past record of achievements.'²⁴⁰ As the subject, one is not only capable of making judgments but also being aware of oneself as knowing being that affirming him/herself as an object. Lonergan calls it the self-affirmation of the knower, that is, individual passion, self-appropriation which means a personal discovery or embrace that leads to personal transformation.

'Self is the I, the concrete and intelligible –unity identity whole, the knower who is characterized by acts of sensing, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, grasping the unconditioned and judging.'²⁴¹ The subject plays a significant role in the attainment of any knowledge since the ways in which one

acquires knowledge all start and end with the self. Thus, man is not only capable of judging object of experience but also judging his/herself as a knower. This comes through the internal process of introspection, paying attention to what happens within consciousness when one is knowing. 'As intelligently conceiving, I am the subject; and as intelligently conceived, I am the object. Similarly, on the third level of judgment, as rationally reflecting, grasping the unconditioned and judging, I am the subject; but as affirmed in the judgment, 'I am a knower, I am part of the object.'²⁴² This claim presupposes that one cannot entirely isolate the subject from the object otherwise the activity of knowing would not take place. The centrality of the subject is strongly echoed by J.F. Ferrier that 'the one feature which is identical, invariable and essential in all the varieties of our knowledge; the standard factor that never varies while all else varies; the *ens unum in omnibus notitis* is the self: the 'I'.²⁴³ Therefore, the subject is the permanent attribute of all knowledge. One loses the founding stone if a purely objective stand is adopted as the 'I' is not subject to denial regardless of an objective or subjective opinion regarding knowledge.

Consequently the subject can judge itself as an object but the object, since it is not conscious of itself, cannot judge itself as an object despite its independent existence from the subject hence the judgment 'I am a knower' which is a concrete judgment of fact. In other words, the subject is always there as emphasized by epistemologists. The problem lies in the interpretation as to whether this object is being. Judgment possibly affirms the existence of the object.

3.9 Judgment and the Object

The fact that knowledge implies a knowing subject, also presupposes a known object. The judgment 'I know what it is' will almost always be natural to the question what do you know? Morelli and Lonergan observe that one knows something through judgment. Judgment produces the finality; it culminates to the product of knowledge. In judgment, man fully knowing or comprehends the object, reality, word, universe or being. The cognitional name for the object that includes absolutely everything is being. This being is the condition for the possibility of knowing. Its existence fuels

the unlimited desire in one to know it as it is. It is here that Lonergan fundamentally differed from Kantian subjective idealism and ushers in critical realism. Man is aware of the real and therefore, his/her questions are not restricted. It is not limited thus he/she constantly strives to know reality.

The distinction between the object and the subject lies in the act of knowing not as a confrontation of the subject with the object but 'a limited identity between knowers and what they know.'²⁴⁴ Lonergan holds that knowing is a result of experience of the sensible world or the knowing oneself, mediation between one's world and oneself through acts of understanding and judgment. He explains that while knowing is an identity between the knower and the correctly known object, it is not a perfect identity. This understanding of a limited identity helps us avoid a duality between the knower and the known such as Descartes' *Cogito, ergo sum*. So knowing is not a simple activity of looking at the given as Kant suggested. It consists of 'three transcending and functionally related activities.'²⁴⁵ That is experience, understanding and judgment yield to the full act of knowing.

Objective knowing according to Lonergan consists of:

Objective knowing not only requires an empirically given component and a second normative component (intelligibility), but also demands a third critical component. This critical component is the most important step since it transcends the prior two levels and transforms your thoughts and theories from plausible hypothesis about reality to critically verified explanations of what actually is and is actually operating in and through various schemes. Judging gives objectivity its fullness, its independence, its irrefutability. Judging commits you to a truth that is not only yours, but that it may belong to any knower who wishes to know it.²⁴⁶

Therefore, the problem comes in when knowing is confused with looking whereby the epistemological mistake will be taking the first level of empirical experience to substitute for the third critical level of judgment. The philosophical assumption is that, 'neither you, the subject, the objects nor reality can be immediately known' unless through the three level structure.²⁴⁷ Unlike Kant who confines objectivity to the empirical intuition, Lonergan extends it to intellectual and rational operations. One

can conclude thus that objectivity is not achieved in sense experience but only via subjecting the sense experience to questions of intelligence and to critical verification.

Lonergan emphasizes that one actually comes to full knowledge by affirming one's own reality when one makes the final correct judgment that he/she actually is. This judgment applies to every other object of knowledge. He elaborates that an objective judgment is reached through 'establishing a context of patterns which are a judgment of yourself as a knower; -a judgment of some other object; and a judgments of the distinction between the knowing subject and the known object –because the notion of objectivity involves an understanding of the way subjects and objects are related and distinguished.'²⁴⁸ Here, the study notes that indeed, a proper appreciation of the critical problem lies in the judgment that the subject and object exists and the differences and similarities between the subject and the object are equally crucial. This assertion differentiates Lonergan's position from his predecessors who almost ignore the similarity and difference of the subject object as significant in validating knowledge.

Therefore, objectivity comprises of the making judgments that transcend the already known subject to an object independently known and affirmed of the existing object. This view is expanded by Maritain Jacques, the father of Thomistic realism. He states that:

In the act of intellection, dependency with respect to the object is reconciled with active spontaneity, in this act, all the vitality comes from the subject or faculty, all the specification comes from the object, because at that instant when it knows, the intellect is immaterially the object itself, the knower in the act of knowing is the known itself in the act of being known. Before knowing, our intellect is a formless vitality waiting to be shaped, as soon as it has received from the senses, by means of its own abstractive power, the intelligible impression of the object, the intellect becomes that object, while carrying it, through the concept it produces of it, to the ultimate degree of formation and intelligible actuality in order at the same time to rise to its supreme point its own immaterial identification with the object.²⁴⁹

The theoretical framework of critical realism from the above perspective highlights the independence of the object even when apprehended by the subject. Critical realism affirms the existence of the object as existing in itself independent of the object. This independent nature is maintained when the subject and the object become immaterially one through insight and judgment affirms this new existence without losing the form neither of the object nor of the subject. Hence, in 'knowing, I subordinate myself to a being independent of me. I am conquered, convinced and subjugated by it. And the truth of my mind lies in its conformity to what is outside of it an independent of it.'²⁵⁰ Therefore, truth is what is objectively affirmed by the subject of the object through judgment which is formally in the object and in the subject despite the existence of the subject that knows it. As a result, there can be no truth without judgment. The two are concomitant.

3.10 Judgment and Truth

The study notes that a judgment is made up of propositions that contain truth values. That is, they are either true or false. For that reason, any judgment has a presupposed truth value. If truth is conformity of subject to the mind, then one's judgments are conditioned by some idealized sphere projected by the subject. If truth lies in the conformity of object with mind, then the truth lies in a correspondence of both subject and object to reality. Lonergan having been influenced by Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophies accounts for truth as 'the conformity or correspondence of the subject's affirmations and negations to what is and is not.'²⁵¹ Truth lies thus in the relationship with the object and subject that is structured only through experience, understanding and judgment between subject and object.

The criterion of truth for him lies in the 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 and the content of judgment has the stamp of the absolute.'²⁵² Since the content of judgment is unconditioned, it is independent of the subject and is a product of rational consciousness. 'Because the content of judgment is absolute, it's drawn from relativity to the subject that utters it, the place in which he

utters it; the time in which he utters it.’²⁵³ Whatever is true is true despite the person, place and time it is said. Therefore, if truth can be obtained from concrete judgments of fact such as ‘Caesar crossed the Rubicon’, then the mind can obtain cognitive self-transcendence, that is go beyond itself to the object.

In this case, truth is the totality of correct judgments. However, the remote criterion of arriving at this truth is the self –correcting process of learning. ‘It is the proper unfolding of the detached and disinterested desire to know’ so that we are constantly striving to know the truth.²⁵⁴ The subject habitually commits to the attainment of correct judgments. Should the subject become less interested in the genuineness of his inquiry and reflection, it shall be because of temperamental inclination to anxiety or individual or group bias.

The desire to know is pure when it seeks nothing but the truth. ‘It is objectivity as opposed to subjectivity of wishful thinking, of rash or exclusively cautious judgments, of allowing joy or sadness, hope or fear, love or detestation, to interfere with proper march of the cognitional process.’²⁵⁵ Unless in such instances, Lonergan shows that the mind is indeed capable of knowing the object that is transcendence ‘not in going beyond a known knower, but in reaching for being within which there are positive differences and, among such differences, the difference between object and subject.’²⁵⁶ As a result, Lonergan defines truth in relation to being giving a critical realist approach to the crucial problem. The *a priori* possibility of knowing becomes the only way out of subjectivity and access to objectivity of being which truth is. It enables truth to be communicated by subjects. Being as the object of knowledge, while remaining as an object of the subject, and therefore subjective, it is at the same time absolute and therefore independent of the subject that has produced it. From this perspective, one can infer that a judgment plays a critical role in the attainment of truth since it is in judgment that man affirms reality as it is really the case.

3.11 The Importance of Judgment

It immediately occurs that man cannot do without truth or falsity. The finality of a judgment is its truth value. These two are the most crucial elements in knowledge. While probability can emerge to certainty with time, certainty remains the case regardless of time. Due to truth or falsity of judgments, responsibility plays a major role in shaping one's knowledge with regard in the subject's contribution to the process. Judgment is important since it is the key to wisdom, the fruit of intellectual maturity where only time and effort accompany a mature judgment. This is reflected in man's daily interactions as with culture, politics, and science; with the universe and all it contains.

Kant also realizes subscribes an immense power and talent to the faculty of judgment which is a preserve of the few. For him, rules can only be understood but judgment can only be practiced.²⁵⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas also recognizes that both intellect and science depend upon the judgment of wisdom for their validity. 'Wisdom has to do with the knowledge of the real as real while it is judgment that we know reality. Wisdom therefore proceeds from the act of judgment.'²⁵⁸ Judgments leads humanity to the critical search and establishment of the truth which is at the core of human nature and forms the core of critical thinking which is the method and attitude of all philosophical endeavours. It is this critical mode that builds institutions and ensures their credibility. It is provides a basis for understanding human situation and plays a valuable operative function in human life. It is evident through actions and judgments people make relating to their lives. It enables one to critically interpret the pluralistic information generated by mass media. The lack of it leads to bias, conflict and anguish. Wisdom is consequently the core of all philosophies and even through it is practical and theoretical; it cuts across all human societies. The existence of wisdom is the evidence of the validity of all human knowledge.

3.12 Critical Remarks

In the critical analysis of the nature of judgment, one observes that logical and linguistic perspectives while revealing an aspect of judgment, challenges the study to

further explore the intrinsic nature of judgment in bridging the subject and object dichotomy. It is palpable then that a comprehensive account of judgment highlights that judgment is logical, linguistic but also epistemological as it is part and parcel of the hierarchy of cognitive acts that involves experience and understanding. Without judgment, one is not in a position to account for his/her knowledge be it subjective or objective since it is impossible to claim certainty. Without judgment, it is unfeasible to account for the truths of logic, linguistic analysis, political, religious, empirical, mathematical sciences and even philosophical bodies of knowledge and numerous other systems of knowledge.

These truths cannot be realised unless first through the understanding of the object – subject relationship. Given the concerns raised in the history of philosophy regarding the critical problem, one issue stands out: that of justification of knowledge. How does man know anything? What criteria do man use? Is his/her knowledge objective or subjective? This question is credited to the Sceptics and to Plato for defining knowledge as justified true belief and to Edmund Gettier for Challenging this position by claiming that there ought to be a fourth criterion of defeasibility. How does man justify the truth that he/she believes or assents to beyond any further doubt? In other words, how does one judge that what they claim to know is really the case? In other words, is it really so?

The question “is it really so” according to Lonergan’s view of judgment is the act of reflective understanding which seeks to grasp sufficient evidence through the virtually unconditioned that guarantees a judgement as true or false. In grasping sufficient evidence one is guided by the *a priori* which plays a heuristic function in connecting the subject with the object known while retaining the identity of the object so that, what one knows is in one’s mind (the subject) and also in the object as given. It is in this view of judgment that the study finds the indefeasibility criteria in the grasp of the virtually unconditioned. To deny this grasp is to use the same process of the experience, understanding and judgment.

The virtually unconditioned escapes the circular argument that begs the question in which the skeptic sets a trap by claiming there is no criterion of truth and meaning hence one must suspend judgment. The implication of the argument is that when one grasps the virtually unconditioned, then one has justified true belief as suggested by Plato. In essence, one has belief that is true and justified. Therefore, Plato already perceived what Lonergan would later justify as the virtually unconditioned which Plato did not state explicitly. It is realised that judgment is a synthesis of both the subject and the object in which both become immaterially one. Therefore, judgment does not occur in isolation of the subject or the object indicating that the two poles are intimately related into one unified whole that human beings call knowledge. The subject and the object are correlated.

3.13 Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, the study ardently looked at the definition, nature and structure of judgment. It looked at judgment from a psychological/phenomenological, logical, analytical and epistemological perspective whereby it took interest in showing how and why judgment occurs and how it relates to the subject and the object. The study has analysed judgment in a comprehensive manner highlighting the contributions of Brentano, Frege, and Kant while emphasizing Lonergan's perspective. The analytics contribute by highlighting the linguistic element of judgment, that judgment is expressed through language. Logicians contribute by revealing the structure of judgment. Epistemologists contribute through explaining the method by which man arrives at a judgment. The perceptions of the three on judgment determine one's theory of knowledge and truth. The strengths of the three perspectives at the same time, contribute to a comprehensive account of judgment.

It emerges then that the mistakes committed by the previous philosophers recline in their emphasis on either the subject or the object while neglecting the other and in the process, failing to understand the nature of judgment. They dichotomized knowledge to be either subjective or objective and were trapped in a never ending cycle of subjectivity and objectivity on one hand. Lonergan on the other hand sees the unity of

both the subject and the object while appreciating their distinctness. The solution to the critical problem therefore lies in one's ability to recognize that metaphysical reality presupposes not only one's knowledge of the object but his/her subjective experience of it as well. The premise changes thus from the claim that either knowledge is subjective or objective to knowledge is both subjective and objective and both contribute to certainty or uncertainty. This relationship between the subject and the object is experienced introspectively and observed in the cognitive act of experience, understanding and judgment. Therefore judgment becomes the synthesis of the object and the subject posited in the realm of being and expressed in the finality of man's knowing.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary

Throughout this research, it has been prominent that the problem of human knowing is as perennial as the grass cutting across all centuries from ancient Greece to contemporary philosophers. The study has observed in particular the problem of subjectivity and objectivity of human knowing whereby knowledge is classified to be either based on the subject's predicaments or the essence of the object's existence. These has emanated from the basic question as to whether man is indeed capable of cognitive self-transcendence. This study has primarily been concerned with Lonergan's project of *Insight* and other forms of epistemology which has entailed an analysis of a diverse range of other scholars.

In response to the questions raised by the critical problem, the study shows that the trends that emerged can be categorized into four aspects that answer the question in the affirmative or the negative. The responses that judge in the negative include first, the radical skepticism of the Greek philosophers such as Plato, the ancient skepticism such as Protagoras and Gorgias who proposed that man should suspend judgment since he/she cannot attain certitude. Second is the subjective idealism of Descartes who conceived of his senses as deceiving him. He doubted the value of sense experience and consequently dismissed all knowledge as unreliable. In the process, he contradicted himself by ascertaining that the only absolute truth was that man is incapable of achieving certainty of anything except for his/her existence as a thinking being 'I think, therefore I am'. In his search for validity and certitude, he ended up locked in subjectivity.

Third is Kant's critical idealism which attempts to provide a positive answer to the critical problem by claiming that one can achieve objectivity. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant fails when he denies the same objective he sets out to achieve; that of proving cognitive self-transcendence. Meanwhile naïve realism gives the affirmative answer that it is possible for man to obtain objectivity by simply taking a look so that

knowing is the same as taking a look. This view was propounded by the British empiricists, Locke, Hume, logical positivist and their followers who subscribe to the view that truth is that which is verified by the senses. Their response is however uncritical since it does not take into account the hierarchy of cognitive faculties of experience, understanding and judgment where experience is the beginning and judgment is the final and critical level of knowing.

Critical observation has led the study to Lonergan's cognitional theory which also answers the question in the affirmative. The focus has been on his aspect of judgment which is a grasp of the virtually unconditioned that presents sufficient evidence. The virtually unconditioned informs the *a priori* that makes understanding possible propelled by the desire to want to know being which is facilitated by the question 'what is it', 'why is it?', 'is it really so' and answered by the form 'Yes' or 'No'. Since judgment is a mental process, and as such affirms or denies reality as Lonergan puts it, the study tries to understand its nature on a larger scale from a multidisciplinary perspective. In order to highlight the significance of Lonergan's notion of judgment, the study explored how other philosophers such as Kant, Brentano and Frege have understood judgment of which they make relevant contributions though their theories are deficient in one way or another in exposing the contribution of judgment to the cognitive process.

The notion of judgment has demonstrated the role of the subject in the dynamic process and that of the object as both being relevant to the act of cognition whereby; the relationship is not confrontational but complimentary and furthermore not perfectly identical. In this type of view, the critical problem is not dissolved as insoluble but *real* and applicable by recognizing that if one can arrive at knowledge of the subject (self-knowledge), then in the same manner, one can arrive at knowledge of the object. All this is possible through correct judgments in which truth is formally found. To this extent, it is demonstrated that Lonergan's cognitional theory and especially notion of judgment is foundational and offers an alternative solution to the

perennial critical problem which contemporary philosophers have not adequately addressed.

4.2 Conclusion

The study ascertains that failure by various philosophers to resolve the critical problem has been due to the difficulty in understanding the dynamic human cognitive process and its operations of sensing, understanding and grasping the virtually unconditioned and finally validating the unconditioned in judgment. This difficulty has led to the holding of extreme positions that either emphasise the subject or the object. Their conclusions were however radically different. Some adopted the view that knowledge is subjective, others knowledge is objective and others knowledge is both subjective and objective but more subjective or more objective. The over emphasis on either aspect was perhaps influenced and conditioned by the varying socio-cultural environments and times in which the various philosophers lived. Regardless of their temporal backgrounds and philosophical inclinations, the critical problem which is the epistemological concern whether man can obtain objectively valid knowledge persists and remains a relevant contemporary philosophical question which requires persistent interrogation.

The research appreciates that there is an intrinsic epistemological relationship between the subject and object in which no one aspect cannot overrides the other; a view supported by Archie Bham in his book *Epistemology: Theories of Knowledge*. His view can be summed up thus that in addition to minds, the real world and human bodies, each of which has its own contribution to make to certainty and uncertainty, man needs to recognise the role of his/her efforts to adapt to the apparently real world both in appropriating its apparent benefits and avoiding its apparent evils and in attempting to control it, exploit it, to produce more benefits from it and to be more successful in avoiding its apparent evils. Both the subject and object contribute to the certainty or lack of it hence have a direct relationship to the way in which man exploits the world, reaps from its benefits and avoids the challenges that emerge from within it.

The confidence in man's abilities to solve problems lies in one's successful interpretation of the critical problem in the search for objective certitude. In this regard therefore, both the subject and object play significant roles in how man generates knowledge and how man makes use of the resources within his/her environment hence contributing to the nature of knowledge. Creative problem solving proposals are expressed through wise judgments made within and without the socio-cultural contexts man finds him/herself in.

The study obtains that judgment is not only a logical synthesis of subject and predicate but also a fusion of the immanent identity of the subjective and objective poles of the cognitive act as existing independent and interdependent truths. The judgments man makes therefore are significantly important in the philosophical field as well as other branches of knowledge and expertise such as sciences i.e., medicine, religion, business, politics, education and research and environment in considering what is judged to be true or false. The critical problem has a direct role to play in shaping other sciences.

The perspective of the critical problem one adopts has a direct influence on what one perceives to be true. A good example is opinion polls conducted by public and private research institutions to determine a subject of concern for example the popularity of a given presidential candidate or a market product. If the researches hold a subjective account of knowledge, that reality is that which is absolutely in the mind, the outcome is unlikely to be objective. This is because the researches would be prejudiced towards the outcome of the research given also the influence of the political environment on the company contracting the research institution.

Other examples include baseline surveys conducted by institutions such as civil society organizations to identify problems and best possible interventions within a specific target group. Here, questions for intelligence and reason are extremely important in the search for a certain and relevant strategy. The interventions would be ineffective unless subjected to an understanding and judgment based on the concrete

experience to ascertain that the approach taken to solve the problem, for example civic ignorance, would be appropriate.

Religion and science are also not exempted from the search for certitude. In the quest to know and understand God, many interpretations have crystallised, leading to illegal sects and cults associated with terrorism. Such extreme interpretations are a global problem that are conditioned by socio-cultural contexts and manifest themselves in many different ways. In the case of religion, human beings seek to condition the “formally unconditioned” (God) in their own relative way. This leads to believers perceiving non-believers as not fulfilling certain conditions in order to be deemed faithfully right leading to religious wars and global conflicts. Scientific theories are constantly changing and technology in the treatment of endemic diseases such as cancer, HIV/AIDS among many other chronic illnesses which pose a threat to human life. New drugs are frequently invented that advance treatments to a higher level in the continued search to precisely treat the diseases.

The study further establishes that global problems are related to the critical problem. These global trends include unfair trade between developed and developing world through exploitation of natural resources from developing countries by developing nations. Plurality, often partial media messages that take sides with the privileged or shifts towards the underprivileged when it favours the media. These examples demonstrate how the approach towards the critical problem is important in generating practical knowledge is necessary for addressing global problems, for example, if the search for certitude is impaired by one’s approach to the critical problem, then his/her knowledge outcomes will of necessity be impaired by his/her bias towards subjective and objective solutions. Such biases can only exacerbate global injustice and unfairness.

By questioning the ability of man to achieve cognitive self-transcendence and how it affects the human enterprise, epistemology places a crucial task especially in learning institutions particularly in higher learning institutions. The central argument is that the transcendental method of experience, understanding and judgment also known as the generalised empirical method is implicit in all philosophical pursuits hence critical in

the passing of knowledge in learning institutions. Learning institutions can in the pursuit of certitude contribute to solving national and international problems if they adapted an unbiased approach to the critical problem. This explains why the critical problem is critical in obtaining certitude in all sciences as well as art studies.

This structure of human knowing is invariant and implicit in both subjective and objective inclinations towards reality whether advanced by the skeptic, relativist, objectivists, idealist, subjectivist, empiricist, rationalist, logical positivist, hermeneutic, existentialist, scientist *et cetera*. It contributes to all concrete situations one can envisage. The process, in every case, is incomplete unless the question for verification, reasonableness, truth and consequently certitude is asked "Is it really so?" This is the grasp of the virtually unconditioned. It is obtained through subjective authenticity where man appreciates himself/herself first and foremost as a being capable of knowing his/her own reality and knowing the truth. It is for this reason, that one can know other truths outside the subject. Without the primary affirmation of man as a knowing being capable of knowing himself/herself (subject), he/she would not be capable of knowing the object and so the search for certitude would become a farfetched enterprise. Without the affirmation of the objective existence of reality, there is no metaphysics which consequently translates to the dissolution of epistemology, logic and ethics since man cannot attain knowledge of absolute moral principles because they exist only in the subjects mind. Cognitive self transcendence is therefore the beginning of all philosophical and scientific endeavours.

4.3 Recommendations

The study recommends that:

1. Lonergan's solution to the critical problem is based on the assumption that the virtually unconditioned exists independent of the mind and one can obtain objectivity by being faithful to subjectivity. The study recommends that further studies should attempt to provide insight into and unearth the nature of the virtually unconditioned from different conceptual frameworks to determine its absoluteness as distinctly independent from the conditioned.

2. Further research should explore how an understanding of judgment can contribute to averting conflicts that stem from subjective inclinations towards reality in the pursuit for certitude hence provide practical knowledge solutions to the pluralistic society.

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