

A Normative Examination of Truth and Belief

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Abstract

The claim that truth is a norm of belief is prevalent among many philosophers. The proponents of this claim argue that belief aims at truth, and our objective for believing a proposition or an assertion is to create true beliefs. Some philosophers, however, disagree with this claim. Although the latter acknowledge the link between belief and truth, they reject the notion that this link is normative in nature. Moreover, they oppose any inherent connection between truth and belief, insisting that this connection lacks any normative element. Thus, the main source of disagreement among these philosophers is how to understand the precise relationship between truth and belief on the one hand, and the extent to which truth regulates belief on the other hand. This paper consists of two interrelated objectives. Firstly, the paper examines the reasons for the claim that belief aims at truth and argues that there are good grounds to justify this claim. The second objective is a consequence and extension of the first. Employing the analytical, evaluative and critical methods of research, this paper distinctly discusses the relationship between truth and belief from a teleological perspective. It shows how truth functions as the goal of belief by inspiring the believer. The paper acknowledges that truth may not always be the only aim of belief. However, it strongly asserts that even in cases where other aims of belief are present, belief primarily aims at truth. It is expected that this research will lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the function of truth in the formation of belief. This will further enable the reader become more aware of the normative value of truth.

Keywords: Normativity, Truth, Belief, Minimalism, Deflationism, Equivalence schema

Introduction

One of the interesting topics in philosophy is the idea that thought and meaning are normative in character. This idea can be traced to Wittgenstein's proposal that to have a particular idea or to grasp the meaning of a word is to attach an evaluative disposition to it- that is, to have a right or wrong usage of it.¹ Similarly, a contentious topic in epistemology is the question concerning the epistemic certainty and validity of beliefs. The question concerning what one ought to belief deals with two essential presuppositions. The first presupposition is that it is possible to provide a normative standard for beliefs. The second presupposition is that philosophy can/should provide the answer to the question concerning what we ought to believe.²

In addition, the claim that truth is a basic norm of beliefs or assertions is a common idea in philosophical circles. Philosophers like Dummett and Frege support this particular view about the relationship between truth and beliefs.³ Frege, for instance, states the aim of science when he argues that " {a}ll sciences have truth as their goal;To discover truths is the task of all sciences...."⁴

This paper discusses the nature of truth and belief and illustrates the normative link between them. It argues in favour of the idea that truth is the aim of belief and evaluates the degree to which beliefs are connected to truth. It analyses the question of the value of truth, exploring the fascinating relationship between the value of truth and the goal of belief.

What are Beliefs?

One of the most fundamental characteristics of the mind is the forming of beliefs.

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1. Pascal Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?" In *Interpreting Davidson*, ed. Kotatko, Pagin (Stanford: CSLI, 2001), 37.
 2. Anna K. Edmonds, "Epistemic Norms and the Normativity of Belief" (PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 2018), 1.
 3. Barry Loewer, "The Value of Truth," *Philosophical Issues* 4 (1993): 265, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1522845>.
 4. Gottlob Frege, "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry," *Mind* 65 (July 1956):289, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2251513>

Beliefs are psychological dispositions of approval to an assertion or a proposition. They are mental inclinations that people have when they regard something to be accurate or in accordance with reality or fact. Ludwig states that "Beliefs are a species of propositional attitude distinguished by their having the mind-to-world direction of fit."⁵

Basically, to believe that something corresponds to the state of affairs is to believe a proposition. This indicates that to believe people means to believe in the proposition that they utter or promote. To believe a scientific theory is to believe the propositions that the theory consists of. To believe in heaven means to believe in the proposition that there is heaven. Thus, belief is said to be a propositional attitude.⁶ What, then, is a propositional attitude? For Schwitzgebel, propositional attitude is, "the mental state of having some attitude, stance, take, or opinion about a proposition or about the potential state of affairs in which that proposition is true—a mental state of the sort canonically expressible in the form “*S* *A* that *P*”, where *S* picks out the individual possessing the mental state, *A* picks out the attitude, and *P* is a sentence expressing a proposition.”⁷

As mental states, propositional attitudes like beliefs consist of two main factors—psychological modes and psychological contents. If I believe that Jesus died on the cross, for instance, the content is Jesus died on the cross while belief is the mode. In addition, a good number of propositional attitudes like beliefs, desires and intentions consist of dual essential features. For example, beliefs are either true or false, desires are fulfilled or unfulfilled. This indicates that propositional attitudes like beliefs and desires possess a pattern of conformity that is either from the world

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5. Kirk Ludwig, "Belief," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Second Edition, ed. Donald M. Borchert (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2006), 531
 6. Victor Terras, "Belief," in *The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig (New York: Routledge, 2005), 88.
 7. Eric Schwitzgebel, "Belief," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2024 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman.
<<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2024/entries/belief/>>.

to the mind or the mind to the world. Beliefs, unlike other psychological attitudes like desires have a pattern of conformity of the mind to the world.⁸ Belief cannot translate into knowledge unless the truth of the proposition in question is apparent to the one holding the belief. Consequently, we can differentiate beliefs based on "their degree of certainty: a surmise or suspicion, an opinion, or a conviction."⁹

The concept of Truth

The concept of truth is one of the oldest and complex topics in philosophy. Thus, there are different theories of truth as well as various and distinct philosophical opinions concerning the idea of truth. The Correspondence, Coherence, Pragmatic, Epistemic are some of the popular theories of truth in philosophy. Like most philosophical issues, it is difficult for philosophers to agree on a comprehensive and common account of the concept of truth. However, one of the most popular theories of truth among many philosophers in the history of philosophy is the correspondence theory of truth.¹⁰ For this reason, and because of the topic under discussion, the correspondence theory of truth will be given more attention in this paper. Notwithstanding its popularity, the correspondence theory has its many problems and critics.

Correspondence Theory

The correspondence theory of truth was the most philosophically accepted idea of truth in philosophy for an extended period of time. In its general form, it emphasises the connection between truth and actual reality. It states that the truth of a proposition is in its conformity with reality or some aspect of it. That is, something is true if what it correctly describes and pictures is in agreement with, expresses or conforms to the real world or part of it- an utterance is true if and only if it expresses

8. Ludwig, "Belief," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 531.

9. Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Belief," *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

10. Panu Raatikainen, "Truth and Theories of Truth," in *The Cambridge Handbook of the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Piotr Stalmaszczyk (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 217.

a true proposition. The primary bearers of truth are propositions. For example, the declarative proposition 'the dog is outside' is true if and only if the dog is outside. The sentence, grass is green' is true, but the sentence 'snow is blue' is false. This means that the truth value of a statement is affected by the ways things are in reality. This view of truth can be seen in the writings of ancient and modern philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, and Hume.

The modern classical expression of the correspondence idea of truth does not emphasise 'reality', state of affair' or 'fact'. Its emphasis, instead, is on the 'object of the judgement'. Bertrand Russell emphasises the notion of "facts corresponding to a belief" in his classical correspondence definition. His definition links the truth value of a belief with the correlation of facts. He states that "a belief is true when there is a corresponding fact, and is false when there is no corresponding fact".¹¹ Many writers have pointed out the many problems of the corresponding theory. The affirmation of the existence of facts by proponents of the correspondence theory raises certain questions about the nature of these facts. The first question is: What are the reasons for the existence of these facts? Secondly, what is the practical relevance of these facts?¹²

Deflationism and Truth

For some philosophers, truth is a strong property that should be considered and examined in the same category as concepts like coherence, pragmatic and correspondence. Conversely, some other philosophers think that truth should be seen as a weak attribute, and suggest a deflationary or minimalist interpretation for truth. They insist that as a weak attribute, truth does not entail or include more than what is represented and conveyed by the equivalence schema or disquotational schema ("q" is true if and only if q). Thus, any effort to explain or understand truth more than what is expressed by the Equivalence Schema according to them, is to add

11. Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, (London: Williams and Norgate, 1912), 61.

12. Raatikainen, "Truth and Theories of Truth," 217.

more meaning to the concept of truth than what the theory of minimalism permits.¹³ It is not surprising that Paul Horwich, one of the main contemporary proponents of the deflationary theory of truth opposes the suggestion of Crispin Wright and Dummett. This is because of Dummett's claim that since truth is "a norm of our assertoric practice", the deflationary theory of truth should be 'inflated' so that it can comfortably fit this fact.¹⁴

Crispin Wright calls his position 'minimal truth' (Minimalism) in order to distinguish it from other deflationary positions, particularly the deflationary version of Horwich. He accepts the position of the minimalists that truth has a thin property and does not include more than the content of the equivalence schema. In other words, our propositions are true if things are the way they say they are, and every proposition has a corresponding negation. However, Wright insists that the equivalence schema does not exhaust everything that can be said concerning the word 'true'.¹⁵ He argues that the deflationist position "is actually inconsistent with the distinctively deflationist corollary, that "true" expresses no real property but is merely a device of disquotation. (Of course, it can express a real property and be a device of disquotation.)"¹⁶

Davidson seems to agree with the minimalists that truth is a thin attribute, although he rejects Horwich's version of minimalism. Davidson believes that the concept of truth cannot be defined. He claims that any attempt to add more content into the meaning of truth more than the formal feature of the equivalence schema is an effort to give an additional definition to a concept that cannot be defined or explained.¹⁷ For Davidson, "[i]t may seem pointless to make so much of the drive to define truth when it is unclear who is trying to do it: not Tarski, who proves it can't be done; not

13. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?" 37.

14. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?" 37.

15. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?", 40.

16. Crispin Wright, *Truth and Objectivity*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 13-15.

17. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?", 39.

Horwich, who disclaims the attempt. Who, then, admits to wanting to define the concept of truth?"¹⁸

What are Norms?

The concept of normativity as it applies to truth and meaning is both complex and vague. This is because the concept of normativity itself does not tell us if truth has other attributes apart from its normative content. The attribution of the term 'normativity' to truth does not indicate that the normative feature of truth is all there is to know about truth. Also, it does not specify the extent to which truth is normative.¹⁹ What does the normativity of truth indicate? In what way is truth normative? Engel clarifies:

When we talk about the 'normative' character of truth are we saying that its normative property or (properties) exhaust the concept, or are essential to it, or are we merely saying that truth has, among other (non-normative) properties, some normative properties as well? And if there are any such properties, do we want to say that they enter this concept directly or that they enter merely indirectly? If truth is 'normative' what kind of norm is it, and in what sense is this norm attached, or implicated, by the very concept of truth?²⁰

From an epistemic perspective, the word 'norm' can be understood in two different ways. Firstly, truth can be seen as a norm of belief and assertion. In this sense, to believe or to assert something is to take it as true. Secondly, truth can be regarded as the objective or purpose of inquiring, a goal people should strive to attain or reach. In addition, one of meanings attached to the use of the word 'true' is "sense of approval" and implies that people have the responsibility and obligation to accept true beliefs and assertions. It indicates, as Engel notes,

18. Donald Davidson, "The Folly of Trying to Define Truth," in *Truth, Language and History*, (New York: Oxford: University Press, 2005), 34.

19. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?", 43.

20. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?", 43.

that there is some element of normative appraisal, or some action-guiding implication, in the concept of truth itself. For it is often said that one of the ordinary uses of the word 'true' is an endorsing use: saying that something is true, or adding to a given assertion: 'And that's true', seems to imply that the speaker praises his assertion, and enjoins his hearer to believe it or to take it as worth asserting.²¹

Apart from 'sense of approval' the word 'true' has other connotations attached to its use. These connotations tell us the ways in which the word 'norm' is used or understood in daily life, particularly in ethics and law. These instances will enable us grasp and recognize the normative consequences of the notion of truth. The first normative significance is deontic in nature. It involves certain notions like correctness, rightness, responsibility, necessity, ought, and so on. These notions regulate actions, and thus indicates that a suitable reaction be made to the standards, restrictions, and authorizations of the notions in question. The second form of the notion of normativity consists of concepts that are prescriptive or evaluative in nature. It consists of concepts like good, right, sensible, desirable, beneficial, useful and so on. These concepts do not consist of any reaction in the form of function to be carried-out by a person. However, they consist of emotional and mental dispositions.²²

Therefore, some philosophers believe that the concept of truth itself contains certain normative attributes or evaluative features. This idea about truth illustrates that to believe that something is true is to give it a sense of approval. Consequently, it is believed that the speaker who expresses a true statement expects others not only to accept it but also believe it as true. It is imperative to ask: Are listeners duty bound to accept or believe what a speaker declares to be true? Do such applications of the word 'true' involve any form of obligation? It is worth noting that there are

21. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?", 43.

22. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?", 43-45.

philosophers who disagree with the understanding of the word 'true' as approval or obligation. They argue that there are instances in which an understanding of the word 'true' does not involve any kind of obligation. Furthermore, these philosophers state that an acceptance of the normativity of truth does not in any way involve any obligation to carry out an action or fulfil a function. The line of argument is that there are certain truths that we do not wish or intend to believe or assert, and as such have no responsibility to believe.²³

Truth and Belief

It is a common view among many philosophers that the notion of belief is primarily normative, and that this normativity is based on a particular criterion of correctness. This criterion is truth. In other words, if one believes a true proposition, then "it is appropriate to say that such a belief is "right" or "correct". On the contrary, if one says that she believes that p and p turns out to be false, we say that that person is wrong, that his belief is incorrect."²⁴

This follows that a belief can be said to be right or correct if and only if the particular assertion or belief is true (that is if that particular belief corresponds to reality or the way things are in the world). Specifically, to believe a proposition A is to believe that A is true. It implies that if one believes a particular proposition or assertion, then one is required to follow a specific criterion that makes one's belief correct or incorrect. The idea that the criterion of correctness is normative is evident in the concept of music and melody. One who performs a song, for instance is 'guided' by a specific standard and the song is judged to be correct or incorrect if certain rules are followed or obeyed. It is expected that the notes are played in a specific pattern and order and the keys follow a particular tempo and melodic movement. This criterion demands that one is obliged to behave in a certain way or that things should be carried out in a

23. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?", 44-45.

24. Davide Fassio, "Belief, Correctness and Normativity," *Logique Et Analyse* 54 (2011):471, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232250408>.

particular way in order to meet certain criterion of correctness.²⁵ This analogy between melody and correctness has interesting consequences. This is because this criterion of correctness, as Fassio observes, "puts an 'ought' on the performance of a song; it says how a song *ought* to be played according to a certain standard. The same seems to be the case for the standards of correct chess-play, correct assertion, correct behaviour, and so on. Therefore, standards of correctness are normative, at least in the sense that they imply some 'ought'-claim."²⁶

The foregoing paragraph affirms the idea that norms regulate beliefs. To accept this claim is to accept that there exists a pattern or rule that beliefs should follow when they are created or renounced. However, this claim implies something more than the mere acknowledgement of a standard or pattern. Owens explains:

Most writers would agree that beliefs are governed by norms, that there is a right way and a wrong way of forming and relinquishing beliefs. 'Being governed by norms' has at least two connotations. First there is the idea that these norms should guide beliefs' comings and goings. Second there is the idea that where these norms are violated, it is (generally) appropriate to criticize the believer for this. ? Criticism seems like an appropriate reaction to an (illicit) threat to some human interest, either one's own or someone else's.²⁷

So, when it is said that the aim of belief is truth, the point being stressed is that the concept of truth is intrinsic to the notion of belief. Engel gives a comprehensive explanation of this inherent link. He states that when we say that belief aims at truth what we mean is this:

that the concept of truth is constitutive of the concept of belief, in the

25. Fassio, "Belief, Correctness and Normativity," 471

26. Fassio, "Belief, Correctness and Normativity," 471

27. David Owens, "Value and Epistemic Normativity," in *Normativity and Control* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 87

following sense: if one has good reasons (is justified) to believe that P, then one has thereby good reasons (is justified) to believe that P is true. The concept of truth goes with the concept of good reason, or of justification for belief. Reason or justification for belief is reason or justification for truth.²⁸

A logical analysis of the two essential elements of belief provides a better and clearer understanding of the claim that belief aims at truth. The first element, known as the 'standard of correctness', is the idea that beliefs are either accurate or inaccurate, good or bad, correct or incorrect.²⁹ What is the foundation of this normative evaluation? It is the conviction "that belief has a goal which it is striving towards, or a function which it is seeking to discharge. A correct belief is one which attains its goal and discharges its function."³⁰

The second element, known as the 'doxastic assessment of epistemic norm', is the idea that beliefs can be justifiable or unjustifiable, reasonable or unreasonable. It explains the fact that reasonable beliefs are good while unreasonable beliefs are bad. It is essential to point out that the idea that beliefs can be reasonable is not solely reliant on the criterion of correctness since an incorrect belief can be reasonable while a correct belief can be unreasonable.³¹ By merging these two elements of belief (Standard of correctness and doxastic assessment) we discover "that the standard of correctness for belief and the epistemic norms governing the acquisition of belief are connected as follows: the standard of correctness for belief sets a goal and epistemic norms are instructions about how to reach that goal."³²

As a propositional attitude, beliefs' pattern of conformity is from the mind to the world. This is one of the reasons why the aim of a belief is to give an objective depiction of the world. Because the aim of belief is truth, it becomes irrational to

28. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?" 47.

29. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?" 283.

30. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?" 283.

31. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?" 283.

32. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?" 283

hold on to a belief that is contrary to how things are in the world.³³ This shows that belief performs its function correctly if attention is given to the confirmation/evidence of the believer when a belief is being formed and preserved. The emphasis on the role of evidence in belief is not an indication that beliefs and evidence are proportionate. It is also not an indication that our evidences are always accurate or that we do not err in our judgement or evaluation. What it indicates, as Ludwig rightly states, is "that belief, by its nature, aims at truth, that its function is undermined if one lets belief formation be sensitive to anything other than what one takes to be evidence. Where there is uncertainty, one may be conservative and persist in a belief. But not to give up a belief in the face of strong contrary evidence is irrational."³⁴

The Value of Truth

Why should we place so much value on truth? If truth is valuable, what does this value denote? The claim that truth is valuable can be understood in two ways.³⁵ The first is that a belief itself is correct or accurate as long as it has a true content. To support this claim is to assert that truth is the primary norm of belief. On this point, it is important to note that truth is not necessarily the only norm of belief or the only pathway through which a particular belief can be correct. Thus, beliefs can also be correct through justification, and this probably explains why it is possible to have erroneous or incorrect beliefs. There are times when certain values can be more significant than other essential values. Truth is not an exception. Lynch explains writes:

Thus the correctness of believing what is true must be *pro tanto*: it is always

33. Ludwig, "Belief," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 531

34. Ludwig, "Belief," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 535.

35. Michael Patrick Lynch, "Pragmatism and the Price of Truth," in *Meaning Without Representation- Essays on Truth, Expression, Normativity, and Naturalism*, ed. Gross, Tebben, Williams (Oxford: Oxford University, 2015), 246.

correct but not always correct all things considered. In this way, cognitive norms like justification and truth are no different than most norms or values. Keeping one's promises is always pro tanto right, but it is not always right all things considered, as everyone knows. Sometimes a pro tanto value is outweighed by other values, and so it is with truth.³⁶

The second meaning of the claim that truth is valuable is contained in an attempt to answer the question, 'why should we be concerned about true or correct beliefs?' The answer is pretty clear- we should care about correct or true beliefs because it is good to do so. This means that "we should strive to reach it while engaging in any practice aimed at producing beliefs. Inquiry is one such practice. So having true beliefs is, as it were, a worthy goal of inquiry, the practice of figuring out what to believe."³⁷

Additionally, the claim that truth is the aim of belief can be justified from a teleological perspective. We can do this by drawing attention to the normative character of the link between belief and truth. This entails that to say that truth is the aim of belief is to say, in a way, that truth is the goal of belief. Thus, the power of normativity that exists between truth and belief is the same power that is found between a goal and its object. In the same way, a person who has a particular goal is propelled to make effort to achieve it.³⁸ Truth is like a goal that inspires a believer to try to obtain he believes.

So, every belief consists of a rational normative foundation that is teleological in nature. This means that the criterion of correctness of a belief describes the level of accomplishment that a belief is expected to possess so as to achieve its desired goal. Shah elucidates how truth is the aim of belief by using the analogy of a building project.³⁹ The main reason why a person would embark on the project of building a

36. Lynch, "Pragmatism and the Price of Truth," 246

37. Lynch, "Pragmatism and the Price of Truth," 246

38. Nishi Shah, "How Truth Governs Belief," *Philosophical Review* 112 (October 2003): 459

39. Shah, "How Truth Governs Belief," 459-460.

house is to give shelter. Although one may have other reasons for embarking on such a project, the desire to give shelter is always paramount and basic. Similarly, in creating a belief, a believer should be regulated by the desire of believing only that which is true. This is important criterion for giving serious consideration to the pursuit of the believer. Like the concept of shelter in the analogy of the building project, truth is an essential criterion of correctness in the structure of belief.⁴⁰

Evaluation

Admittedly, the acceptance of the claim that truth is the aim of belief has certain philosophical implications. Most importantly, it can imply that truth is a fundamental aim of belief such that a mental state or a propositional attitude can only be considered a belief if it aims at truth. Another interesting implication of the notion that truth is the norm of belief is that truth is the yardstick by which the correctness of beliefs is measured.⁴¹

As a result, many thought-provoking and coherent objections have been raised concerning the claim that beliefs aim at truth. These objections have come from philosophers like Donald Davidson who disagree with the idea that truth is a norm. They argue that the concept of truth does not possess any inherent value and that it is not valuable to have true beliefs. Engel seems to argue in favour of this position when he notes that we tend to "believe all sorts of things, some rational, some irrational, some justified, some unjustified, some true, some false, and there is no particular norm that we follow, no particular prescription that we obey and no particular sanction that we incur when we go off track."⁴²

The preceding philosophical position seems to imply that it is not essential to

40. Shah, "How Truth Governs Belief," 459-460.

41. Fileva Iskra, "What Does Belief Have to Do with Truth?" *Philosophy* 93 (2018): 338, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26538265>.

42. Pascal Engel, "Belief and Normativity." *Disputatio* 2 (November 2007): 179, doi: 10.2478/disp-2007-0009.

make sure that our beliefs are true. It also suggests that it is pointless to make attempts or efforts at discovery truth because this search would be a fruitless one.

⁴³This paper asserts that this philosophical position is untenable because it has far reaching consequences not only for belief, knowledge and morality, but also some vital philosophical disciplines like epistemology, philosophy of science and philosophy of logic- it threatens their foundation and validity. ⁴⁴

It is also noteworthy that some philosophers (like Richard Rorty and Stephen Stich) reject the claim that truth is valuable. They contend that truth is not value or goal to be pursued. They argue that there are particular truths we never wish to believe or assert probably because these truths are insignificant, inconsequential or difficult to fathom or unravel. A good example of this is the research that indicates that there are between 100,000 to 150,000 hairs on the human head. This instance, they contend, shows that people do not just believe every truth they come across. This also suggests that we are not obliged in any way to believe such truth. The point here is that the claim that truth is a norm from a deontological perspective is bizarre or ridiculous. Why should the concept 'norm' be understood as 'value'? These philosophers insist that it is strange to claim that we desire, treasure or cherish every true belief. This is because some true beliefs are insignificant or inconsequential. Thus, the norm of truth does not literally translate into an inherent value for truth.

⁴⁵The question begging for an answer remains: is it not essential and logical to desire true beliefs or ensure that our beliefs are true?

For Davidson, to say that truth is the goal of inquiry is to attempt to bring certain epistemic and human notions into the concept of truth. ⁴⁶ He admits that there are instances where we are justified in believing something that turns out to be true. He

43. Loewer, "The Value of Truth," 265

44. Loewer, "The Value of Truth," 265

45. Engel, "Is Truth a Norm?" 45-46.

46. Donald Davidson, "The Structure and Content of Truth," *Journal of Philosophy* 87 (1990): 298.

notes that there are other cases where the contrary is the case. He asserts that if truth were the aim of inquiring, then truth should necessarily be known, justified and even correspond with the idea of justification to make it a concept of knowledge. Although he agrees that justification is the aim of belief, he asserts that the former has no natural inherent connection with truth.⁴⁷

It is significant to admit that the views and objections expressed above require great attention and consideration; this is because of the invaluable contribution they make to the topic under discussion. This study does not claim to exhaust all discussions and knowledge concerning normativity, truth and beliefs. In fact, this research has acknowledged and indicated above that truth may not necessarily be the only norm of belief or the only pathway through which a particular belief can be correct.

Conclusion

The view that this paper has defended, which is also its main objective, is that truth is the basic norm of belief. To achieve this objective, the concepts of truth, belief and normativity have been coherently explained and analysed. In analysing the concept of truth, this paper has shown that two ideas come to mind when the concept of normativity is discussed. The first idea is that beliefs are right or accurate when they have true contents. The second idea is that since having beliefs are valuable, it should be the aim or purpose of inquiring. Also, this paper rightly notes that the relationship between truth and belief is normative- when one decides to believe a proposition, the aim is to create a belief that is true.

This research has also addressed the debate concerning the attributes of truth, evaluating whether truth should be seen as a substantial or weak property. A critical examination of the perspectives of different philosophers on the issue was carried out. True to its second objective, this paper has discussed in detail the question of the value of truth and the goal of beliefs. It as explicated how truth is a goal of our

47. Lewis Hahn, ed., "Reply to Pascal Engel," in *The Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, (La Salle: Open Court, 1999), 461.

inquiry and a value to be pursuit. It has also made serious attempt to answer the question regarding the intrinsic link between them, explaining how belief is connected to truth.

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