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# On the Way to the Truth

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ON THE WAY TO TRUTH

A Graduate Research Paper  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Religion

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by  
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347

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
METHOD OF PROCEDURE . . . . .	1
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY . . . . .	7
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM . . . . .	11
JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY . . . . .	13
DEFINITION OF TERMS . . . . .	13
Statement . . . . .	13
Correspondence . . . . .	13
Acceptability Qualifier . . . . .	14
Statement of Organization . . . . .	14
2. CONTEMPORARY, WESTERN THEORIZING ABOUT TRUTH . . . . .	16
THE CORRESPONDENCE THEORY OF TRUTH . . . . .	17
Russell on Truth and Correspondence . . . . .	18
Alfred Tarski and Precision . . . . .	21
THE COHERENCE THEORY OF TRUTH . . . . .	22
A. C. Ewing on Coherence . . . . .	22
Coherence and the Longings of Contemporary Man . . . . .	24
Coherence and correspondence . . . . .	25
Coherence and the acceptability qualifier . . . . .	25

THE PRAGMATIC THEORY OF TRUTH . . . . .	26
John Dewey on Truth . . . . .	26
Ideas . . . . .	27
The criterion for truth . . . . .	28
Pragmatism and the Longings of Contemporary Man . . . . .	29
Pragmatism and correspondence . . . . .	29
Pragmatism and the acceptability qualifier . . . . .	30
THE NON-DESCRIPTIVE THEORY OF TRUTH . . . . .	31
Strawson, Performatives and Truth . . . . .	31
Strawson and the Longings of Contemporary Man . . . . .	34
Strawson and correspondence . . . . .	34
Strawson and the acceptability qualifier . . . . .	35
CONCLUSION . . . . .	35
3. HEIDEGGER AND HIS SOURCES . . . . .	38
HEIDEGGER AND TRUTH . . . . .	39
A Switch in Primacy . . . . .	40
Heidegger on <u>Alētheia</u> . . . . .	42
The Heideggerian Theory of Truth . . . . .	44
Heidegger and this Paper . . . . .	45
HEIDEGGER'S SOURCES . . . . .	46
Plato and Aristotle . . . . .	48
The Presocratics . . . . .	51
The Greeks Reconsidered . . . . .	52
4. A PARALLEL TRADITION: THE BIBLE . . . . .	54
THE GORDON THESIS . . . . .	54

THE BIBLE, THE GREEKS AND TRUTH . . . . .	58
SUMMARY . . . . .	69
5. CONCLUSION . . . . .	70
A DEFINITION OF TRUTH . . . . .	71
EVALUATION . . . . .	72
The Theory's Problems . . . . .	72
The Impact of the Theory . . . . .	73
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	75

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

A title, like "On the Way to Truth", requires an explanation, in fact, a two-fold explanation. It requires such an explanation because it is both methodologically and thematically suggestive. These aspects of the title will be discussed in the next sections of this introduction. The first of these sections will deal with the methodological implications. The second section will contain an introductory discussion of the subject indicated by the title.

### METHOD OF PROCEDURE

"On the Way to Truth" is more than a catchy title for a treatise on truth. It characterizes the type of investigation that is being presented. Unlike the title "Arrival at Truth", "On the Way to Truth" does not suggest the ending or final completion of an investigation. Unlike "Starting toward Truth", it does not indicate the initial efforts in a new area. The concept of truth has been studied for a long time and will continue to be debated long after this volume is forgotten.

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The purpose of this paper is to pave some new ground for our collective journey towards a fuller understanding of what truth is.

"On the Way to Truth" is also suggestive of Martin Heidegger's words and method. It could be called an adaption of Heidegger's title Unterwegs zur Sprache.<sup>1</sup> Even more important than this, is the

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Hertz in translating this work into English has given it the title On the Way to Language.

methodological resemblance that it suggests. Both Heidegger's work and this paper are investigations which are "unterwegs", that is, "on the way", in process but not completed. Both projects are done with a view to further development.

The announcement of some congruence between Heidegger's work and this paper should not be taken as implying that this volume is the furthering of the Heideggerian program, because it is not. It can not stand as the next step in the Heideggerian enterprise for four reasons. In the first place the methodological resemblance is not unique to the Heideggerian program. Secondly, Heidegger's work is not centered on the same topic that this paper is. Thirdly, the two investigations hold to different biases. Lastly, there exist methodological differences between Heidegger's project and this investigation.

J. L. Mehta in The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger makes two points which support the above assertion that the concept of philosophy as "unterwegs" is not unique to Dr. Heidegger's work. In the preface of the above mentioned book, Dr. Mehta states that all philosophy is thought which can be characterized as "unterwegs":

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The finitude of human thought lies in the fact that it is prompted by a profound need to raise and answer questions about ultimate truth and is at the same time incapable of arriving at any definitive, eternally valid formulation. It is always unterwegs, under way, both in the thinking of individual philosophers and in the collective, historical thinking of an epoch and a people, though hardly ever aware of itself as being so and treading sometimes with the arrogant mien of being in possession of a total final vision. It is ever on its way, groping and fumbling, towards a dimly perceived goal, not only in regard to the conditions of historical or biographical development but also in respect of the moves, techniques and methods. . . .<sup>2</sup>

This statement is supportive of the assertion that a concept of philosophy

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<sup>2</sup>J. L. Mehta, The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), p. ix.



as "unterwegs" is not unique to Heidegger's way of thought in two ways. First, it supports this assertion by being a statement about what Dr. Mehta personally believes philosophy to be. The statement occurs in the context of J. L. Mehta's presentation of his thesis:

The following pages attempt to show how this conception of philosophy as a "way" and as being "on the way" is explicitly recognized and concretely exemplified in the thinking of the great German philosopher Martin Heidegger.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis is very clearly established in the book. Secondly, it supports the assertion in question by implying that there have been other philosophers throughout the ages who have conceived of philosophy in the same way that Heidegger and he himself have. The second point that he makes which is supportive of the assertion under discussion is that there is not as wide a gulf between contemporary Anglo-American philosophizing and the thinking of Martin Heidegger as many have thought.

It may, however, be pointed out that, despite differences in starting-point and contextual milieu, contemporary analytical philosophy is in pursuit of aims which are not themselves basically different from those of phenomenology. Both analytical philosophy and phenomenology subserve at bottom a common logos, discourse aimed at disclosure of what is hidden and implicit in experience, in the way we understand things, in language. What Moore and Price seek, what Wittgenstein and Wisdom, Ryle and Austin achieve, is illumination and disclosure of hidden structures, helping us, in F. Waismann's words, "to open our eyes, to bring us to see things in a new way." In his own way, and perhaps in a profounder sense, this is just what Heidegger does all the time, bringing some "state of affairs" into view, letting what is come to light.<sup>4</sup>

Mehta's further elucidation here is supportive of the assertion that a concept of philosophy as "unterwegs" is not unique to Heidegger's way

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<sup>3</sup>Mehta, p. ix.

<sup>4</sup>Mehta, pp. xiii-xiv.

of thinking in establishing a greater degree of commonality between contemporary Anglo-American and Heideggerian methodology. Considering the support that has been given, it seems clear that the concept of philosophy as "unterwegs" is not unique to Heideggerian thought.

Heidegger, if he were still alive, would not accept this project as a furthering of his work, or even a truly philosophic endeavor, because it is not an investigation into being. The driving question of this paper is not about being but truth. Heidegger conceives of philosophy as the attempt to become clear about the nature of being by asking the question, "Why are there essents [things that are] rather than nothing?"<sup>5</sup> According to Heidegger, philosophy is not interested in what populates the world, but why it does. Questions about what we encounter in the world, be they questions concerning animals or concepts, belong to the particular sciences. In Heidegger's eyes our investigation would be philological rather than philosophical.

Heidegger would also not think very highly of the suggestion that this investigation is a piece of philosophizing in the Heideggerian style, because of his bias against the concept of Christian philosophy. In fact, Dr. Heidegger once wrote that Christian philosophy is a "round square and a misunderstanding."<sup>6</sup> It is an impossibility, in Heidegger's eyes, not because Christians cannot think, but because they already

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have the answer to the question of philosophy. Concerning Christians, he alleges:

Anyone for whom the Bible is divine revelation and truth

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<sup>5</sup>Martin Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics, trans. Ralph Manheim (Anchor Books ed.; Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics, p. 6.

has the answer to the question "Why are there essents rather than nothing?" even before it is asked: everything that is, except God himself, has been created by Him. God himself, the increate creator, "is."<sup>7</sup>

Lastly, this investigation does not fit comfortably into the Heideggerian mold, because it differs in method. Even though the Heideggerian corpus and this paper exhibit an interest in the history of philosophy and in exegesis, their views in these areas differ considerably. Heidegger is interested only in the Western philosophic tradition from the Presocratic philosophers through Nietzsche.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, this paper will deal with three periods of history, only one of which is of interest to Heidegger. Like Heidegger, this author has an interest in Greek philosophy. Unlike Heidegger, he is vitally interested in contemporary philosophy and Biblical thought. Not only is there a difference in terms of historical interests, different views are held by the two authors with regard to the nature of exegesis. In the process of commenting on lines 332-75 of Sophocles' *Antigone*, Heidegger makes the following statement concerning exegesis:

The actual interpretation must show what does not stand in the words and is nevertheless said. He must seek the essential where nothing more is to be found by the scientific interpretation that brands as unscientific everything that transcends its limits.<sup>9</sup>

For Heidegger, the last step in exegesis is the revealing of what was left unsaid, but intended, by the author. This is a sort of asking the question behind the question: It is a guessing at what is happening inside the head of the author. Because the analysis of supposed

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Mehta, p. 123.

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics, p. 136.

intentions is so speculative, this paper will be limited, for the most part, to a more scientific style of exegesis.

Having turned from the Heideggerian banner, one might well ask under whose banner has this assault upon the hinterland of truth been made. If not some Continental giant like Heidegger, then perhaps under the banner of some Anglo-Saxon philosopher? While moving within the spirit of Anglo-Saxon philosophy, this paper does not parade behind the banner of any one Anglo-Saxon philosopher. But how can this be? It is because the philosophic labels, the old banners of Anglo-Saxon philosophy, have been swept away.

Just prior to his death in October, 1976, Prof. Ryle very ably described how these old banners were swept away in an article entitled "Fifty Years of Philosophy and Philosophers." In this article he commented:

We could not care or even remember on which philosophical ticket he or she or we ourselves had formerly voted or could be relied on to vote tomorrow. So we unconsciously gave up bothering ourselves with the sectarian and electoral designations. They stopped designating.<sup>10</sup>

Probably of as great an importance as these sociological inputs to the sweeping away of the old banners, was the realization by most English speaking philosophers that Wittgenstein was correct when he wrote,

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Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts.  
 Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity.  
 A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations.  
 Philosophy does not result in 'philosophical propositions',  
 but rather in the clarification of propositions.  
 Without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and  
 indistinct: its task is to make them clear and to give them  
 sharp boundaries.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Gilbert Ryle, "Fifty Years of Philosophy and Philosophers," Philosophy, LI, No. 198 (1976), 385.

<sup>11</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 49.

But what did this mean to philosophers? It meant that a philosophy was not a collection of doctrines, an intellectual position which stood in opposition to other such collections. Philosophy had become the collective enterprise of elucidating language. The question "Who do you support?" was dropped in favor of the question "What concepts interest you?" And with the change in questions, the old banners became remnants of a bygone age.

In summation, the investigative method captured in the title "On the Way to Truth" can be characterized in the following five ways:

1. It is philosophical in the Wittgensteinian sense of the word, because its goal is the clarification of a concept.
  2. It is historical in that it deals with our understanding of truth at various periods in the course of human history.
  3. It is scientifically exegetical, because it is concerned with the expressed meaning only, and not any of the supposedly intended meanings.
  4. It is comparative in that it strives to relate various systems in a synthetic way.
  5. It is projective in that it is an attempt to move into new territory in a way that is determined by the historical development of the concept under investigation.
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#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

If we are to be truly philosophical in the Wittgensteinian sense, we should turn from the question "Who do we support?" to the question "What concepts interest us?" In turning to this question, we are again brought back to the title, "On the Way to Truth." The first

words of the title suggested the method. The last word determines the theme, the topic, of this investigation. This work is concerned with the notion of truth.

Our notion of truth is indeed very rich and much too complex for one brief investigation. A full treatment of this concept would involve not only an inquiry into the meaning of truth, but would involve a cataloging of the items we commonly label as "true." Such a cataloging, even of just the truths of Christianity, would require thousands of volumes this size. Therefore, this volume will be limited to a discussion of the meaning of truth.

Despite the fact that we are not interested in cataloging various truths, an understanding of the things that we call "true" will aid us in further limiting our investigation. Prof. Alan R. White in his book Truth states: "The things that we call "true" fall into two classes, namely, what is said and things other than what is said."<sup>12</sup> In the first class of things, i.e., the things that are said, we find statements, accounts, stories, etc. The second class of things is represented by objects, such as, paper and ink, and concepts, such as, goodness and beauty. Items in the first class are called "true" for a different reason, than the items of the second class. According to Prof. White,

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When an X, e.g., a statement or a story, is characterized as true in virtue of what is said in it rather than for itself, such an X is a true X if and only if what is said in it is true. When, on the other hand, an X, e.g., a Corgi or courage, is characterized as true other than because of what is said in it, an X is a true X if and only if according to some restrictive standards of X it is true to say that it is an X.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Alan R. White, Truth (Anchor Books ed.; Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970), p. 3.

<sup>13</sup>White, p. 5.

The first use of the word "true" is its primary sense, because,

. . . the whole point of characterizing some X other than what is said as true is to suggest that "X" is here being used according to some restrictive standards by which not everything which is called by that word is, in the user's opinion, truly so called.<sup>14</sup>

Because this second sense of truth is not primary, it will be regarded as superfluous and omitted from our considerations.

Having limited the discussion to the truth of what is said, it becomes incumbent upon us to distinguish what is said from several closely related things. Prof. White states,

We can distinguish what is said, e.g., that there is life after death, from (1) what is used to say it, e.g., the English words uttered or written in order to convey it; from (2) what it is the content of, e.g., the assumption, claim, conclusion, objection, warning, belief, hope, or fear that there is a life after death; and from (3) the saying of it, e.g., by the local vicar.<sup>15</sup>

What Prof. White is saying is that we must separate what is said from the act complex involved with it. We must not confuse what is said with the act of saying it, with that act's artifact or with that act's purpose.

This is the type of distinction that J. L. Austin was trying to create when he distinguished between performative and constative.<sup>16</sup>

Prof. Austin used these two words to classify types of statements. The term "statement", like the term "proposition", refers to what is said

by a string of meaningful symbols which we call a sentence. What J. L. Austin saw as distinguishing a performative statement from a constative

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>White, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup>J. L. Austin, How to Do Things with Words, ed. J. O. Urmson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 1-11.

statement was (1) whether or not it described or reported something; and (2) whether or not it was part of doing an action. If a statement did not describe or report, and was involved in the doing of an action, then it can be classed as a performative statement. If the opposite were the case, then the statement would be classed with the constatives.

The importance of this distinction to what Prof. White has said is that it adds to our understanding of the distinction between what is said and the act complex involved in saying it. Prof. Austin has added to our understanding of the act complex by showing us that some statements are part of the act complex to which they are related and not part of what is said. For example, the statement, "I pronounce you man and wife," is not a description of a couple's relationship but a part of the act of uniting them in holy matrimony. This means that a performative differs from a constative in being the expression of an act and not the description of that act.

Now the distinction between what is said and the act complex involved in saying it, is important to us because only what is said can be true in the primary sense of the term. The act of saying that there is life after death by the local vicar is properly speaking neither true nor false, but only appropriate or inappropriate. For example, it ~~would be appropriate for the vicar to say it at a funeral and, most~~ likely, inappropriate at a christening. Similarly, the artifact of this expression, the ink marks on the page, can be judged as true in only the secondary sense of the term. In this sense, "true" becomes a synonym for "proper" or "well-formed." Lastly, even though this expression can be used to express a truth, it can be used to generate hope, as well.



In summation, four limitations have been placed upon this investigation. First, taking a lead from the title, the investigation has been limited to a discussion of the notion of truth. Realizing the immensity of the task, it was decided to investigate only the meaning of truth, and not to become involved in the cataloging of truths. In the third place, the study has been limited to the primary sense of the word "true", that is, as it is applied to what is said. Last, it was found that not everything that could be said was either true or false in the primary sense of the word, and decided to exclude the truth of performative utterances from our investigation. By means of these restrictions, this study has been limited to an investigation of the truth of what is said.

#### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Having limited the investigation to the truth of what is said, what problems can be discussed? The crucial disagreements appear to deal with particular truths, and not the nature of truth. The populace is more interested in the truths of the environmental sciences or the Christian faith than the definition of truth. The man on the street, unlike Pilate, rarely asks, "What is truth?"

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Even more debatable than the hazards of smoking, is the nature of truth, especially the truth of what is said. The nature of truth is more hotly debated now than at any other time in history. Prior to the development of the Pragmatic Theory of truth, only three theories of truth had been considered in the Western world. They are the Platonistic Correspondence Theory, the Idealistic Coherence Theory and the Presocratic Existence Theory. After the Pragmatic Theory's development,

debate intensified. Several new theories, such as, the Non-Descriptive Theory of truth, were formulated.

Inquiry into the nature of truth increased because philosophers began to find the traditional analysis to be inadequate. While it was generally agreed that a statement was true because it corresponded to a fact, there was no such consensus about the definition of correspondence. This proved to be a real problem when correspondence was applied as the criteria for truth. Without a definition of correspondence, the determination of a statement's truth could not be handled mechanically: a computer could not be programmed to determine a statement's truth. The determination of particular truths was realized to be very subjective.

Having uncovered this flaw, contemporary, Western man has looked for more in truth than a mere correspondence between what is and what is said. Without complete success, they have tried to link with the belief that truth is the correspondence of statements with the world, an acceptability qualifier. An acceptability qualifier is a criteria for truth. It is most adequate when it is a mechanically decidable method for determining a statement's truth.

It is this failure on the part of contemporary, Western man that has generated this paper. This investigations goal is two fold. First,

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it must establish that contemporary, Western man has looked and failed. It must be established that contemporary, Western man sees more in truth than a mere correspondence between what is and what is said and that he is trying, though without complete success, to link with the belief that truth is the correspondence of statements with the world, an acceptability qualifier. Having established this first point, a new

direction will be suggested that will point toward a more mechanical understanding of the acceptability qualifier.

#### JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study finds its justification in two sources. The first source is the perennial confusion over the nature of truth. This confusion is seen in the fact that truth is seen as being everything from the correspondence of statements to the world, to a logical superfluity. A second source of justification is the writer's commitment to the Wittgensteinian concept of philosophy as the elucidation of language. The writer believes that he has a responsibility to clarify concepts that are confused. Therefore, seeing the confusion in the notion of truth, the author feels obligated to clarify the concept of truth.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

Before the investigation can proceed any further, there are some terms which must be defined. These terms are: statement, correspondence, and acceptability qualifier.

##### Statement

A statement is what is said. It is to be distinguished from the saying of it, the artifacts of the act of saying it and the purpose for which it is said. It is to be considered synonymous with the word "proposition." It can be said to refer to the content of a declarative sentence.

##### Correspondence

Correspondence is a relationship which can obtain between members of different set, i.e., collections of things, and between sets

themselves. It is a relationship which is best understood on the model of a matching process. Two sets are said to correspond when their members can be matched. For example, there is a correspondence between the numbers from 1 to 10 and the letters in the word "correspond." It is possible for a correspondence to exist between unequal, but symmetric, groups. An example of this type of correspondence is the relationship between the numbers from 1 to 10 and the numbers from 1 to 100. For the sake of our investigation, the term "correspondence" will refer solely to relationships of the first type, i.e., a one to one correspondence.

#### Acceptability Qualifier

This is a term coined by the author to refer to the criteria for truth. An acceptability qualifier is most adequate when it is a mechanically decidable, or computable, method for determining truth.

This term is substituted for criteria in order to stress the fact that it is this test that makes a given truth acceptable.

#### STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION

The remainder of this investigation's presentation is to be found in the next four chapters of this volume. In the first of these chapters, the point is made that contemporary, Western man sees more in truth than mere correspondence, and that he is trying to link correspondence with an acceptability qualifier. In chapter 3, a new direction is established through a discussion of Heidegger's attack on analytical philosophizing concerning truth, the positive statement of his own theory, a statement of his theory's effect on the acceptability qualifier, and an analysis of his sources. Within the pages of chapter 4 is revealed a Biblical Theory of truth and its answer to the question:

"What is the standard for material truth?" The last chapter contains the final statement of this paper's provisional theory of truth and its evaluation.

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## Chapter 2

### CONTEMPORARY, WESTERN THEORIZING ABOUT TRUTH

In this chapter, it will become evident (1) that contemporary, Western man sees more in truth than a mere correspondence between what is and what is said; and (2) that he is trying, without complete success, to link with the belief that truth is the correspondence of statements with the world, an acceptability qualifier. The establishment of these points will be accomplished on the basis of the critical analysis of three contemporary, Western theories of truth. These theories are the Coherence Theory, the Pragmatic Theory and the Non-Descriptive Theory. In each case, the relationship of each theory to the Correspondence Theory will be discussed, as well as each theory's development of the acceptability qualifier.

The thesis concerning Western man's dissatisfaction with the belief that truth is merely a correspondence between what is and what is said has been framed in the contemporary period, because of the greater availability and variety of literature for this period. This thesis

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could have been cast in terms of early Greek philosophy, but was not because of the lack of primary sources from this period. That there was dissatisfaction with the Correspondence Theory in this earlier period is evident in the conflict between the Existence Theory of truth and the Correspondence Theory in Plato's Sophist. It is, also, seen in the

fact that Aristotle saw the concept of future truth as being problematic.<sup>1</sup>

Before the relationship of the Coherence Theory, the Pragmatic Theory, and the Non-Descriptive Theory to the Correspondence Theory can be intelligently discussed, the Correspondence Theory must be understood. Therefore, the discussion of the former theories will be preceded by an analysis of the Correspondence Theory.

### THE CORRESPONDENCE THEORY OF TRUTH

Of even more help in the explanation of the Correspondence Theory than a "slogan-like" characterization is the clarification of the theory's central issues, or problems. The slogan, "Truth is the correspondence of what is to what is said," says much about the Correspondence Theory, but not enough. For example, it does not explain the nature of this relationship called correspondence. Not only does it not explain the nature of correspondence, it fails to define the items related by the relationship of correspondence. It does not define what is meant by "what is" and "what is said".

The expression "what is" cannot refer to a single object, if the secondary sense of truth is to be avoided. If "what is" were a single object, then to say that its name, i.e., the statement pertaining to the object, is true is to only say that the correct name has been given to the object. To say that a fact is a single object is to imply that statements, like, "The cat is on the mat" or "Grass is green", are names, like "Jonathan" or "Paul". It also implies that a true statement is no more than the proper name for the object to which it refers.

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<sup>1</sup>Aristotle, De Interpretatione IX.

To imply this is to rob truth of its primary meaning. Therefore, the expression "what is" must be taken as referring to more than one object, for example, to a complex of objects.

"What is said" is simply what is said. The words "statement" and "proposition" can be substituted for it. It can be said to refer to the content of a declarative sentence. "What is said" must be distinguished from the saying of it, the artifacts of that act and the purpose for which it is said.<sup>2</sup>

These two definitions are now at a fairly high level of refinement and, for the moment, are not in need of any further clarification. This is not the case with the notion of correspondence. As a result, Lord Bertrand Russell's suggestion concerning the nature of this correspondence will be examined.

#### Russell on Truth and Correspondence

Bertrand Russell is one of the many subscribers to the Correspondence Theory who is interested in explaining the nature of this type of correspondence and in defining the objects of that relationship. Lord Russell first showed signs of an interest in the Correspondence Theory in 1906.<sup>3</sup> At this time, he delivered some lectures on the subject of truth that were later published in Philosophical Essays. In 1912, he refined his earlier thoughts and published them in The Problems of Philosophy.

In The Problems of Philosophy, Mr. Russell states that,

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<sup>2</sup>See page 9 of this paper.

<sup>3</sup>A. N. Prior, "Correspondence Theory of Truth," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1965), II, 226d-227a.



. . . correspondence with fact. . . [is what constitutes] the nature of truth. It remains to define precisely what we mean by 'fact', and what is the nature of the correspondence which must subsist between belief and fact, in order that belief may be true.<sup>4</sup>

For Lord Russell, truth is a property of beliefs. A belief is true if, and only if, it corresponds to some fact. Unfortunately, his use of the word "belief" is rather slippery. At one moment it may mean what is said. Or, at another, it may take on more of a sense of the statement's purpose. Despite this slipperiness, much can be learned from Lord Russell's theory; because his analysis is directed more at statements than their purpose or function.

A true belief, according to Lord Russell, is not a relationship between the belief and a single object (e.g., Desdemona's love for Cassio), but a belief and a complex of objects (e.g., Desdemona, loving and Cassio).<sup>5</sup> He feels forced to make this point in order to insure that there can be falsehoods. If the relationship was between a belief and a single object, e.g., Desdemona's love for Cassio, and that object did not exist, then the statement, "Othello believes that Desdemona loves Cassio," would be nonsense. It would be nonsense, because it would refer to nothing. Following Russell's suggestion, even if the statement was false, it would not be nonsense. It would not be nonsense, because it would still refer to various objects, i.e.,  


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Desdemona, loving and Cassio.

Having now defined Russell's use of the terms "belief" and "fact", the nature of the correspondence that can hold between true beliefs and facts can be discussed. A belief, a statement, is true, when there

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<sup>4</sup>Bertrand Russell, The Problems of Philosophy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 123.

<sup>5</sup>Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, pp. 124-130.

exists a semi-parallelism between the last words of the statement and the fact.<sup>6</sup> For example, the statement, "Othello believes that Desdemona loves Cassio," is true if, and only if, in fact, Desdemona loves Cassio. If Desdemona loves Cassio, then the same order is shared by the last words of Othello's belief, i.e., the words "Desdemona", "loves" and "Cassio", and the fact. It is this paralleling of the respective orders that Russell considers to be the nature of the correspondence between true beliefs and facts.

It should be noted that Russell's theory does not completely agree with the Correspondence Theory as presented in this paper. While sharing the same view about the nature of what is, that is, that facts are complexes of objects, the two theories differ with respect to the definition of the first term of the relationship. Mr. Russell's definition is more inclusive. It allows for both what is said and its function.

Lord Russell's analysis of the correspondence relationship is delightful and can serve as the explanation of correspondence that this paper has been lacking. It can be objected that the adoption of Mr. Russell's analysis of the correspondence relationship is not proper, because of the difference in the two theories' view of what can serve as the first member of the relationship. Since Russell's view is more inclusive, there is no problem. What is true of a group in general is always true of each of its members. Therefore, it is not improper to adopt Russell's analysis. Since it is not improper to adopt this analysis, it will be from this point on considered part of the Correspondence Theory presented in this paper.

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<sup>6</sup>Prior, 226d-227a.

### Alfred Tarski and Precision

Someone may object that the Correspondence Theory presented in this paper lacks precision. In fact, such an objection has been made by the great Polish logician Alfred Tarski. The current theory lacks precision, because it employs two ambiguous terms, i.e., "proposition" and "true."<sup>7</sup> For Prof. Tarski, the term "proposition" lacks precision, because

. . . its meaning is notoriously a subject of lengthy disputations by various philosophers and logicians, and it<sub>8</sub> seems never to have been made quite clear and unambiguous.

Similarly, Prof. Tarski considers the word "true" to be ambiguous. He expresses this point in these words:

The word "true," like other words from our everyday language, is certainly not unambiguous. And it does not seem to me that the philosophers who have discussed this concept have helped to diminish its ambiguity. In works and discussions of philosophers we meet many different conceptions of truth and falsity, and we must indicate which conception will be the basis of our discussion.<sup>9</sup>

These points, especially the first, suggest that the Correspondence Theory formulated in this paper is imprecise.

If this is the case, why not abandon the present theory in favor of the correspondence theory put forward by Alfred Tarski? His theory, which is too technical to be presented here, has a great flaw. The present formulation is limited to formalized languages, like those of

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mathematics and symbolic logic. Because of this fact, a transition to Prof. Tarski's theory will not be made.

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<sup>7</sup> Alfred Tarski, "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics," Readings in Philosophical Analysis, ed. Herbert Feigl and Wilfrid Sellars (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1949), pp. 53-54.

<sup>8</sup>Tarski, p. 53.    <sup>9</sup>Ibid.

## THE COHERENCE THEORY OF TRUTH

Even though the Coherence Theory is supported by a number of Logical Positivists, namely, Carl Hempel and Otto Neurath, it is primarily a doctrine of the Idealists.<sup>9a</sup> Therefore, this section will be centered on the Coherence Theory as formulated by the Idealists. Undoubtedly, Idealism's best exposition is to be found in A. C. Ewing's Idealism: A Critical Survey. Therefore, the following presentation of the Coherence Theory will be largely based on his book.

### A. C. Ewing on Coherence

In Idealism: A Critical Survey, A. C. Ewing states that, for the Idealists,

- 'Coherence' is held to constitute
- (a) a definition of truth, or at least an account of its nature;
  - (b) an account of the nature of reality;
  - (c) a criterion of truth.<sup>10</sup>

It is in his chapter entitled "The Coherence Theory" that he tries to show how this is accomplished by the Idealists.

The first reason why coherence can be employed in the definition of truth is that what we know is identical with what is. Mr. Ewing put it this way:

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~~Now if truth means what is known or what facts are for~~  
 cognition in so far as cognition is successful and reality  
 means the facts per se, the view that truth and reality  
 are identical may well be accepted. In so far as we know,

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<sup>9a</sup> Alan R. White, Truth (Anchor Books ed.; Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970), pp. 109-110.

<sup>10</sup> A. C. Ewing, Idealism: A Critical Survey (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1934), p. 195.

what we know is identical with reality or it would not be knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

In order for it to be known or considered to be true that there is a cat on the mat, there must indeed be a cat on the mat.

If it were not for another belief of the Idealists, this belief would be more support for the Correspondence Theory, than it is for the Coherence Theory. Both theories declare that what is, is what is true. According to both the Coherence Theory and the Correspondence Theory, if the world were other than what it is declared to be, then those declarations would be false. If there is no cat to be seen on the mat, then the declaration, "There is a cat on the mat," would be false.

What allows the Idealists to tie this concept of truth and coherence together is the belief that reality is one coherent system.<sup>12</sup> But what is it to say that reality is one coherent system?

Coherence must not be confused with self-consistency. Anybody who believed in a thoroughly pluralistic world in which every fact was logically independent of every other would still hold that his view was self-consistent in that the different facts did not contradict each other, but he certainly would not be maintaining the coherence theory but rather its opposite. What is meant is not merely that the different facts do not contradict each other, which would be compatible with their being all quite indifferent to each other logically, but that they stand in some positive logical relation of entailment to each other.<sup>13</sup>

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The world is coherent, because the facts of the world are both consistent with and dependent upon each other. Because this is the case, coherence can be used as a criterion for sorting true statements from

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<sup>11</sup>Ewing, p. 199.

<sup>12</sup>Ewing, p. 228.

<sup>13</sup>Ewing, pp. 228-229.

false statements. Because it would be the case that a coherent set of statements would represent, and would be parallel to, a set of facts. This would not be the case with false, that is, incoherent statements; because there would be no parallel or matching set of facts.

Having completed a discussion of the three things coherence is said to constitute, it becomes necessary to mention a peculiar aspect of the Coherence Theory. This peculiar aspect is the doctrine that statements are both partly true and partly false.<sup>14</sup> This seems to conflict with the whole notion of the Coherence Theory, but really does not. It does not conflict, because statements are thought of as complex ideas. When it is said that the cat is on the mat, the ideas of cat, existence, location, mat and particularity, just to name a few, are being combined together. For example, if the cat stood where the missing mat normally was to be found, then the statement, "The cat is on the mat," would not be totally false. The ideas of cat, existence, location and particularity would be for the most part correct. Therefore, the statement would be partly true and partly false. It should be noted that one can hold to the belief that the world is coherent and not to the doctrine of degrees of truth, and, further, that the doctrine of degrees of truth involves a confusing of the concepts of judgment and inclusion.<sup>15</sup>

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#### Coherence and the Longings of Contemporary Man

Having briefly described the Coherence Theory, it is necessary to show its relationship to the contentions of this paper. The questions,

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<sup>14</sup>Ewing, pp. 208-209.

<sup>15</sup>Ewing, p. 441.

"What is the relationship between the Coherence Theory and the Correspondence Theory?" and, "What kind of acceptability qualifier is employed in the Coherence Theory?" must be asked and answered.

Coherence and Correspondence. The two theories distinguished by the terms "coherence" and "correspondence" share the same view as to the nature of truth. They both believe that the essence of truth is caught in the Aristotelian dictum: "To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, is true."<sup>16</sup> To the extent that each theory holds to this dictum, they assert that a true statement corresponds to the facts of the world. To the extent that each theory holds to this dictum, they are correspondence theories.

Coherence and the acceptability qualifier. For the Coherence Theorist, correspondence is not to be regarded as the test for truth. While defining truth as correspondence, the Coherence Theorist turns to a different criterion for testing truth. They generate an acceptability qualifier. They state that what makes a potential truth an acceptable one is the fact that it fits with their own thoughts. The criterion for truth, according to the Coherence Theory, is the coherence of statements to each other. For the Coherence Theorist, the question is not, "Does it fit reality?" but, "Does it fit your system of thoughts?"

The question, "Does it fit your system of thoughts?" shows the egoism inherent in the Coherence Theory. Such a question exhibits the human tendency to be self-centered. It suggests the even more ego-centric statement, "Of course it's true, it's just what I would have

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<sup>16</sup>Tarski, p. 54.

said." In either case, truth becomes a function of an individual's (or possibly, a group's) theorizing. When coherence is employed as the acceptability qualifier, truth tends to become a subjective predicate about statements. Truth tends to be robbed of its objectivity. Therefore, if truth is to be an objective predicate of statements, then either the acceptability qualifier must be scraped or redefined.

### THE PRAGMATIC THEORY OF TRUTH

The Pragmatic Theory of truth is one of the few philosophical theories to have its birth in the United States of America. It had its beginning in the late 1800's in the thoughts of Charles Sanders Peirce. This theory was made popular by William James and refined by John Dewey. It will be this refined form of the theory that will be discussed in the following pages.

#### John Dewey on Truth

In Truth, Prof. White characterizes the Pragmatic Theory of truth as the belief that, "A true idea is one which fulfills its function, which works; a false idea is one which does not."<sup>17</sup> The key word in understanding this characterization is the word "idea." So important is the proper conception of idea for the analysis of the Pragmatic Theory of truth that John Dewey wrote, after a thorough discussion of the proper conception of ideas:

Little time is left to speak of the account of the nature of truth given by the experimental and functional type of logic. This is less to be regretted because this account is completely a corollary from the nature of thinking and ideas. If the view held as to the latter is understood, the conception of truth follows as a matter of course. If it be

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<sup>17</sup>White. p. 123.



not understood, any attempt to present the theory is bound to be confusing, and the theory itself to seem arbitrary and absurd.<sup>18</sup>

Ideas. For John Dewey's concept of idea to be understood, ideas must be distinguished from facts and classified according to their purpose. It must be understood that facts and ideas are different types of things. Further, Dewey's notion of an idea cannot be separated from its function. Therefore, both of these issues will be discussed.

For Mr. Dewey, ideas have an instrumental function:

According to it [that is, Dewey's notion of idea] an idea--a term used loosely by these philosophers to cover any "opinion, belief, statement, or what not"--is an instrument with a particular function.<sup>19</sup>

But what is the function of an idea? John Dewey says of ideas that they function in the solution of problems:

. . . ideas, meanings, conceptions, notions, theories, systems are instrumental to an active reorganization of the given environment, to the removal of some specific trouble and perplexity, . . .<sup>20</sup>

Ideas function as hypotheses, proposals or plans for action in the solution of problems. One of the best places to look to find ideas functioning as hypotheses is in modern science. A look must be taken at modern science, and not Greek science, because, unlike Greek science which is centered in the classification of things, modern science is interested in altering the environment.<sup>21</sup> Modern science is the science

<sup>18</sup>John Dewey, "The Instrumentalist Account of Truth," Belief, Knowledge, and Truth: Readings in the Theory of Knowledge, ed. Robert R. Ammerman and Marcus G. Singer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), p. 440.

<sup>19</sup>White, pp. 122-123.

<sup>20</sup>Dewey, p. 440.

<sup>21</sup>Sheldon P. Peterfreund, An Introduction to American Philosophy (New York: The Odyssey Press, Inc., 1959), p. 211.

of problem solving. When in science, or life, an individual is faced with a problem, he reflects until the lights go on and he has an idea, a way out of the dilemma. Following this model, an idea functions as a suggested solution to the problem. Once it has been tested and found to work, the idea becomes transformed into a true idea, or judgment.

Granted, ideas are not facts, but why must the two be distinguished? It is because facts confirm ideas. If facts and ideas were the same kinds of things, then the Pragmatic Theory would be reducible to the Coherence Theory of truth. It would be the same as saying that the truth of one statement is to be found in its coherence to other statements. Pragmatism, on the other hand, is interested not in coherence, but workability.

Having stressed the need to distinguish these concepts, it becomes necessary to ask "How can facts be confused with ideas?" They can be confused with ideas because both facts and ideas are functional elements in investigations. "Facts are used in inquiry to set the terms of the problem by marking off what is secure and unquestioned."<sup>22</sup> Unlike an idea which speaks about possibilities, a fact points to what is. A fact can be likened to the clues with which a detective works to confirm his hypothesis, his idea.<sup>23</sup>

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The criterion for truth. "Ideas become true when their 'draft upon existence' is honored by the verifying facts."<sup>24</sup> An idea has the potential of being true, because it promises that certain facts are going to

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<sup>22</sup>Gertrude Ezorsky, "Pragmatic Theory of Truth," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1965), VI, 429b.

<sup>23</sup>Ezorsky, 429b.

<sup>24</sup>Ezorsky, 429b-429c.

be found to be the case. For example, the idea that of the three keys on the ring it is the green key that will open the green door promises, that is, suggests, that, in fact, the green key will be found to be the one that opens the green door. When the green key opens the green door, then the idea is judged to be true. It is discovered that the idea worked.

### Pragmatism and the Longings of Contemporary Man

The Pragmatic Theory of truth, like the Coherence Theory, has many ties to the theses of this paper. It has close ties to the Correspondence Theory of truth. It also defines the acceptability qualifier in a way which allows for a more objective character for truth.

Pragmatism and correspondence. Pragmatists, like Coherence Theorists and Correspondence Theorists, contend that true statements do correspond to reality. Evidence of this point can be seen in these words by William James: "Truth . . . is the agreement of an idea with reality."<sup>25</sup> This agreement is not explicately defined as a semi-parallelism between beliefs and reality. This agreement is understood in terms of a process of wish fulfillment. A statement is made and then it is fulfilled by the facts of life. Despite, this difference in explicate definition, it is possible to combine the two positions. It can be said that the

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fulfilling fact can substantiate a promissory statement because its order is congruent with the closing words of the statement. For example, the fact that the cat is on the mat can verify the statement "John thinks that the cat is on the mat," because the order of the terms in the fact parallel the order of the terms in the "that-clause."

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<sup>25</sup>White, p. 123.

Such a combination as the one just made, does two things. First, it justifies William James' claim that the Pragmatic Theory of truth is a form of the Correspondence Theory of truth. Second, it explains to some degree why a fact can verify an idea. It can verify an idea because it corresponds to it.

Pragmatism and the acceptability qualifier. Not only does the above combination of the Correspondence Theory and the Pragmatic Theory justify James' assertion and explain why a fact can verify an idea, it establishes that the function fulfilling process is not the Pragmatists' definition of truth, but their criterion for truth. The concept of workability, like the concept of coherence, is freed to stand as the Pragmatists' candidate for the acceptability qualifier.

The Pragmatists' suggestion for the acceptability qualifier is indeed to be preferred to that of the Coherence Theorists. It is to be preferred because it makes truth a more objective predicate. According to the Pragmatic Theory, truth is determined by objective facts, like, the presence of the cat on the mat, and not the statements of some individual's subjective system of thought.

Despite this objectivity, the Pragmatic Theory has a fault. It is too tied to the process of problem-solving to deal with a priori truths as traditionally understood. An a priori truth is not a necessary truth, according to the Pragmatists, just a mere stipulation. Clarence Irving Lewis expressed this thought in the following way:

The a priori represents an attitude in some sense freely taken, a stipulation of the mind itself, and a stipulation which might be made in some other way if it suited our bent or need. Such truth is necessary as opposed to contingent, not as opposed to voluntary. And the a priori is independent of experience not because it prescribes a form which the data of sense must fit, or

anticipates some preestablished harmony of experience with the mind, but precisely because it prescribes nothing to experience. That is a a priori which is true, no matter what. What it anticipates is not the given, but our attitude toward it: it concerns the uncompelled initiative of mind or, as Josiah Royce would say, our categorical ways of acting.<sup>26</sup>

This is problematic because it makes various concepts, like the laws of mathematics or the notion of a figure-ground relationship, a purely arbitrary matter, and not a fact about the world.

#### THE NON-DESCRIPTIVE THEORY OF TRUTH

The Non-Descriptive Theory of truth was developed by P. F. Strawson as an attempt to apply J. L. Austin's conception of performative statements<sup>27</sup> to the refutation of Tarski's Semantic Theory of truth, a more precise form of the Correspondence Theory.<sup>28</sup> J. L. Austin, however, did not approve of this application and attacked it in an article entitled "Truth." This article, as well as, one by P. F. Strawson, became the core of a symposium on truth prepared for the Aristotelian Society. The initial formulation of this doctrine by Mr. Strawson is to be found in an article entitled "Truth" which was published in 1949, the year before the symposium, in Analysis. This article by Mr. Strawson will serve as the major source for the following exposition of his theory.

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#### Strawson, Performatives and Truth

Fundamental to the Non-Descriptive Theory of truth is the belief

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<sup>26</sup>Clarence Irving Lewis, "A Pragmatic Conception of the A Priori," Meaning and Knowledge: Systematic Readings in Epistemology, ed. Ernest Nagel and Richard B. Brandt (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), p. 221.

<sup>27</sup>See pages 9 and 10 of this paper.

<sup>28</sup>See page 21 of this chapter.

that truth is not a property. In fact, Mr. Strawson stated it in a more germane way in these words: "Truth is not a property of symbols; for it is not a property."<sup>29</sup> To say that truth is not a property is to say that it is not about anything, especially statements or sentences. It is not the name of a quality possessed by a particular group of sentences or statements.

The assertion of this belief's contradiction, i.e., the assertion that truth is a property of sentences, results from maintaining one or both of the following two theses:

First, any sentence beginning 'It is true that. . . ' does not change its assertive meaning when the phrase 'It is true that' is omitted. More generally, to say that an assertion is true is not to make any further assertion at all; it is to make the same assertion. This I shall call Thesis 1.

Second, to say that a statement is true is to make a statement about a sentence of a given language, viz., the language in which the first statement was made. It is (in other and more technical terms) to make a statement in a meta-language ascribing the semantic property of truth (or the semantic predicate 'true') to a sentence in an object-language. The object-sentence concerned should strictly be written in inverted commas to make it clear that we are talking about the sentence; and the phrase 'is true' should strictly be followed by some such phrase as 'in L', where 'L' designates the object-language concerned. This I shall call Thesis 2.<sup>30</sup>

What is being asserted in the first thesis is that the sentences, "The cat is on the mat," and, "It is true that the cat is on the mat," say

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no more than that the cat is on the mat. What is being asserted in the second thesis is more difficult to explain. Fundamental to understanding this thesis is an understanding of what is meant by the distinction

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<sup>29</sup>Peter Frederick Strawson, "Truth," Meaning and Knowledge: Systematic Readings in Epistemology, ed. Ernest Nagel and Richard B. Brandt (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), p. 161.

<sup>30</sup>Strawson, pp. 160-161.

between an object-language and a meta-language. This distinction is difficult to grasp, because it is not like the distinction between Indo-European and Semitic languages. A language cannot at one time be an Indo-European language and at another a Semitic language. This is not the case with languages which can be classed as either object-languages or meta-languages. It is possible, and often the case, that the same language can at one moment be an object-language and at the next a meta-language. How this is possible can be seen from the definition of the term "meta-language." A meta-language is by definition a language used to talk about other languages. For example, when someone says, "'Das ist mein Buch,' is a German sentence," he is saying something in English, his meta-language, about a sentence in his object-language, German.

After stating these theses, Mr. Strawson goes on to point out their good and bad points.

Of these two theses, the first is true, but inadequate; the second is false, but important. The first thesis is right in what it asserts, and wrong in what it suggests. The second thesis is wrong in what it asserts, but right in what it implies. The first thesis is right in asserting that to say that a statement is true is not to make a further statement; but wrong in suggesting that to say that a statement is true is not to do something different from, or additional to, just making the statement. The second thesis is right in implying that to say that a statement is true is to do something different from just making the statement; but wrong in asserting that this 'something different' consists in making a further statement, viz., a statement about a sentence.<sup>31</sup>

The fault with the first thesis is that it suggests that the phrase "is true" has no purpose. If this were the case, then there would be no reason to attach it to other sentences. If its being there does not alter the meaning of the sentence, then it must have some other purpose,

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<sup>31</sup>Strawson, p. 161.

even if only to waste words. Even though, the distinction between object-languages and meta-languages is valuable, it is not in this situation that it proves its value. Mr. Strawson claims that the problem with the second thesis is that it ignores the context within which the phrase "is true" is used. It ignores the fact that the expression "is true" is not used to describe, but to agree.

If the true elements of these two theses are combined, then the Non-Descriptive Theory of truth is born. According to Mr. Strawson, to say, "It is true that the cat is on the mat," is not to assert anything about cats and mats, but to agree with an earlier speaker's assertion that there is a cat on the mat. "Is true" becomes synonymous with "I agree." Truth becomes the act of confirming.

#### Strawson and the Longings of Contemporary Man

Strawson's theory exhibits a greater degree of dissatisfaction with the Correspondence Theory of truth than any of the other theories covered. He is not interested in maintaining, or improving, any part of the Correspondence Theory. Despite this fact, his writings suggest some important things in regard to the directions of this paper.

Strawson and correspondence. In other writings, Mr. Strawson points out that the big problem with the Correspondence Theory is that it never gets back to the world itself. If Tarski's theory of correspondence is followed, the move is from one sentence to another. If, on the other hand, Lord Russell is followed, the move is from a statement to a fact. The problem here is that a fact is already a word related picture of the world: it is not reality itself.<sup>32</sup> If this is the case, the world

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<sup>32</sup>John R. Searle, "Strawson, Peter Frederick," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1965), VIII, 27a-27b.



is never touched by the test of correspondence. This may be the very reason why people are striving to supplement the test of correspondence with an acceptability qualifier of some type.

Strawson and the acceptability qualifier. In the Non-Descriptive Theory of truth, the ascription of the expression "is true" becomes simply a matter of fulfilling the conditions set by the acceptability qualifier, i.e., the rules of the linguistic game of agreement. The acceptability qualifier becomes a term for expressing contextual propriety. The expression "is true" can be attached to a statement if and only if it is involved in a verbal act of agreement.

#### CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this chapter to establish (1) that contemporary, Western man sees more in truth than a mere correspondence between what is and what is said; and (2) that he is trying, without complete success, to link to the belief that truth is the correspondence of statements to the world, an acceptability qualifier. The proof of the first point is to be found evidenced in the fact that while both the Coherence Theory and the Pragmatic Theory subscribe to the Aristotelian dictum of correspondence, i.e., "To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, is true,"<sup>33</sup> both suggest that more is involved with the labeling of some statement as true. The Coherence Theory and the Pragmatic Theory agree that this is a fine definition of what truth is but that it is not an adequate test for what is or is not true. The Coherence Theory suggests that the best test for

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<sup>33</sup>Tarski, p. 54.

truth is the coherence of statements to each other. On the other hand, the Pragmatic Theory suggests that the best test of a statement's truth is to see whether or not it fulfills its function. In either case, more is involved in the definition and determination of truth than the assessment of correspondence. When the Non-Descriptive Theory is considered, it is found that the assessment of correspondence has nothing to do with the definition and determination of truth. In this theory, the meaning and use of the expression "is true" is totally determined by the rules of the linguistic game called agreement. Both the weight of truth's definition and determination is thrown upon the Strawsonian conception of the acceptability qualifier. Therefore, in the three theories considered mere correspondence between what is and what is said is seen as being inadequate for both the determination and definition of truth.

The inadequacy of the definitions put forward for the acceptability qualifier establishes the second thesis, i.e., that contemporary, Western man is trying, without complete success to link with the belief that truth is the correspondence of statements to the world, an acceptability qualifier. While each of the theories mentioned defines the acceptability qualifier, their definitions involve faults which detract from their acceptability. Either the definition is too

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subjective, too limited or too independent to be combined with correspondence. For example, if the acceptability qualifier is understood in terms of coherence, it becomes too subjective. If it is considered from the Pragmatic point of view, it is found to be too limited for discussions of a priori truth. If the acceptability qualifier is considered from the perspective of the Non-Descriptive Theory, it is found

that there is no need to rely upon the Correspondence Theory at all in the determination or definition of truth. Therefore, it can be said, at least in terms of the theories considered, that there has been an effort to link with the Correspondence Theory an acceptability qualifier, but that the effort has not been a complete success.

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## Chapter 3

### HEIDEGGER AND HIS SOURCES

By this point, the writer believes he has established that at the heart of the Correspondence Theory of truth is the belief that reality or being, that is, what is, and truth are tied together. In order for a statement to be true in the primary sense of the term, it must correspond to a fact, i.e., to what is. It must be possible to match with the statement an event in the world. This is not as simple as it may seem. In fact, it has been suggested that it cannot be done. One person to have suggested this is P. F. Strawson.<sup>1</sup>

According to Mr. Strawson, the problem with the Correspondence Theory of truth is that it falsely equates facts with events in the world. The difficulty here is that facts and events are not the same thing. Unlike an event, a fact is a word related picture of the world: it is not reality itself.<sup>2</sup> A fact can be distinguished from an event, from reality itself, in that facts, "unlike events, situations, states of affairs, or objects, have no date or location."<sup>3</sup> Where the cat may be on the mat now and gone in an hour, the fact that the cat was on the mat is timeless. Similarly, facts are not normally to be found reclining on mats.

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<sup>1</sup>See pages 34 and 35 of this paper.

<sup>2</sup>John R. Searle, "Strawson, Peter Frederick," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1965), VIII, 27a-27b.

<sup>3</sup>Alan R. White, Truth (Anchor Books ed.; Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970), p. 80.

This false equation of facts with reality is problematic, because the type of correspondence required by the Correspondence Theory of truth is that of a statement's semi-parallelism with a fact.<sup>4</sup> This being the case, truth is robbed of any direct connection to reality. The statement, "It is true that the cat is on the mat," is verified through comparing it with a fact, not reality. It may be asked, "Is every tie to reality then lost?" No. Reality is considered the criterion for determining whether or not something is a fact. Therefore, truth does not have a direct, but a mediated tie to reality. According to the traditional formulation of the Correspondence Theory, facts bridge the gap between truths and events.

This is not an altogether happy situation, because it evades the real issue. It leads people into falsely thinking that they understand what it is for a true statement to correspond to reality, when they do not. This approach to the problem explains what it is for a statement to correspond to a fact, but leaves untouched the problem of what it is for a fact to correspond to the world. The nature of the correspondence between true statements and the world is not completely described.

#### HEIDEGGER AND TRUTH

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It is from this unhappy situation that Martin Heidegger sought and found escape. This escape required a reformulating of the Correspondence Theory of truth. His best presentation of this reformulated doctrine, which will now be called the Heideggerian Theory of truth, is to be found in "On the Essence of Truth." This reformulation is

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<sup>4</sup>See pages 19 and 20 of this paper.

accomplished in two phases. The first phase involves the redetermination of what is the primary sense of truth. The second phase of this reformulation requires the elucidation of the early Greek conception of alētheia.

#### A Switch in Primacy

It was earlier stated that truth has two senses.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Heidegger agrees with this point. Even though he agrees that truth has two senses, he disagrees with the earlier determination of which sense is primary. It was determined earlier that the primary sense of truth had to deal with statements, and not objects. Prof. Heidegger considers the reverse to be the case.

Not only did Martin Heidegger switch the determination of primacy, he gave more descriptive names to the two classes of things which can be called true. To the first class of truths, that is, the things that are said, Prof. Heidegger gave the very appropriate name "propositional truths."<sup>6</sup> He probably called them propositional truths, because their truth is dependent upon the propositions they express. The second class of truth he referred to as "material truths."<sup>7</sup> This is very appropriate terminology to use in regards to the objects that populate the world.

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Employing this new terminology, it is discovered that Heidegger would prefer to consider material truth as primary, and not secondary.

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<sup>5</sup>See pages 8 and 9 of this paper.

<sup>6</sup>Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth", trans. John Sallis, Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), pp. 119 ff.

<sup>7</sup>Heidegger, pp. 119 ff.

This stands in opposition to the earlier stance taken in this paper. At that point, the propositional sense of truth was considered primary.

Dr. Martin Heidegger generates two reasons for making this change. The first of these deals with the scope of propositional truth. The second reason is rooted in the traditional definition of truth: "veritas est adequatio rei et intellectūs [Truth is the adequation of matter and intellect.]." <sup>8</sup>

It is not reasonable to assume that propositional truth is the primary sense of truth, because it presupposes material truth. If a statement is to be propositionally true, it must first be materially true. A statement cannot be true, unless it is correctly stated: It cannot be propositionally true, unless it meets the standards for being a proper statement. For example, "Four greens quickly," cannot be propositionally true, because it does not meet the criteria for being a statement. The words, "Four greens quickly," cannot be propositionally true, because it is not materially adequate. It is just an interesting collection of words, and not a statement. It says nothing.

A second reason for making this switch is to be found in the traditional definition of truth. From the middle ages forward, truth has been generally defined as the adequation of matter and intellect. Accordingly, if one wants to check the truth of one of his ideas, he must compare it with the objects of his world. But, if this checking is to ~~avoid the falsehood brought by illusion, then it must be first determined~~ whether or not the objects in question are materially true. To determine the truth of the statement, "There is a bent stick in the water," one must first determine if the stick is a real stick. Therefore, one must first determine the material truths involved before he can determine the status of the proposition in question.

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<sup>8</sup>Heidegger, p. 120.

### Heidegger on Alētheia

There are three things which have a great bearing upon Heidegger's understanding of alētheia. The first thing is the source from which he drew the concept. The second is the term, "letting be." The last item is his understanding of freedom.

Heidegger, in formulating his understanding of alētheia, drew primarily from three Greek philosophers. The first of these philosophers is Aristotle. Heidegger found a great deal of material concerning this subject in Aristotle's interpretation of alētheuein in the Nicomachean Ethics, "which analyzed the many ways of relating to 'truth,' that is, ways of letting beings show themselves as they are in their Being."<sup>9</sup> The second Greek philosopher to serve as a source for Heidegger's musing about alētheia is Plato. The role that Plato's thought played in Heidegger's musings concerning truth can be found reflected in the article entitled, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth." Last, but by no means least, is Heraclitus. In fact, Heraclitus can be considered the most important of the three. Heraclitus can be considered the most important because it was fragment B 16 of Heraclitus' works which served as the text for Heidegger's article "Alētheia."<sup>10</sup>

Even though alētheia is normally translated as truth, Heidegger found that the above mentioned Greeks used it in a little different way. For these Greeks, alētheia was not what corresponded, but what was disclosed. Therefore, Heidegger has chosen to translate alētheia as "disclosure" or "unconcealment."<sup>11</sup> Alētheia, or truth, is predicated of something, when it serves to disclose what is.

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<sup>9</sup>David Farrell Krell, ed., Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), p. 14.

<sup>10</sup>Krell, p. 396.

<sup>11</sup>Heidegger, p. 127.



One thing that allows this disclosing of the world to come about is described in the term "letting be." Heidegger uses this term in a sense quite different from the normal use.

Ordinarily we speak of letting be whenever, for example, we forgo some enterprise that has been planned. "We let something be" means we do not touch it again, we have nothing more to do with it. To let something be has here the negative sense of letting it alone, of renouncing it, of indifference and even neglect.<sup>12</sup>

If the world is to be disclosed, it must not be neglected. Anyone interested in disclosing the world must engage himself in the world.

However, the phrase required now--to let beings be--does not refer to neglect and indifference but rather the opposite. To let be is to engage oneself with beings. On the other hand, to be sure, this is not to be understood only as the mere management, preservation, tending, and planning of the beings in each case encountered or sought out. To let be--that is, to let beings be as the beings which they are--means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness, as it were, along with itself. Western thinking in its beginning conceived this open region as ta alētheia, the unconcealed. If we translate alētheia as "unconcealment" rather than "truth," this translation is not merely more literal; it contains the directive to rethink the ordinary concept of truth in the sense of the correctness of statements and to think it back to that still uncomprehended disclosedness and disclosure of beings. To engage oneself with the disclosedness of beings is not to lose oneself in them; rather, such engagement withdraws in the face of beings in order that they might reveal themselves with respect to what and how they are and in order that presentative correspondence might take its standard from them.<sup>13</sup>

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When one engages the world, for the sake of disclosing it, he must not engage it with a mind to alter it, to change it, but with a mind to leave it as it is. He must leave it as it is, so that it can conform to the material standards of truth applicable to it. "Letting be," then, is not an altering of being, but an assisting of being in its

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<sup>12</sup>Heidegger, p. 127.

<sup>13</sup>Heidegger, pp. 127-128.

self-realization. It is the process of bringing being into being.

Freedom is the last item of importance in considering the Heideggerian conception of alētheia. Freedom can be called a pre-condition for alētheia. For Heidegger, freedom is not just the mere absence of chains and bars, it is engagement itself. Heidegger expressed it in this way:

Freedom is not merely what common sense is content to let pass under this name: the caprice, turning up occasionally in our choosing, of inclining in this or that direction. Freedom is not mere absence of constraint with respect to what we can or cannot do. Nor is it on the other hand mere readiness for what is required and necessary (and so somehow a being). Prior to all this ("negative" and "positive" freedom), freedom is engagement in the disclosure of beings as such.<sup>14</sup>

The type of freedom which is of interest to Heidegger is not the freedom of mere engagement, but the kind of freedom which can be characterized as letting things be. Understood in this way, freedom is what brings truth into being.

In summation, Heidegger understands alētheia, truth, to be the disclosure of the world that results from engaging the world in such a way that it can be what it is.

### The Heideggerian Theory of Truth

Having discussed the Heideggerian switch and the Heideggerian conception of alētheia, it is possible to formulate the Heideggerian Theory of truth. In brief, a statement is true when it allows something to be materially true. A statement is considered to be true when it serves as a cause for a being's revelation. The statement, "The cat is on the mat," is judged as true, when it serves to reveal an unknown aspect of the cat's way of living, that is, when it reveals a mode of

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<sup>14</sup>Heidegger, p. 128.

the cat's existence.

It can be objected that this theory of truth robs true propositions of their timelessness. This is really not the case. What has been said above must be considered as a description of what happens when a statement becomes true. As the years pass, there is no reason to require that what has been revealed go back into hiding, even though this often happens. It is important to note that the importance of the revelation may decline as time passes. Facts have a habit, like most things, of becoming common place. For example, how many people are surprised when the lights go on?

#### Heidegger and this Paper

Heidegger's work in the area of truth is of importance to the development of this paper for two reasons. The first reason is that he presents us with a radical transformation of the Correspondence Theory. The second reason is that he suggests a new tack which can be taken in the definition of the acceptability qualifier.

While still holding that truth is correspondence, Martin Heidegger brings about a radical transformation of the Correspondence Theory of truth. He brought about this transformation in doing two things. First, he established that contemporary man had erred in his determination of which class of truths are really primary. He determined that material truths should be considered primary, and not propositional truths. The second thing he did was to reject the notion that correspondence consisted in a semi-parallelism of statements and facts. He rejected the notion that the correspondence lies between statements and the world. For Heidegger, statements are like ideas in the Pragmatic Theory of truth. Both statements and ideas are functional elements in

the discovery of truth. Both are goal directed and validated terms. In both cases, the truth of a statement or idea depends upon its ability to bring about a desired end. In the case of ideas, the end is the solution of a problem. In the case of statements, the end is an understanding of what is. According to Heidegger the correspondence lies between objects and the standard for their existence.

The second reason that Heidegger is important to the development of this paper is that he offers a new direction which can be taken in the definition of the acceptability qualifier. What he suggests is that the real criteria for truth should be found in the standards for material truth. Unfortunately, he fails to define what these standards are. It is hoped that further examination in this area will yield the definition Heidegger missed.

#### HEIDEGGER'S SOURCES

In the previous section, the Heideggerian Theory of truth was discussed. It was discovered to be truly revolutionary, but yet incomplete. While suggesting a new direction which can be taken in the definition of the acceptability qualifier, it fails to follow through with a formulation of this definition. What this theory suggests is that the real criteria for truth is to be found in the standards for material truth. Unfortunately, the Heideggerian Theory fails to define what these standards are: It fails to define the acceptability qualifier.

After noting this limitation of the Heideggerian Theory, the hope was expressed that further examination in this area would yield the definition that the Heideggerian Theory lacks. Where is this further examination to start? Probably, the best place for it to start is where Heidegger himself started. Consequently, the refining of this

theory will begin with an examination of the Greek philosophers from which Heidegger derived his theory.

In his theorizing about truth, Heidegger drew primarily from the works of Aristotle, Plato and the Presocratics. The first two of these thinkers, that is, Aristotle and Plato, can be considered together. The Presocratics, on the other hand, must be considered separately from both Aristotle and Plato.

Aristotle and his teacher, Plato, can be considered together, because they stand in opposition to the modes of Presocratic thought. Prior to Socrates, it was unity, and not difference, which characterized the thoughts of the Greek philosophers. When, for example, the Presocratics thought about Being, they strove to maintain the identity, the sameness of such concepts, as Being and Becoming, reality and appearance. This is why people attribute to Thales, the "initiator of Greek philosophy"<sup>15</sup>, the view that all things are one.<sup>16</sup> This situation was altered when Plato introduced the notion of ideal forms--unseen, quasi-spiritual entities--which he equated with Being.<sup>17</sup> As a result of this Platonic innovation, a gulf arose in philosophical thought between reality and appearance. Therefore, Plato is the point of demarcation for two philosophic traditions, i.e., the Presocratic and the Western metaphysical traditions.

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<sup>15</sup>Frederick Copleston, S. J., A History of Philosophy (Image Books Edition; Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962), Vol. I, Part I, p. 40.

<sup>16</sup>Copleston, Vol. I, Part I, p. 93.

<sup>17</sup>J. L. Mehta, The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), pp. 147-149.

### Plato and Aristotle

The emergence of this gulf between reality and appearance brought a change in the conception of truth for the entire Western metaphysical tradition. Not only did it bring a change in the Platonic conception of truth, it also generated a new notion of truth which has been employed in the thinking of Western philosophers since the time of Plato. This means that Aristotle, though differing in many ways from Plato, employed generally the same notion of truth that Plato did.

According to Heidegger, the emergence of this gulf transformed truth from being a matter of unhiddenness to a matter of perceptual correctness, "from a-letheia to orthotes."<sup>18</sup> To characterize truth as "orthotes", i.e., correctness, accomplishes something very interesting. It makes it possible to declare that the primary sense of truth is propositional. This is the case because truth becomes a matter of the correctness of a perceptually oriented proposition, and not a matter of some objects faithfulness to its essence. When truth is characterized as "orthotes", then it does not matter if it is characteristic of cats to bark. All that matters is whether or not some cat has been heard barking. If some cat has been heard barking, then it is true to say that the cat was barking.

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~~What has been said thus far about truth characterized as correct-~~  
 ness applies equally well to both Plato and the Western metaphysical tradition that he spawned. However, Plato's theory of truth did possess a feature which makes it unique. While opening the door to the idea that truth is primarily propositional in character, he did not move from the belief that truth is primarily material in character. He did

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<sup>18</sup> Mehta, p. 149.

not follow his thoughts to their ultimate conclusion. The reason that he did not follow his thoughts to their natural conclusion was that he was preoccupied with the analysis of absolute truth.

In the Republic, especially those sections in which Plato presents the analogy of the Line and the allegory of the Cave, Plato declares that there are two kinds of truth, or knowledge. He calls one category opinion and the other, knowledge. It is only in the category called knowledge that Plato claims that real and infallible truth can be found. Most people would argue that there are truths to be found among man's opinions. Having mentioned that Plato believes that truth is ultimately only to be found in the category labeled knowledge, it becomes necessary to delimit what he means to include in that category. Plato uses the term "knowledge" to refer to information about ideal forms, or what are now termed universals. On the other hand, Plato uses the term "opinion" to describe statements about appearances, about particulars. Statements about goodness would be categorized as knowledge bearing, because goodness is one of the Platonic ideal forms. The statement, "The cat is on the mat", would be a matter of opinion, because it deals with particulars. For Plato, true knowledge can only be possessed concerning the world of ideal forms.

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Before going in further, it must be understood that Heidegger

rejected both the general notion of truth as correctness and Plato's particular formulation of that notion. Many reasons can be put forward for why Heidegger would want to reject this notion. The first reason is that it demands a distinction between reality and appearance. Heidegger makes abundantly clear in Being and Time that reality and appearance are one. In this work, he equates reality with essence and

then proceeds to establish a method for determining essential in a given series of some being's appearances. He argues that a being's essence is the common residue of that being's appearances. If, for example, a pyramid is described from a number of different vantage points and those descriptions are compared, what is found is that it is consistently described as a figure having at least two dimensions. This is found to be what Heidegger would call the essence, or reality, or being, of a pyramid. Therefore, because Heidegger views reality as a subset of all possible appearance, and not a separate category of existence, it would be impossible for him to support this Platonic based conception of truth as correctness.

A second reason why Heidegger rejected this notion of truth can be found in the fact that it opens the door to the declaration that the primary sense of truth is propositional. Dr. Heidegger makes it clear in "On the Essence of Truth" that he believes the primary sense of truth to be material truth.<sup>19</sup> He put forward this position for two reasons. The first reason is that a statement cannot be true propositionally, unless it is a proper statement.<sup>20</sup> For example, "Four greens quickly" cannot be propositionally true, because it does not meet the criteria for being a statement. The words, "Four greens quickly", say nothing. The second reason was that the primacy of material truth is indicated by the traditional definition of truth: "veritas est adequatio [Truth is the adequation of matter and intellect]."<sup>21</sup> According to this

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<sup>19</sup>Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth", trans. John Sallis, Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), pp. 119 ff.

<sup>20</sup>See page 41 of this paper.

<sup>21</sup>Heidegger, p. 120.



definition, a statement's truth is based on its acceptable description of what is already materially true. This is a situation that is not always recognized by individuals subscribing to the traditional definition of truth. Therefore, considering Dr. Heidegger's rejection of the primacy of propositional truth for the above reasons, it would be unfair to expect him to support a theory that entailed the primacy of propositional truth.

The last reason Prof. Heidegger would have for rejecting the notion of truth as correctness is that it is closely tied to the spirit of Nihilism. This conception of truth is the result of the generation of a gulf between reality and appearance. Heidegger claims that this step is the first move in mode of thought that finds its logical fulfillment in the Nihilism of Nietzsche.<sup>22</sup> By this claim Heidegger means to suggest that Plato began the trend for Western thinkers to reject and rebel against their culture, instead of thinking through their culture. Nietzsche's exhortation to the effect that one should generate his own morals can be considered the flowering of this rebellious trend. It can be considered the flowering of Nihilism, because it tells the rebel what he can do once the traditional norms have been rejected. It tells the rebel that he can make up his own rules. On the other hand, the rather conservative Prof. Heidegger would prefer it, if a

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thinker would simply think through--discover what was intended in the thoughts of his ancestors.

### The Presocratics

Desiring to turn from the rebelliousness of Plato and the Western metaphysical tradition, Prof. Heidegger turned to Plato's

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<sup>22</sup>Mehta, pp. 126-127.

intellectual ancestors for direction. It was to Presocratic philosophy, especially the writings of Heraclitus, that he turned.

The most important portion of Heraclitus' works for the formulation of the Heideggerian Theory of truth is fragment B 16: "How could anyone escape the notice of that which never sets?"<sup>23</sup> This fragment serves as the text upon which Heidegger based his article entitled "Alētheia."<sup>24</sup> This statement is very elusive and seems to say little, if anything, about truth. The one thing that it seems to suggest is that what is true is obvious because it is always present with us. What is true is that which is not hidden. This statement, while encapsulating the Heideggerian Theory, does not throw any light on the standard for material truth. This fragment does not aid in the solution of the problem set for this chapter, that is, the determination of the criteria for material truth. Since, this is the only statement in the works of Heraclitus dealing with truth, it can be stated that Heraclitus does not provide an answer to the question of what the standard for material truth is. This is also the case with the other Presocratics.

### The Greeks Reconsidered

The hope that a turn to the Heideggerian sources would provide a detailing of the standard for material truth has proven fruitless.

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Neither the Platonic tradition nor the Presocratic thinkers have been of any help. In the investigation of Plato it was found that any

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<sup>23</sup>John Mansley Robinson, An Introduction to Early Greek Philosophy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 103.

<sup>24</sup>David Farrell Krell, ed., Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), p. 396.

positive contribution that Plato could have made would have been at odds with Heideggerian metaphysics. It would have been at odds with Heidegger's metaphysics, because it divorced reality from appearance, "Being" from "Becoming." Even though, Heidegger and the Presocratics shared the belief in the identity of "Being" and "Becoming," the Presocratic writings were of no help in determining the standard for material truth. Therefore, if the hoped for solution to this problem is to come, it can now be clearly seen that it must come from a different quarter.

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## Chapter 4

### A PARALLEL TRADITION: THE BIBLE

Despite the fact that the Heideggerian sources did not provide the hoped for standard for material truth, one need not give up the hope that it can be found. In fact, there is a parallel tradition that appears to provide the solution. This parallel tradition finds its literary expression in the Bible. This tradition can be called the Hebraic tradition or the Biblical tradition.

### THE GORDON THESIS

One might object that the Biblical or Hebraic tradition does not parallel the Greek intellectual tradition. It could be objected that one is Semitic, and that the other is Indo-European. Or, it could be objected that one is prophetic, and that the other is philosophical. The Hebraic culture is clearly Semitic and prophetic in character, and not in the least Indo-European and philosophical. On the other hand, the intellectual development of the Greeks can be characterized as Indo-European and philosophical. Clearly a gulf exists between the Hebraic and the Greek traditions.

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Cyrus H. Gordon contends that, despite these differences, "Greek and Hebrew civilizations are parallel structures built upon the same East Mediterranean foundation."<sup>1</sup> By this he means that both

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<sup>1</sup>Cyrus H. Gordon, The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1965), p. 9.

civilizations were generated from the same foundation and that each built upon that foundation. Both the Greeks and the Hebrews took from the culture that spawned them. In doing this, they generated divergent, yet parallel, civilizations.

This thesis was put forward by Prof. Gordon in an attempt to answer the question, "Why are there so many parallels between the Bible and Homer's poetry?" This question arose as a result of the discovery of significant parallels between the Bible and Homer. Among the many parallels which generated this question are the functional equivalence of the Greek aegis and the Hebrew Staff of God,<sup>2</sup> and the use of triads in catalogues.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the various parallels, what evidence can be advanced in support of the contention that Greek and Hebrew civilizations are parallel structures. To these parallels Dr. Gordon adds two other types of evidence. First, Mr. Gordon supports his thesis through an analysis of East Mediterranean urban society, i.e., through an analysis of the Levantine. Secondly, he strengthens his position by tracing the development of Minoan civilization. The Minoan civilization was the foundation upon which the Greeks built their culture.

When one understands the urban structure common in the eastern Mediterranean in and around the Amarna Age, he begins to see the potential for cross-cultural fertilization in this area. During this and earlier ages, the cities of the eastern Mediterranean were great commercial centers where people--merchants, soldiers and diplomats--gathered from many lands. The cities were a sort of melting pot. This particular form or style of melting pot is termed a Levantine pattern.

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<sup>2</sup>Gordon, pp. 12-13.      <sup>3</sup>Gordon, pp. 16-17.

The Levantine pattern is the mingling of distinct communities side by side. If we contrast a Levantine city (such as Istanbul, Beirut or Alexandria) with an American city (such as New York or Boston), the difference between the Near East Levant and the American melting pot will become clear. The minorities in the Levant maintain their individuality for centuries, and even millennia, whereas the norm in an American metropolis is assimilation.<sup>4</sup>

In a Levant, instead of forming one culture, the groups are allowed to intermingle and pollenate each other, while maintaining their own distinctives. In an environment like this it becomes very easy for an individual or a group to become familiar with another culture. This potentiality supports Dr. Gordon's thesis in that it establishes a method for cross-cultural fertilization that does not require the merging of the cultures involved. It allows the cultures to form in parallel structures as opposed to one tremendous monolith.

Dr. Gordon's analysis of Minoan history serves as the real support of his thesis. His analysis of Minoan history is based primarily on two things. The first is his discovery that the earliest Minoan inscriptions are written in a Semitic language.<sup>5</sup> The second item upon which his history is based is the fact that the early Twelfth Dynasty Pharaohs overthrew the foreigners of the Delta.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Gordon suggests that this conflict resulted in the mass exodus of Semites from the Nile Delta. It would be at this time that the Hebrews moved into the land of Canaan. Mr. Gordon suggests that Semites also moved during this period to the islands of Crete. In these islands the Semites set up what is now called the Minoan Culture. The fact that the Minoan culture is Semitic in origin is born out by the nature of the Minoan language. Dr.

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<sup>4</sup>Gordon, pp. 30-31.

<sup>5</sup>Gordon, pp. 206-217.

<sup>6</sup>Gordon, p. 7.

Cyrus Gordon has established that the lingua franca of the Minoan civilization is Semitic. With the lingua franca of the Minoan culture being Semitic, it is only natural to assume that the major population group of this culture was Semitic and, quite possibly, from the Nile Delta. It might be objected that the islands of Crete are a little too far from Egypt for any major migration. In response to this objection, it can be stated that Prof. Fell of Harvard has discovered inscriptions which suggest that both Egyptians and Semites had colonized North America some 2500 years ago.<sup>7</sup> The remainder of Minoan history has been known for a long time. During the close of the second millennia, Greek speaking Indo-Europeans invaded the islands of Crete. And, like the Romans who in turn invaded Greece, these Indo-Europeans adopted the culture of the Minoans. It would then be as a result of this merging of the Greek and Minoan cultures that Homer would have become familiar with the Semitic world.

Therefore, considering the data just presented, it is reasonable to say that both the Greek and the Hebrew cultures are parallel structures built upon the same foundation. It now seems clear that both the Greek and the Hebraic traditions were spawned in Egypt and that both cultures followed divergent, yet parallel, courses of development. With this being the case, the Hebraic tradition would then be an excellent

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place to turn to find a theory of truth similar to the early Greek theory, and to, also, find a determination of the standard for material truth.

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<sup>7</sup>Barry Fell, America B. C. (New York: Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co., 1976).

# THE BIBLE, THE GREEKS AND TRUTH

The Bible is the chief expression of the Hebraic tradition and, as such, the best place to look for material on the Hebraic notion of truth. One might object that the Bible is not the best place to turn, because it represents two different traditions, i.e., the Jewish and the Christian. It is true that the Bible contains material sacred to both of these faiths, but it is wrong to suggest that they are completely distinct traditions. The Christian faith is no more than the fulfillment of the first stages of the Hebraic tradition. This fulfillment is the result of the arrival of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ. Christ revolutionized--but did not abandon--the Hebraic tradition by doing two things. First, he pushed through to the essence of the tradition in his teachings. Secondly, he brought reconciliation with God, the goal of the Hebraic tradition, through his death and resurrection.

Even though truth is conceived in essentially the same way through out the Bible, there are some differences between the presentations of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The New Testament expresses a much fuller understanding of truth. In the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, truth is discussed in a number of different connections. The Old Testament conception of truth finds its expression

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in the usage of the Hebrew word "ʾemeth." "ʾemeth" is used in primarily three different ways in the Old Testament. It is considered from the perspectives of epistemology, law and religion.<sup>8</sup> "Alētheia" is the

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<sup>8</sup>Gottfried Quell, Gerhard Kittel and Rudolf Bultmann, "ἀλήθεια, ἀληθής, ἀληθινός, ἀληθεύω," The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (1964), I, 232-237.



Greek term used to signify the New Testament conception of truth.

Rudolf Bultmann points out in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament that "alētheia" is used in six different ways. He suggests that it is used for that which has the force of certainty; for that upon which a person can rely; for that which is disclosed in experience; for that which is a true statement; for that which is a true doctrine; or for that which is genuine.<sup>9</sup>

From the perspective of epistemology, the Old Testament teaches that the word "ʾemeth" describes a firm, binding reality.<sup>10</sup> It describes a world with which one interacts. It suggests, as did Heidegger and the Presocratics, that a precondition for truth is engagement with the world. It also indicates that truth is ultimately grounded in reality. Here is found the suggestion that truth involves both the individual's encounter with the world and the primacy of material truth.

It is in the New Testament that the last parallel is found which allows for the identification in essential respects between the Hebraic and the Heideggerian/Presocratic conceptions of truth. This last parallel is tied to one of the six points mentioned above in Bultmann's description of alētheia's use in the New Testament. Within the Bible, the Heideggerian corpus and the Presocratic literature, the term alētheia denotes non-concealment, disclosure. All these sources indi-

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cate that material truth is rooted in the disclosure of the world that results from engaging the world in such a way that it can be what it is. With material truth defined in this way, it is then possible to say with

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<sup>9</sup>Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, 242-247.

<sup>10</sup>Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, 232-233.

Heidegger that a statement is propositionally true when it allows something to be materially true. The statement, "The cat is on the mat," is determined to be true, when it serves to disclose some unknown aspect of the cat's way of living, that is, when it unveils a mode of the cat's existence.

Bultmann relies heavily on the first chapter of Romans to support his thesis that alētheia is sometimes employed in the Bible to denote non-concealment, disclosure. He considers the key verses for his argument to be verses 18, 19 and 25. He understands these verses to be speaking of God as a "revealed reality."<sup>11</sup> He finds additional support in Acts 4:27, Colossians 1:6 and numerous places in John.<sup>12</sup>

The parallel between the New Testament and the Heideggerian conceptions of truth extends beyond the level of material truth. The New Testament also views propositional truth in a functional way. Paul's defense of his gospel in I Corinthians suggests a functional view of language. The passage states that Paul wants to be judged in terms of the success of his proclamation. A functional view of language and preaching suggests a functional view of propositional truth.<sup>13</sup>

Having made these identifications, it is now proper to ask if the Bible can answer the question Heidegger and the Presocratics could not. It is time to see if the Bible suggests a standard for material truth. It is now time to see if the Bible suggests a method for determining whether or not a given disclosure presents some facet of the

<sup>11</sup>Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, 243.

<sup>12</sup>Quell, Kittel and Bultmann, 243.

<sup>13</sup>That Paul did indeed view propositional truth from a functional perspective will be established in the later treatment of I Thessalonians 2.

world as it is.

At this point in the investigation, the writer was most fortunate to come across I Thessalonians 2. This passage was important for what it suggested, and not what it actually said. While these verses did not define the acceptability qualifier, they did suggest a course of study which led to its definition.

I Thessalonians 2 is a defense of Paul's ministry. The Pauline defense parallels the Heideggerian Theory of truth and suggests a new direction for the investigation. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible renders this passage in the following words:

For you yourselves know, brethern, that our visit to you was not in vain; 2 but though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the face of great opposition. 3 For our appeal does not spring from error or uncleanness, nor is it made with guile; 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please men, but to please God who tests our hearts. 5 For we never used either words of flattery, as you know, or a cloak for greed, as God is witness; 6 nor did we seek glory from men, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children. 8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.<sup>14</sup>

This passage's most important portion is verse three: "For our appeal does not spring from error or uncleanness, nor is it made with guile."<sup>15</sup> From the context, it is clear that, in this verse, Paul is asserting the veracity, the truth, of his teachings. In making this assertion Paul combines three concepts. These concepts are error,

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<sup>14</sup>I Thessalonians 2:1-8 (RSV).

<sup>15</sup>I Thessalonians 2:3 (RSV).

uncleanness and guile. The last of these concepts "guile" can be omitted from our discussion, because it is clearly a reference to moral, and not epistemological truth. The other two terms have a more epistemological character and will, therefore, be studied.

Breaking with the understanding represented in the King James Version of the Bible, the Revised Standard Version rendered the Greek word "planēs" by the English word "error." In the King James Version, it is translated by the word "deceit." The Revised Standard Version's translation is to be preferred, because the term "deceit" does not accurately represent what is expressed in the Greek word "planēs." This word refers to what misleads or causes one to wander from what is at hand. It is understood by analogy with the straying of sheep. Understood in this way, planēs reflects not only the moral truth suggested by deceit, but also epistemological truth. Therefore, the more neutral term "error" is to be preferred.

When planēs is understood in its more primordial sense, as that which misleads or causes one to wander astray, it can be said to allude to the nature of propositional truth. It appears to be an employment of the notion of propositional truth conceived of as an instrument for bringing about the disclosure of some item. Paul seems to be saying that his statements have not been turning people away from experiencing

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Christ as he truly is, but have been pointing to him. In fact, Paul elsewhere claims to be directing people to Christ and to him crucified.<sup>16</sup> In this passage, Paul appears to be using the same conception of truth attributed to Heidegger and found elsewhere in the Bible.

The use of uncleanness in the analysis of epistemological truth

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<sup>16</sup>I Corinthians 2:2.

seems incongruent. Discussions of cleanness seem more appropriate in the field of moral science; however, it also has a place in epistemology. The biblical term "clean" and its opposite "unclean" can operate in both spheres of thought, because they are used to denote various states of acceptability which are determined by the same basic criteria in both the fields of ethics and epistemology. The point that the term "clean" is used to denote a state of acceptability should be fairly obvious. When something is clean, it is acceptable. For example, when a Jew declares a ham steak to be unclean, he does not mean that it has dirt on it but that it is not an acceptable food stuff. The second point, i.e., that ethics and epistemology both employ the same basic criteria for acceptability, is not as easy to see and will require an exposition of the biblical conception of cleanness.

Before pressing further, the exact relationship between the term "clean" and its standard--which will later be employed as the acceptability qualifier in virtually all areas of truth--must be explained. "Clean" is a label for what has been determined to be acceptable. Its standard is the test for acceptability. If something meets the standard, then it is labeled clean or acceptable. This is similar to the act of labeling a piece of meat prime. When the meat passes inspection, that is, meets the criteria, then it is graded prime. The label "clean" and its standard are related as elements in a testing or grading process.

What test does the Bible suggest for cleanness? If one concentrates on the Old Testament, the Law stands out as the standard. If, for example, one wants to know about a given meat's acceptability, all he needs to do is see what is said in the Law. After reading Leviticus

11:5, the individual would know that a piece of coney is unclean. In the Old Testament, the Law appears to be the final standard for cleanliness.

The use of the Law as the standard for cleanness, may be fine in the area of morality, but not in the area of epistemology. It is especially useless in the determination of material truth. Where, for example, the Law informs one about the moral status of the coney, it gives very little information about the material status of the coney. On the basis of the Law one cannot distinguish between a hare and a coney. They are both described as not being clovenfooted, cud chewers.

Some German scholars suggest that another standard for cleanness in the Old Testament is an item's proximity to something of great supernatural power.<sup>17</sup> If something has recently been close or is now close to a fearful power, then it is considered unclean. These scholars suggest that it is this conception of uncleanness that led to both the early Greek and Hebrew declarations that sex was unclean. Sex was labeled unclean, because fearful powers were viewed as taking part in sexual activity.

This notion of cleanness is also of little help in this investigation. It makes any assessment of cleanness, of acceptability, a very transitory judgment. At one moment, it is; and, at the next moment, it is not. When one seeks for truth, especially epistemological truth, one wants something that is lasting. With this being the case, it is only natural to assume that the same individual would want to work with

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<sup>17</sup>R. Meyer and F. Hauck, "καθαρός, καθάρω, καθαίρω, καθαρότης, ἀκάθαρτος, ἀκαθαρτία, καθαρισμός, ἐκκαθαίρω, περικαθάρμα," The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (1964), II, 413-431.

a fairly permanent standard for acceptability. Therefore, if a standard for cleanness, like the one above, is going to be highly transitory, then it will not be suitable for the determination of epistemological truth.

When the essence of the Hebraic tradition is revealed in the New Testament, the actual standard for cleanness is found to be quite different from what it appeared to be in the Old Testament. The New Testament declares that cleanness is determined by an act of God. It is taught that it is not someone's or something's adherence to the Law that counts, but what God has done to him or it. It is not proximity to a fearful power that determines someone's or something's cleanness, but an act of God.

A very enlightening passage in the New Testament on the relationship between cleanness and the acts of God is to be found in the 10th chapter of Acts. In verses 9-16 of this chapter is recorded a vision Peter had. In this vision a sheet was lowered from heaven containing various of unclean animals. After the lowering of the sheet, the following conversation transpired.

13 And there came a voice to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." 14 But Peter said, "No, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." 15 And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has cleansed, you must not call common."<sup>18</sup>

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Because of this vision's importance and Peter's slowness, God repeated this scene two more times.

This vision was given to teach the very important point that cleanness is a result of God's actions. Upon what kind of action performed by God is cleanness dependent? Verse 15 suggests that it is the

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<sup>18</sup>Acts 10:13-15 (RSV).

result of God cleansing something. To say this does not push the investigation forward. Of course, when something has been cleansed, it is clean. To say this is to express an utterly trivial tautology. If this investigation is to progress any further, then God's act of cleansing must be described in a non-tautological fashion.

Just such a description is to be found in the conception of a new creation. It may be objected that cleanness and creation are completely unrelated concepts, but this is not the case. It is in Galatians 6:15 that Paul establishes the connection between these concepts. In this verse Paul contrasts the notion of cleanness as resulting from an act of God with the apparent Old Testament notion that cleanness is tied either to someone's or something's adherence to the Law or to its proximity to some fearful force. In this passage he represents the apparent Old Testament view by the terms "circumcision" and "uncircumcision." He represents the view that cleanness results from God's action with the New Testament conception of a new creation. Asserting the superiority of the New Testament view, Paul says, "For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation."<sup>19</sup>

How does the New Testament conceive of the new creation? The New Testament describes a new creature as being the result of God's transforming intervention in an individual's life. God changes the believing sinner into a new creature, a saint. God creates a new being freed from its past sins. Used in this way the term "new creature" is a label synonymous in many respects with the term "clean." For this paper, what is important is not the label, but the process leading to that label. The labeling of someone as a new creature results from a

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<sup>19</sup>Galatians 6:15 (RSV).



creative act of God. As with cleanness, the New Testament conceives of the new creation as a label resulting from an act of God, to be exact from a creative act of God.

If these ideas are extended beyond the limits of the new creation, then something very wonderful is discovered. It is found that the Bible conceives of God's creative activity as being the ground for both its notion of ethical acceptability and its notion of epistemological acceptability. The Bible suggests in various ways that, in his creative work, God has established the standard by which things are to be judged. This is a truth found in the Old Testament, as well as, the New Testament. For example, the Law that the Jews were so prone to use as a standard for moral truth gained its authority from the fact that God had created it.

In establishing the Law, God revealed some of the standards that he had placed in the universe. Unfortunately, he did not reveal them all, when he gave the Law. While the Law was very complete in the area of morality and religious practice, it did not provide a standard for the determination of material truth which is the object of this portion of the current investigation. Even though, the Law did not give all the desired information, it did establish the fact that there are standards in the universe.

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Fortunately, God in his creative activity has provided a mechanism for making determinations in the area of material truth. God has established a way to determine whether or not various things are genuine. He has made provision for a test to determine if, for example, some creature is truly a coney. He did this by establishing the principle that things reproduce according to their own kind. Conies bear other conies, while roses produce other roses.

With the universe reproducing according to the principle of kind, man can determine an item's authenticity through a process of comparison. An individual can take a random sampling of items already recognized as being members of a given group, compare them, preparing a listing of the characteristics they have in common, and, then, check the item in question against the list to determine if it is the real thing. If the item has everything on the list, then the individual knows that the item is authentic. For example, a random sampling of conies can be taken and compared. The list of their shared characteristics, like no visible tail, short ears, etc., could then serve as the standard or test for genuine conies. This listing would be serving as the standard for material truth with respect to conies. It would be the acceptability qualifier for coneyhood.

Because of the terminological awkwardness of the preceeding paragraph, some new terminology will be introduced. In the previous paragraph, three terms had the tendency to get into each other's way. These terms are "group", "characteristics" and "list." This situation can be altered by employing terminology common to the mathematical sciences. In mathematics groups are referred to as sets. The characteristics mentioned are called set-defining characteristics. A list of set-defining characteristics for the same set is termed the definition of that set.

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With this new terminology in hand, it can be seen that the standard for material truth--the long hoped for acceptability qualifier--amounts to no more than the definition of the set for the category in which the object in question seeks membership.

## SUMMARY

In this section of chapter 4, three things have been accomplished. First, Cyrus H. Gordon's thesis that the Greek and Hebrew traditions are parallel structures springing from the same foundation has been reviewed and supported. This has permitted this investigation to journey beyond the fruitless fields of Greek thought into the pages of the Bible. Upon turning to the Bible, it was discovered that the Bible conceived of epistemological truth in essentially the same way that Heidegger and the Presocratics did. This fact provided impetus to continue the search for the standard for material truth, for the acceptability qualifier, within the pages of the Bible. Lastly, the long hoped for standard for material truth was discovered to rest in the definition of various sets of objects.

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## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION

The point has finally been reached towards which the previous chapters have been directed. It is now possible both to present in final form and to evaluate the conception of truth aimed at in this investigation. This point has been reached through the process of establishing three things. The first thing that needed to be established was that various attempts on the part of contemporary, Western man to link with the belief that truth is the correspondence of statements with the world an acceptability qualifier, a standard for truth, have failed. Secondly, a new direction had to be established for the investigation. This new direction was found in the writings of Martin Heidegger. In his attack of the various analytical theories of truth, he determined that the primary form of truth was material, and not propositional. This switch in the attribution of primacy brought about revolution in theorizing about truth. It changed the nature of the correspondence between statements and the world from a material correspondence to a functional correspondence. It also shifted the search for the accept-

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ability qualifier from the realm of propositional truth to the area of material truth. Lastly, a definition for the acceptability qualifier had to be established. This definition was arrived through an investigation of the biblical conception of cleanness. The acceptability qualifier was determined to be the list of set-defining characteristics for the category in which the object in question seeks membership. With

all this established, this paper's definition of truth can be presented and evaluated.

#### A DEFINITION OF TRUTH

The goal of this paper has been the production of a definition of propositional truth. Such a definition must come in two parts. The first part is foundational in character. The foundation for the definition of propositional truth is to be laid by the defining of material truth. Upon this foundation will be laid the definition of propositional truth.

The assessment that something is truly what it appears or claims to be involves three things. It involves first the assessors engagement with the object in question in such a way that it can be itself. Secondly, it involves the assessor's determination through a process of comparison what the characteristics are that determine membership in the desired category. Lastly, it involves the comparison of the listing of set-defining characteristics with the object in question. Bearing this in mind, material truth can be defined as the correspondence of an item with the standard for the category to which it belongs that has been discovered through an assessor's open experience of the world.

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It is to this foundation that this paper's definition of propositional truth is to be added. Propositional truth, following Heidegger, is understood as referring to that state in which a statement serves to bring about an awareness of some material truth. The statement, "This is a coney," is determined to be true, when it serves to reveal the fact that it is materially true that the object referred to is a coney. In this view, a statement is true when it fulfills the function of revealing

something about the world.

This is a functional, as opposed to static, account of propositional truth. In this sense, it is similar to the Pragmatic Theory of truth, but in contrast to the Correspondence Theory of truth. In the Pragmatic Theory, a statement's truth is a product of its success in problem solving, where here it is a product of its revelatory effectiveness. This is to be contrasted with the Correspondence Theory which views truth as a static matching relationship.

### EVALUATION

The evaluation of this theory will be considered under two headings. Its problems and its impact will be considered.

#### The Theory's Problems

For all the objections that this theory has laid to rest, it still has two major problems. Both problems are tied to the operation of the acceptability qualifier. In the first place, it can be objected that there are groups which are homogeneous and do not have any one characteristic in common. Secondly, it can be objected that the acceptability qualifier, the standard for material truth, cannot adequately deal with unique items.

The notion of a set-defining characteristic cannot be universally used in the formulation of the standard for material truth, because

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there are sets which do not have set-defining characteristics. The best example of this type of set is the extended family. When one considers the list of possible set-defining characteristics for any one extended family, he finds that they do not even share the same family name. This is a problem that this paper's theory as currently formulated cannot avoid. If, however, this theory were supplemented with Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblances--the doctrine that a group can be bound

together by characteristics which, though they are not universal throughout the group, do overlap at various points in the group--the problem disappears.<sup>1</sup>

The second problem is the application of the acceptability qualifier to unique items. If, for example, there is one and only one coney, how does one determine that it really is what it is. The problem amounts to the denial that a set of one item has set-defining characteristics. This problem does not result from the fact that sets of one item do not have characteristics, but from the fact that they are very hard to determine and tend to be quite arbitrary in nature. The best method for such a determination is to consider sets of one individual to be sets of experiences of that individual and, then, compare the experiences in the same way that various individuals would be compared. This is really the best method, because what the assessor is interested in really determining is not whether the individual is the individual, but whether or not a given experience of the individual is an experience of that individual.

#### The Impact of the Theory

With these objections answered, the impact of this theory can now be considered. Only two of the possible areas of impact will be considered. ~~The first area to be considered is the central issue of~~ philosophy of language, i.e., the nature of linguistic meaning. The second area is a theological issue, i.e., the doctrine of propositional inerrancy.

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<sup>1</sup>Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (3rd ed.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), pp. 31-32.

When one views propositional truth in a functional way, he is almost required to conceive of the meaning of language functionally, too. This would require the rejection of nominalism. This is not a logical but a psychological demand. It is logically possible that a statement can function effectively as a source of revelation, because its words name items in the world. Even though, it is possible, it is not necessary. It is psychologically demanding, because Western man has long believed that meaning and truth are congruent structures. This demand is not especially problematic, because there now exist highly refined functional conceptions of language.

This theory does present a problem for people who believe that the Bible is God's inerrant word. It does not provide a method for determining the truth of the Genesis account of creation. In fact for that matter, it does not provide a method for validating the theory of evolution either. This theory does not provide a method for handling events that have happened once and only once. Even the suggestion that was put forward for handling sets of one individual would not work in this situation, because there is no way to divide a single experience into more than one experience. Perhaps, this should not be considered a problem for the supporter of inerrancy, but for the supporter of this theory. It is a problem for the supporter of this theory, because it

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implies that this theory is not developed enough to handle matters of history. This should not come as a great shock, because this is only a provisional theory in an investigation that is "unterwegs."



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