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Heidegger, Correspondence Truth and the Realist Theology of Thomas Forsyth Torrance

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Recommended Citation
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June, 1997
ISBN: 0-85364-828-X/000pp/229 × 145mm £19.99

Paternoster Press
PO Box 300 Carlisle Cumbria CA3 0QS UK

paternoster press

EQ 69:2 (1997), 139–155

John D. Morrison

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> Once known, Truths acquire a utilitarian crust; they no longer interest us as truths but as useful recipes. That pure, sudden illumination which characterizes truth accompanies the latter only at the moment of discovery. Hence its Greek name *aletheia*, which originally meant the same as the word *apocalypsis* later, that is, discovery, revelation, or rather, unveiling, removing a veil or cover.[1]
>
> Ortega y Gasset

> The concept of truth enshrines at once the real being of things and the revelation of things as they are in reality. The truth of being comes to bear in its own light and in its own authority, constraining us by the power of what it is to assent to it and acknowledge it for what it is in itself. St Anselm who developed that further in a more realist way held truth to be the reality of things as they actually are independent of us before God and therefore as they ought to be known and signified by us. Everything is what it actually is and not something else and cannot according to its nature be other than it is. That is what he called its inherent 'necessity' or 'truth.'[2]
>
> Thomas F. Torrance

I. Introduction

The question and nature of truth has long been at the heart of philosophical concern at various levels and within and between schools of thought and method. Truth as 'correspondence,' however that has been construed historically, has remained at the center among the major competing views on the nature of truth. It has been called by some the 'common-sense' perspective. Yet in the last two centuries it has faced, as have emphases on

[1] Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations on Quixote*, trans. E. Rugg and D. Marin (New York: Norton, 1961) p. 67.
[2] Thomas F. Torrance, *Reality and Scientific Theology* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Academic Press, 1981), p. 141, Hereafter RST.

(critical) realist knowledge of the world, much negative response.[3] In the twentieth century such antagonism has arisen not only from among neo-Kantians and some analytical philosophers but from philosophers influenced by the thought of Martin Heidegger. It has been commonplace in some quarters to identify Heidegger's understanding of truth as 'disclosure' or 'uncovering' (*a-letheia*) as an overthrowing of the old, static, constrictive correspondence notions of truth. But this is not in fact what Heidegger has expressed. In fact his point is to support or undergird correspondence truth by his emphasis on disclosure. It is this interpretation of Heidegger which Reformed Christian theologian Thomas Torrance carefully appropriates for his own discussions of the Truth of God disclosed in his Word—thus his emphases on both correspondence and coherence truth, and on critical realism.

II. Correspondence Truth: Some Classical Expressions

In the process of examining Martin Heidegger's apparently negative response to 'correspondence theories' of truth, it is necessary that one see clearly that against which Heidegger is responding. For that reason we will examine briefly what are often regarded as three 'classical' formulations of correspondence truth in the Western tradition: the Platonic, the Aristotelian and the Thomistic. In the words of Richard Rorty, these three are all found (rightly or wrongly) to fall within the paradigm of 'the mind as a great mirror, containing various representations—some accurate, some not—and capable of being studied by pure, nonempirical methods.'[4]

Plato's understanding of correspondence truth is said to be covertly developed in the *Republic*, with the first explicit formulations of a correspondence theory to be found in the *Sophist* and the *Theaetetus*. Yet even here Plato seems to reflect some hesitation about it. In the *Sophist*, truth as correspondence is presented in relation to basic instances of human judgment involving direct perceptual apprehension of the current condition of a particular given. Regarding the truth or falsity of statements,

[3] In contrast to naive realism, critical realism, as Torrance understands it, seeks knowledge of and correction by the external fact of the object, 'the truth of things.' The mind must be yielded to and tested by the object as it discloses itself. This is set against a dualism which would separate object from knower.

[4] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 12.

'the true one states about you the things that are as they are,' and 'the false statement states about you things different from the things that are.'[5] While the dialogue questions the human capacity to know what is real and what is unreal at several points, the Stranger proposes a definition of 'real being' as that which is constituted so as to 'possess any sort of power either to affect anything else or to be affected.'[6] But if knowing is an 'acting upon' the object known, then to be known is to be changed. But this cannot occur in that which is changeless.[7] But Plato, through the Stranger, is not asserting that reality is only the 'changeless,' that which cannot be acted upon by the knower. Rather, as he later asserts, reality is comprised of both 'all that is changeless and all that is in change.'[8] But in the *Sophist*, Plato's arguments are not brought to resolution in relation to presentations of truth as correspondence. Correspondence theory is here qualified by attendant arguments which question the simplicity or self-evidence of perceptual givens as static realities which can be 'read off the surface.'

Similar points are developed in the *Theaetetus* where Socrates says that things are not given in themselves but rather 'for each other,' i.e., 'whether we speak of something's 'being' or its 'becoming,' we must speak of it as being or becoming *for someone*, or *of something*, or *toward something*.'[9] He then develops the argument that 'agent' and 'patient' are relative to each other, which raises the problem of relativism, that 'what every man believes as a result of perception is . . . true for him.' To avoid this, Socrates turns the argument away from perception to the mental operations involved in perceptually grounded judgments. Knowledge occurs on a level that is as much mental as perceptual, as shown by knowledge based on memory, knowledge of a fact not even present to the senses and thus derived not from sense experience but from mental operations which transcend such (as in mathematics). Along similar lines, Socrates finally concludes that 'we must not look for (knowledge) in sense perception at all, but in what goes on when the mind is

[5] Plato, *Sophist* 236a, trans. F.M. Cornford, *Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 957–1085.

[6] Ibid., p. 247e.

[7] Ibid., p. 248e.

[8] Ibid., p. 249d.

[9] Plato, *Theaetetus* 160c, trans. F.M. Cornford, *Collected Dialogues* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 845–919.

occupied with things by itself.'[10] Having thus problematically transferred truth to the level of mental operations, he asserts that knowing and not knowing are identical to being and not being, i.e., 'one who thinks *what is not* about anything cannot but be thinking what is false,'[11] again, a simple form of correspondence theory. Yet, again, counter arguments are raised here in relation to the notion of falsehood. It would seem that Plato's early description of correspondence truth leaves much that is unresolved.

Aristotle's version of truth as correspondence, as found in the *Metaphysics*, is not qualified in context in the way Plato does with his version. While discussing the law of the excluded middle, he makes the following clear definition of truth as correspondence: 'To say that what is is, and that what is not is not, is true; and therefore also he who says that a thing is or is not will say either what is true or what is false.'[12] This definition again seems limited by the context to clear cut instances of a correspondence between a mental reflection and particular perceptual objects. A middle ground in which things can be understood in more than one way and in which changes of judgement can occur is excluded, greatly limiting the applicability of Aristotle's definition of truth.[13] Like Plato in the *Sophist*, Aristotle seems to transfer the problem of truth from the level of sense perceptions alone to an operation 'in thought.' Hence, Aristotle maintains that truth is grounded upon the capacity of the mind to make judgments and, thereby, statements about what is and what is not, and to relate these statements by combinations and separation to particular perceptual experiences.[14] In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle places his notion of correspondence truth into a wider context. He asserts that 'there are three elements in the soul which control action and the attainment of truth: namely, Sensations, Intellect (*nous*), and Desire.'[15] In relation to these three elements, the theory of correspondence, as described in the *Metaphysics*, is held to be adequate only to the 'truth of intellect.'

St Thomas Aquinas gives much attention to a theory of truth as correspondence following the Aristotelian model. But here Aristotle's correspondence theory of truth undergoes something of a division or bifurcation because of Thomas' theological position. He starts with a problem posed by the understanding of truth as based on the intelligible grasping of sensible forms. In response to Augustine's view that truth is in the mind, he endeavors to resolve the contradiction by first contrasting truth or knowledge with desire. The goal (end) of desire, which is the good, is in the thing desired while the 'end or term of knowledge, which is truth, is in the mind,' i.e., while the direction of desire is outward to the thing, the direction of knowledge is rather from the thing to the mind.[16] This is because the referent of knowledge is the experience of truth, which is not given in the thing itself but is a mental phenomenon. Thus Thomas largely agrees with Aristotle, while also developing Aristotle's thought on truth as correspondence. While Thomas' resolution of the problem arising from the existence of objects that are not presently standing in perceptual relation to the knower in the differentiation between human and divine intellects is of interest and could further illustrate the points previously made, it is of little use for our purposes here.[17]

[10] Ibid., 187a.
[11] Ibid. 188d.
[12] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 4.7.1, trans. Hugh Tredennick (New York: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1933) (Loeb ed., pp. 199–201).
[13] Ibid. 4.6.8.
[14] Ibid. 6.4.3.
[15] Aristotle, *Nicomachian Ethics* 6.2.1, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962) (Loeb ed., pp. 327–329).

III. Martin Heidegger's Apparent Negation of 'Correspondence Truth' and Truth as 'Disclosure'

In *Being and Time*, and less directly in 'On the Essence of Truth,' Martin Heidegger seems highly critical of correspondence theories of truth which, he says, are determined by 'the kind of relation that obtains between the statement and the thing.'[18] Most expositions of Heidegger's influential understanding of *a-letheia* (as 'unveiling', 'unhiddenness' or 'dis-closure' which occurs in the mode of relationality in the context of human existence in the world) regard his position as one which casts off or overthrows correspondence notions of truth in relation to objective reality. This is a position or interpretation often taken, assumed and repeated by, e.g., W. Kaufman, F. Olafson, T. Langar, M. Grene, M. Gelven, W. Richardson, W. Macomber, J. Rouse, M. Okrent and J. Macquarrie and especially in the analytical tradition. In his

[16] St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1a. 16. 1, trans. Thomas Gornall, S.J. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 4:75.
[17] Ibid. The discussion of James J. Dicenso has been helpful at several points. Cf. below.
[18] Martin Heidegger, 'On the Essence of Truth,' *Basic Writings of Martin Heidegger* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977), p. 123. Hereafter BW.

influential philosophical hermeneutics, Anthony Thiselton has developed and analyzed at length the existential ontology of Martin Heidegger and the effects of his thought upon contemporary questions of interpretation. Thiselton is quite typical when, with regard to Heidegger's assessment of correspondence truth, he states that

> Heidegger repeatedly urges that we must avoid anything which suggests a correspondence theory of truth . . . This approach to the question of 'reality' naturally leads on to Heidegger's rejection of a correspondence view of truth . . . 'Representations' (*Vorstellungen*) do not get compared . . . What is to be demonstrated is solely the being-uncovered of the entity itself . . . Hence he (Heidegger) can never be satisfied with a correspondence view of truth which locates truth in terms of relationships between concepts 'in the mind' and 'reality out there.'[19]

A similar recent example of such an interpretation of Heidegger is found within James J. Dicenso's larger discussion of Heidegger's ontological emphasis on truth as disclosure. He understands Heidegger's position to be one which stands in marked and critical contrast to the grouping of views classified as 'correspondence theories of truth'—'disclosure' is found to stand outside of and over against 'correspondence.' He says,

> *Aletheia*, Heidegger argues, means 'unhiddenness,' and this tells us something about the nature of truth . . . Heidegger introduces the argument for truth as disclosure by indicating the limitations of correspondence theories . . . Modes of relationality, or being open, antecede any specific and determinable existential encounter or experience. That is, the open region is a necessary dimension of the human capacity to relate hermeneutically to a world and to others and hence to have any form of experience . . . Heidegger's argument is that prior to any possible experience of truth as correspondence of entity and idea there must be a constitutive region of disclosure that informs the specific mode of apprehension of the given . . . no judgment . . . is purely objective and context free.[20]

Dicenso's ensuing discussion interprets Heidegger's emphasis on 'disclosure' truth to be one of relegation of correspondence truth (if not, in fact, *negating* it finally) to a place of very minor

[19] Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 151, 174, 199.

[20] James J. DiCenso, Hermeneutics and the Disclosure of Truth: A Study in the Work of Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur (Charlottesville, Va: The University Press of Virginia, 1990), pp. 56–58.

usefulness for the question and contexts of truth because of its static and oppressive nature. Indeed, it is true that Heidegger does often speak in very negative terms in reference to the correspondence theory of truth, i.e., that the correspondence notion makes 'truth' into a thing, that it 'ossifies' truth within notions of conformity and agreement (*adequatio intellectus et rei*) and thereby 'covers over' the ontological reality of Truth.[21]

But are Thiselton's and Dicenso's (*et. al.*) interpretations of Heidegger as one who has endeavored essentially to push aside or overthrow correspondence truth accurate? Is Martin Heidegger's understanding of Truth (*aletheia*) as 'disclosure' such that any real sense of correspondence truth is all but cast out as a viable understanding of truth?

IV. Heidegger, 'Disclosure,' and 'Correspondence' Truth: An Analysis of *Being and Time*

The opening quotation from Ortega y Gasset anticipates several of the questions and issues which Martin Heidegger subsequently developed, including his particular etymological concern for the Greek term *aletheia*. *Aletheia* became a means whereby, in the pursuit of *Sein* or 'Being-as-such,' he explicated the disclosive dimension (as the ontological dimension, i.e., more original) of Truth. In this Dicenso must be recognized as at least partly correct when he pointed out the 'prior-ness' of Truth as disclosure to any other 'ontic' questions or positions on the nature of truth. While our focus herein will be given to the pivotal forty-fourth section (¶44) of *Being and Time*, it being Heidegger's most developed expression of 'truth as disclosure,' this discussion must be prepared for by a preliminary unfolding of context and argument.[22]

Section forty-four is the culmination and conclusion of the first of the two major divisions of *Being and Time* (the promised 'third' part was never done). Division one is a preliminary analysis of the 'being of *Dasein*' (the 'being-there' of the existing person) as 'being-in-the-world' in all of its that-ness or facticity (*Geworfenheit*). In his endeavor to 'uncover' the meaning of *Dasein*, Heidegger argues forcefully stage by stage to make clear that the *being* of *Dasein* is Care (*Sorge*), that the meaning of the

[21] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962), pp. 257–267 and BW, pp. 119–122.

[22] Ibid., pp. 256–273.

being of Care is Temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) via Resoluteness in the face of death. This is intended to lead through and beyond the phenomenological analysis of *Dasein*, through 'being-unto-death' (*Sein zum Tode, Selbständigkeit*), to the Horizon of Being-as-such, which is the condition of the meaning of the being of *Dasein*. In the development of Heidegger's argument and transition from the meaning of *Dasein* (Division One) to the meaning of Being (Division Two), the phenomenon of truth is of increasing significance and in the process the association or relation between 'Being' (*Sein*) or 'Is-ness' and 'Truth' (*Wahrheit, aletheia*) becomes one of near interchangeability (cf. below).

Discussions preliminary and preparatory to ¶44, 'Dasein, Disclosedness, and Truth,' can be found directly and indirectly throughout *Being and Time*. But two sections, ¶6 and ¶39, stand out as of particular importance and relevance as conceptual background to ¶44. Section 6 describes 'the task of a *Destruktion* / Deconstruction of the history of ontology' and has obviously had great influence upon recent philosophical and radical theological developments.[23] In this brief discussion of the need to disassemble, so to speak, the history and, thus, the static and 'veiled' notions of Being in Western ontology in order to 'arrive' at the original 'disclosure' or 'revelation' of Being in the pre-Socratics (e.g., Parmenides, 'making present'), Heidegger presents a brief but most significant study of the word *logos*.[24] As Heidegger states the point,

> *Legein* is the clue for arriving at those structures of being which belong to the entities we encounter in addressing ourselves to anything or speaking about it ... As the ontological clue gets progressively worked out—namely, in the hermeneutic of the *logos*—it becomes increasingly possible to grasp the problem of Being in a more radical fashion ... *Legein* itself—or rather *noein*, that simple awareness of something present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*) ... has the Temporal structure of a pure 'making-present' of something. Those entities (*Das Seiende*) which show (*phaino* as making present) themselves in this and for it, and which are understood as entities in the most authentic sense, thus get interpreted with regard to the Present; that is, they are conceived as presence (*ousia*).[25]

[23] The discussion of deconstruction/*Destruktion* in section six is, though brief, Heidegger's attempt to 'dig' back through the layers of the history and development of Western ontology in the hope of thereby laying hold again of the 'original' revelation of Being (*Sein*) as given to the pre-Socratics (particularly Parmenides) before subsequent developments robbed the concept of its dynamic qualities. Heidegger desires that by such a clearing process, or rather the 'in-covering' of the original revelation of Being, that re-construction of the Western tradition can then be pursued properly.

[24] Heidegger, BT, pp 47, 48.

Logos is understood then as letting something be seen, a showing or making manifest the entity about which one is speaking. But this making manifest or showing must be done in such a way that it is thereby taken out of its hiddenness to let it be seen or known as unhidden or dis-closed.

In ¶39, Heidegger is attempting to make the extended (though ultimately unsuccessful) transition from *Dasein* to *Sein*. Therein he explains that any entity *is what it is* independently of anyone's experience of it as such or not. But he also states that there is no Being except in the understanding of that being having understanding of something like Being ('those to whose being something like an understanding of Being belongs'), i.e., *Dasein*. Being 'is' (*Sein ist*) only so long as there is any being having the understanding of something like Being (in contrast to 'entities').[26] This is not intended to be reflective of some neo-Kantian subjectivity, but is intended interestingly in the Cartesian sense. This is not an alignment with Descartes' substance metaphysics but with what Heidegger takes to be his true discovery of, or the 'un-covering' of, that which had been lost or covered by traditional concepts, 'subject-ivity' (cf. ¶ 6). Being is that element in a judgment, expressed in a copula, which connects a judgment to an object (i.e., S *is* P, the Leaf *is* green). But without beings who understand (*verstehen*) or can make such 'connection' there would be as such no Being, no Truth (the 'what is' of something). So contra entities (*Seiendes*) Being (*Sein*) only appears in the understanding (*Verständnis*) of such entities. In the understanding of *Dasein* is the 'place' where Being occurs. Or, to put that another way, Being exists *as* the understanding of Being (by *Dasein*). In such expression of Being as the 'letting be as is,' Heidegger explicitly established the connection, indeed the identity, of Being and Truth.[27] Upon such bases of argument, Heidegger brings out the full import of his understanding of 'Truth as Disclosure' and the question or questionability of 'truth as correspondence' in ¶44.

At the opening of this section, Heidegger reflects positively on the fact that Western philosophy from the pre-Socratics has associated truth and Being, Being and thinking. Indeed, Parmenides 'identified Being with the perceptive understanding of

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., p. 228.

[27] Ibid.

Being.' From such a basis the 'traditional' concept of truth (i.e., 'correspondence') has emerged and taken varied forms as reflected in three theses: first, the place of truth is assertion/judgment; second, that the essence of truth lies in the 'agreement' of judgement with its object (*adequatio intellectus et rei*); third, Aristotle's assignment of truth to judgment as 'agreement' in the sense that in the experiences of the soul its 'representations' (*noemata*) are likenings to things.[28] As this third form was developed it became the basis of the Latin (as well as Jewish and Arabic) formulation of Truth. Against the neo-Kantians, Heidegger points out that Kant too assumed the correspondence theory of truth, i.e., truth as agreement of knowledge with its object. But all of this leads him to the question of what is implicitly posited in the relational totality (understanding/knowledge and thing) of correspondence? In the relation of 'agreement' (*adequatio* or *correspondentia*), in what is the 'agreement' to be found between the understanding and the thing? Is it a relation between real psychical process and Ideal content? There is a relation but is it one of correspondence or something else? A coin and a statement about it are obviously not identical. Heidegger is thus led to ask what the traditional correspondence relation 'reveals' ontologically. It is found that advancement can only be made by making visible or present the necessity of clarifying

> . . . the kind of Being which belongs to knowledge itself . . . try to bring to view a phenomenon which is characteristic of knowledge—the phenomenon of truth. When does truth become phenomenally explicit in knowledge itself? It does so when such knowing demonstrates itself *as true*. By demonstrating itself it is assured of its truth.[29]

In other words, what kind of 'Being' is knowing? In this phenomenal context of 'demonstration,' 'agreement' must become 'visible,' truth must become 'explicit.' The human act of knowing is that which brings truth into being in the sense that to know truth (truly) is to know the thing in such a way that it is 'let' or 'allowed' to be on its own as it is. Heidegger's famous example of the judgment that the picture hanging on the wall is crooked clarifies his point. The judgment is confirmed ('Behold so it is!'). But what is thus shown by this 'demonstration'? Agreement between cognition and thing? Yes and no. It is not, as in some forms of 'correspondence,' a relation of myself to a mental representation. The true relation of knowing must be to the

[28] Ibid., pp. 257–258.
[29] Ibid., p. 260.

actual picture on the wall, the showing of the thing-in-itself. Thus assertion or judgment is a way of 'Being towards the Thing itself that is' in such a way that 'this Being *is* the very entity which one has in mind in one's assertion,' and that 'such Being (towards) *uncovers* the entity towards which it is.'[30] What is to be positively demonstrated then is only the 'Being-uncovered (*Entdecktsein*) of the entity itself—that entity in the "how" of its uncoveredness.'[31] In thus concluding that 'Being-true' means 'Being-uncovering,' disclosing the entity as it is, Heidegger has not at all sought to overthrow the 'correspondence' conception of truth but has sought to expand the notion of correspondence truth by showing that correspondence truth is rooted in and from a more original (primordial) Truth (*aletheia* as dis-closure, un-veiling, un-covering) which is the 'condition' and basis of true correspondence. It is this way of Being (as *logos*) which *Dasein* can either authentically 'uncover' or 'cover up.' Truth as dis-closure is the ontological condition for the possibility that assertions can be either true or false.[32]

V. 'Truth as Disclosure' and Christian Theology: The Case of Thomas Forsyth Torrance

Thomas Torrance's response to and careful but formative use of Martin Heidegger's understanding of Truth as dis-closure has

[30] Ibid., pp. 260–261.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., p. 269. Though making a somewhat different contextual point, Hubert L. Dreyfus strongly confirms this interpretation of Heidegger's ontological understanding and undergirding of Truth and a proper (critical) realism when he states that 'Many interpreters, however, understand Heidegger as holding the instrumentalist view that scientific entities are social constructions essentially related to human purposes, or else a form of operationalism equation scientific entities with their intraworldly effects or measurements. Such forms of antirealism, as Arthur Fine puts it, 'accept the behaviorist idea that the working practices of conceptual exchange exhaust the meaning of the exchange, having it its significance and providing it with its context.' But Heidegger never concluded from the fact that our practices are necessary for access to theoretical entities that these entities must be *defined in terms* of our access practices . . . in *Being and Time* Heidegger is what one might call a minimal hermeneutic realist concerning nature and the objects of natural science, and that he remained such in his later work, even when he became severely critical of the understanding of being underlying scientific research and technology.' Hubert L. Dreyfus, 'Heidegger's Hermeneutic Realism,' in *The Interpretive Turn: Philosophy, Science, Culture*, David R. Hiley, James F. Bohman, and Richard Shusterman, eds. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 26–27.

apparently gone largely unnoticed. Torrance understands Heidegger's concept of Truth (*aletheia*) to be not so much the 'condition' and basis/ground of correspondence (and coherence) truth but more the very heart of correspondence truth. As such he finds that Heidegger's understanding of Truth as 'dis-closure' has many significant implications for theological knowledge of the objective self-giving of God in his Word.

Torrance's response to Heidegger's thought is admittedly mixed. Negatively, Torrance believes that Heidegger, like Kant, is to be faulted for finally denying that genuine knowledge in every proper field of inquiry is established in terms of the object's actual, internal relations with real intelligibility (including theology).[33] In Heidegger, Torrance sees finally a dualist leap into nothing as a result of having lost the eternal-temporal interactivity (cf. his lengthy criticisms of the destructive modern dualisms of and from Descartes, Newton and Kant). Torrance finds that despite important advances Heidegger falls back from ontology to existentialism because he works with a non-conceptual relation to being as a result of the fact that *logos* is not properly understood as inhering in being and therefore cannot be conceptually grasped. Heidegger can only think of letting being disclose itself through a non-conceptual leap into that nothing. In this way he is said finally to fall back upon himself and his own self-understanding.[34]

Yet Torrance also finds Heidegger's insights into realist thought and truth to be of great importance. Going back even to Heidegger's dissertation on Duns Scotus, Torrance contends that he rightly traced the difficulties of Western philosophy back to the false separation of thought from reality and the ascendancy of abstract formalization over nature, all of which Heidegger learned from Scotus. From Scotus, he is also said to have been influenced toward a negative reaction to Aquinas' form of realism. Also like Scotus, Heidegger has endeavored to establish a more properly realist epistemology wherein room is made for a

[33] Thomas Forsyth Torrance, *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1980), p. 42. Hereafter GG. Cf. Thomas F. Torrance, *Space, Time and Resurrection* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), p. 151. Hereafter STR. Cf. Robert P. Scharlemann, The Being of God: Theology and the Experience of Truth (New York: The Seabury Press, 1981), chapters two and three.

[34] Thomas F. Torrance, *Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), p. 309. Hereafter TCFK. Cf. Torrance, RST (Edinburgh: The Scottish Academic Press, 1981), p. 49.

direct relation between mind and being. Heidegger's belief in the openness of nature to empirical investigation of its intrinsic relations and rational order is said by Torrance to have thus been much influenced by Scotus' realism. It is as a result of this indirect influence that Torrance interprets Heidegger as seeking to clarify his critical realist concern regarding the Western separation of *logos* from *physis*.[35] In calling attention to the problem of such a false and damaging severance, Heidegger is said to have revealed appropriate concern for detachment of thought from being. When such a 'split' occurs, subjectivistic human thinking then develops dictatorial, legislative habits of thought which attempt to impose nomistic structures upon being.[36]

According to Torrance, Heidegger desired that thought again approach being appropriately in accord with being's own interior principles of activity and powers of communication and signification whereby propositions are true only when manifesting being's own intention. In this way, objective modes of thought are correlated with the ultimate openness of being and its semantic reference. It is here that Torrance is especially interested in Heidegger's analysis and interpretation of *aletheia*. Heidegger is found to let being itself show through in its own freedom and reality. In relating *logos* and *physis*, Torrance understands Heidegger to correctly perceive that *logos* is the natural force of being by which it manifests itself, by which it comes out into the open and shows itself in its own light. *Logos* immanent in being is not seen to be itself the locus of truth, but 'is the manifesting of the reality of things or their unconcealment (*aletheia*).'[37] Torrance finds it significant that Heidegger's understanding of Truth has no need for intermediary representations, which happens whenever logos is separated dualistically from being. This is because the actual concern is with the showing of reality itself to the human knower, which is why Heidegger gave so much effort to the analysis of 'existence' (*Dasein*) in order to destroy the false ontologies which arise by means of the verification of substitute-symbolisms. This was done in order that the entire focus of

[35] Ibid., p. 1.

[36] Thomas F. Torrance, *Theological Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 252. Hereafter TS. Cf. Torrance, GG, p. 81, as he follows Heidegger and the description of how *logos* became separated from being and how this led to the attempt to throw a 'logical bridge,' natural theology (*a priori*) between knowledge of this world and knowledge of God.

[37] Torrance, RST, p. 47. Cf. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 17–18. Hereafter TRst.

attention would be directed upon being in the full and proper sense (*Sein*).[38] Despite perceived problems, then, Heidegger is still found by Torrance to have brought to preliminary corrective clarity the need to allow reality to unveil itself in its own inner intelligibility (*aletheia*). Torrance says that thinking must be thrust up against the truth of being in such a way that it is 'sustained by an objective signification and does not fall back into the dark whirlpool of man's self-understanding . . . we grasp the truth of intelligible being out of the depth of its own reality, but we let it interpret itself to us.'[39] Building upon Heidegger, then, Torrance says that 'if (these structures or modes of thought) serve the uncovering of being, let it show itself or come to view or stand out in its reality, then they are true, but if they obscure being or distort its showing forth by imposing . . . an alien structure of meaning . . . they are false.'[40] Heidegger's understanding of *a-letheia* or 'unconcealment' of being is highly regarded by Torrance and developed in a way which reflects Torrance's own emphasis on the disclosure and the realist knowledge of objective being as correspondent as well as coherent. Only in this way, he says, can objectivity and ontology (the truth of being/Being) be recovered.

Basically, Torrance understands truth to denote a state of affairs which is necessarily and ontologically prior to the truth of cognition or statement. The truth of being is basically synonymous with objective reality as it is dis-closed to be known. As with Augustine, the truth is 'what is' or 'that which manifests what is . . . and manifests it as it is.' Truth is said to enshrine at once 'the real being of things and the revelation of things as they are in reality.'[41] As a result, thought and statement refer beyond themselves and this is said to clarify scientific activity in theology. In this, the knowledge of God as he is out of himself means that human thought of God is thrown back upon God as its direct and proper Object. Thought is brought increasingly into accord with God as he is in his personal movement of disclosure, and thereby as he is in himself. We are addressed by the compelling Word of God's openness to be known in his 'unconcealedness' in Christ, and then summoned to faithful and disciplined response in the exercise of reason.[42]

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., p. 48.
[40] Ibid., p. 49. Cf. Torrance, *God and Rationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 177–178.
[41] Ibid., p. 141.
[42] Torrance, TS, pp. xii–xiii.

Torrance is clear in his belief that behind all correspondent truth of knowing there stands the Truth of God, Truth as Personal Being, which has taken the form of active life in human historical existence in Jesus Christ. He is the Truth of the Father. In Jesus Christ, God 'turns in Grace toward us and makes Himself open to us . . . (bearing) directly upon us with the presence and impact of ultimate Truth.'[43] Theology is concerned strictly with the ultimate Objectivity of God who personally comes and impresses his Truth in openness upon our thought, which then has a corresponding conception of Truth and which is, in that sense and in that measure, not provisional but ultimate. God's Truth is his Word which is his own Person in self-communication. God's Truth is the communication of himself which is not apart from truths. But such truths must cohere in the one Person of the incarnate Word of God in dialogical relation with human knowing for faithful response. In this God-established knowing relation in Christ by the Spirit there is adaptation of human thought and human theo-logical expression in accordance with the creative, revealing and saving acts of God among human beings. Therefore, theo-logical thought and statement which would be faithful to its proper object must have a logic of reference which does 'correspond to the logic of God's self-communication to men—and correspond is here the appropriate term.' In theo-logical science, Torrance is not merely concerned with human reference to divine Being, but with redemptive knowledge of the living God in Christ and by the Spirit, with the responsive correspondence of human thought and word to the divine Word, and human act with the divine Act in accord with faith-ful scientific process. Human theological statements arising responsively out of God's ultimate Truth will then not be ultimate and final. Theological statements must refer away from themselves and away from human subjectivity, beyond, to the 'level' of ultimate Truth which has ontological priority.[44] As an ongoing process of conformation, adaptation or correspondence to the Truth of God in its own objective, inner coherence, scientific clarification and progressive development ensues in theological understanding and so in theological statements/disclosure models in the context of that faith knowing.

In theological science, in the pursuit of the theological task which arises in and from the object knowing relation with God in Christ, Torrance advocates that correspondence and coherence

[43] Ibid., pp. 142–143.
[44] Ibid., pp. 231–232. Cf. p. 145.

be finally integrated, for to know God in a realist way means that one ('by the Spirit and through the Word') faithfully 'follows' or 'thinks after' the objective disclosure (*a-letheia*) of God's Word in Christ in God's ' economic' coming, and finally into God's own internal rationality and coherence as it is in the eternal relations within the 'ontological' Trinity. Only in this way may theology serve the objective self-disclosure of God in Christ by the Spirit, serve as an opening for rather than a barrier to God's self-giving to and in the world, serve as a reponsive speaking which, by the utter grace of God and at its own human 'level,' corresponds to the real knowledge of the triune God in the person of the Savior.

VI. Conclusion

Thus contrary to much interpretation and use of Martin Heidegger's understanding of 'Truth as dis-closure,' Heidegger had no intention of denying or doing away with or belittling 'truth as correspondence.' Rather his purpose was to clarify the foundation and to undergird such a knowing relation. Thomas Torrance has not only recognized that this was Heidegger's goal but has made Heidegger's understanding of *a-letheia*, 'Truth as disclosure,' the very center and basis of his own understanding and expression of (critical) realist human knowing of objectively given truth, particularly the Truth of the triune God who has graciously given himself to be known as he is in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way, Torrance has truly 'un-covered' the possibilities of Heidegger's 'correspondent' theo-logical usefulness for Christian theology, and, most helpfully, the way of the Truth of God for human redemption.

Abstract

Within the context of Thomas Torrance's larger concern to critique the re-entrenchment of philosophical (epistemological) dualism in theology specifically and culture generally, there lies his desire to re-establish a proper understanding of 'correspondence truth.' There have been multiple viewpoints on truth which have been clustered under the heading 'correspondence.' Yet, contrary to the sweep of interpretation of Martin Heidegger's thinking, Torrance takes the Heidegganian view of truth as 'disclosure,' the disclosure of Being (*a-letheia*) to be the very heart of

a proper reckoning of correspondence truth and as essential to his own critical realist theology. Specifically, 'truth as dis-closure,' properly understood, not only brings healing to the epistemological split resulting from disjunctive, dualist perspectives, but is the basis of Torrance's emphasis on the Truth of the triune God who has graciously given himself to be known as he is in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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