

On Heidegger and Truth

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1. Introduction:

In this essay, we aim to investigate the concept of truth in Heidegger's philosophy, and his way of thinking, from different perspectives. We will less try to circle around a central question, like what is the essence of truth, and more try to articulate the different ways Heidegger's conception of truth as *aletheia* is understood.

Our main task will be, at the expense of being wrong in Heidegger's terms, to reflect our intuitions through the path Heidegger made way.

2. Heidegger's insight in to truth :

We already had our inquiry in to the meaning of being, Dasein, world (of useful beings which Dasein is in), and the different ways Dasein relates to these beings within the world which are called existentials. Now, an immediate quote from Being and Time (P.202) reveals; "In the disclosedness of world, innerworldly (within-the-world) beings are also discovered". The ontology of Dasein, and the ontology of such beings where their beings (*zein*) are determined by Dasein is at hand; but what makes way for Dasein to act/move towards such beings? In where the being of beings is determined? And in what way? Does this determination of being of each being happens altogether and/or at an instant, or happens (which Heidegger claims) in parts and trough the historicity of Dasein?

Below, it will be evident that a where, an open region, and a how, by unconcealing, the Dasein will "relate" to the being of each being. But let's take a step back now, and start with an innocent example.

The correspondence theory of truth is wide known and widely accepted, and we leave the discussion of it to a later section. So let us start from and say that the cup I hold is round. Evidently, this statement is true, since the cup is round. Yet, what corresponds with what in this case? The statement corresponds with the cup? How can? The statement is a verbal utterance, while the cup is made of cartoon (those canteen cups).

So for Heidegger, the relation of the statement to the “fact of the world” is in need to be cleared. In *Being and Time* (p.216) he writes, “If it is impossible for *intellectus* and *res* to be equal, ... , perhaps they are similar?” and he stressed “... we must ask about the context ... “.

The idea is that, the truth which until this time thought to be lying in the correspondence, is in no way brought forward until the Dasein actually involves in the relation itself. Heidegger writes, “... asserting [read corresponding] is a way of Being towards the Thing itself that is”.

In a sense, the idea of roundness and the idea of this cup I have in my soul separately should in some level coincide. The fact that the cup is a phenomenological object with its reality bracketed but its being is opening up in Dasein, stresses an open region where Dasein can uncover and understand the cup as round, cartoonish, wet, flammable, badly colored, disturbing the coffee’s taste and so on. Exactly in this open region the being can “take their stand and become capable of being said” (*On the essence of truth*, p.141).

But be aware, as Heidegger warns (*Being and Time*, p.218), “... neither it is an agreement between the ‘contents of the consciousness’ among themselves”. Even though we heavily tend to disagree, and want to stop Heidegger from moving forward; according to him the truth is a much more primordial thing, in short, unconcealment of entities in an open region by Dasein, making them useful for Dasein.

Let us also note that the languages plays a primary role here. As we said before, “without [language] whatever we think would be mere imaginaries and neuron firings” and “Dasein lives in *logos*” (Uluğ,2018, p.1). Gordon says “Language assists Dasein to comport itself toward beings ... open region is founded upon a basic comportment that Dasein lives in” (2006,p.19). In a more fundamental level, *logos*, understanding, the language is the way Dasein interprets the *telos*/goals/care in to his own being (The terms respectively from ancient Greek, modern cognitive science, and Heidegger). Language helps for care to shape Dasein’s everydayness.

3. Truth as *aletheia* :

In his book “Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected Problems of Logic”, Heidegger articulates the open region we have been talking about as; “a fourfold openness: (1) of the thing, (2) of the region between the thing and man, (3) of man himself with regard to the thing, and (4) of man to fellow man”. How similar are these to existentialities of Dasein? As itself, as a tool, as mans reflectance, as Dasein when it is present?

In the opening words in his essay “On the essence of truth” Heidegger holds that, the essence of truth is what “distinguishes every ‘truth’ as truth”. The truth as correspondence only has a derivate meaning, a meaning that stems from language being used to describe the facts of the world but nothing more. According to Heidegger, viewing the correctness as the major yardstick for truth narrows the scope of the truth, and therefore of thinking, and the most importantly of human freedom. The major problem with this generally accepted concept of truth is that it does not relate to the essence of truth.

Aletheia literally translated as what is not covered. So we by uncovering a being we imply (in accordance with the first quote we gave) (1) a thing as it self being (2) in relation to Dasein where

Dasein (3) cares to the thing in the context of Dasein's (4) historicity. But the act of uncovering necessarily requires something to be already covered. Gordon enforces in his book the theme; Truth must be gained by struggle. It is a process, the way of Dasein, to uncover and put effort in to uncovering.

Gordon offers that, in order better to comprehend what is meant by truth we should struggle and ask questions concerning what is concealed. We should ask: What is concealed? Who does the concealing? How does it take place? When and where does the concealing take place?

Heidegger states that truth as *aletheia* does not accord with Descartes's approach. Descartes sought certitude as a basis for truth. Such a search for certitude has been dominant in much of Western thinking ever since Descartes. But the search for certitude as a basis of truth evades the question: What is the essence of truth? In contrast, Heidegger's insight that "truth must be gained by struggle" and brought forth from concealment partially reveals the essence of truth.

Even in science, there are things we observe, and the patterns underlying that we sought. Does stating what is there is, with "there is"'s correspondence, help us to attain some manner of uncovering about "nature" of what is there is? Isn't what humans always does is generalizing? Don't we "learn" something not when we memorize the words in the book, nor when we understanding perfectly not what the words in the book say, but when we gain "intuition" on the subject matter? And isn't this the time we are most happy? Replace book with world and book in the words with facts about the world and gaining intuition is uncovering some certain principles from it. On a grand scale, as Gordon likes to take things to, for example when Socrates deemed that "A life not examined is a life not worth living", he was putting forth an insight, a truth about human *arete* that took Socrates struggle, even his live to uncover. It was human virtue concealed by the Athenians that Socrates uncovered. Or as Gordon gives example of Copernican revolution,

Copernicus did not merely stated a truth, a correspondence about the status of planets, but an insight in to the truth of the celestial, he brings forth a concealed truth of the *heliocentric* view, highly opposed at that time.

In short, *aletheia* is a struggle, a relating of human mind with its pattern recognition *form* to reflect on what comes about in his perception, in his soul. Unlike Heidegger, we take no issue in emphasizing the “concepts in consciousness”, tough in a more correct way “relatedness in understanding”. In cognitive science terms, forming representations of every-day objects in memory, subject to constraints put forth by the goals(care) of the cognitive system (Dasein).

4. Phenomenology in Heidegger’s conception of truth and succeeding Husserl:

At core, Tugendhat in his paper (1994) identifies three steps in the progression of Heidegger’s definition of truth. Let’s immediately list them now, all happening only in two successive paragraphs in Being and Time (p.218):

- a) An assertion is true if it points out and uncovers the entity “just as in itself”.
- b) To say an assertion is true means: it uncovers the entity in itself.
- c) An assertion being true means it uncovers the entity.

Now, the first step of dropping the emphasize “just” is of no issue as Tugendhat points out. The jump from second to third tough, is peculiar.

Let’s see what we have at hand. Already in accordance with Husserl’s theory, the first (and second) definition asserts that truth is an intending toward the entity and bringing it in to context as it is in itself. But then, how could Heidegger drop the obvious requirements of this uncovering to uncover the objects, as it itself and not in some other way?

The difference of Husserl's and Heidegger's phenomenology becomes apparent here, as we also mention little in the 6. section. While Husserl brackets, Heidegger tries to show the in-necessity.

So for Heidegger, the idiom "as it itself or in some other way" would already be nonsense, beings are already be as Dasein intends to them. While with Husserl's conception we would expect for "false" to be intending wrongly; for Heidegger false is to be failing to intend as intending itself necessitates the struggle of uncovering; so where this is uncovering there is truth.

But does this leaves room for falsehood? Can we ever be false in relating to objects? Or we are in false at each case we are not intending, for example intending to the ceramic coffee cup right now in my dormitory, where I am not at right now?

Here is a thought for food, is it even possible for Dasein to intent without uncovering? A minute ago, I was not uncovering my good cup because I was not thinking about it, I was not intending to it. And when I intended to it, I immediately uncovered parts of it, like it being ceramic, and it being better than carton cups. I even had a picture of some parts of it in my eyes, al with the context of it sitting on my table with dried coffee inside it. We would be in accord with Heidegger on this matter, there is no "just as it is" as there is no "just as it is not", there is at a given time either how I related to it, how the fact that I am not relating to it at all.

And one may ask, beside intending, what then if an assertion is undeniably false? Luckily, our assertions above does not assert for assertions themselves. Tugendhat explains how Heidegger would explain this rather nicely, stating that in that case assertion fails to intend to the object it claims to be intending, it does not make the thing usefull for Dasein, nor understandable. As Tugendhat says that Heidegger would say, it "instead hiders and conceals it".

5. Myths and the poetic nature of truth:

Tugendhat says, with the general understanding of the Plato's conception of ideas, and truth as accordance to the ideas; Heidegger claims that the Plato (similar to all other Greek philosophers) was misunderstood and this misunderstanding led to a conception of truth which further away from "things as themselves" to "things as mans subjectivity".

Let's make a note here, a naive reader may ask, isn't phenomenology, "things as themselves", isn't already a subjectivization of things? What gives? We actually saw a clear graphical explanation to this in class. where first there was inside and outside, subject and object; with phenomenology we put object in to the rectangle of subject and bracketed "what else gives"/the *res extensa*. The Heidegger's quest as it is has always been is trying to take a step further, how and in what direction is at question. The fact that Heidegger takes issue in this bracketing and criticize Husserl on that ground, or the Heidegger's mention of the scandal of philosophy are just two examples.

Specially to the late Heidegger, the nature of truth has been buried since the death of Aristotle. Not as a syllogism, not as an inference, and not as a coherence to a given set of known truth; but as myths and stories truths had been showing itself in before times. The real purpose of the myths are telling the truth as it is, in context of the human experience and care.

6. Conclusion:

At first it appears that the ideas Heidegger has in his minds are in our opinion are highly romantic and abstract. But we have also seen ways to relate them to human mind, to history of science, and to myths and poems. Heidegger seems like reached and brought back an understanding of truth older than Aristotle himself, succeeding Husserl and Metaphysics in his quest. More importantly, and simultaneously, he opened a way for all humans to understand how they relate to entities, to

understand what makes propositions and even things themselves in accord and “true”.

Heidegger's ideas undoubtedly has important implications in everyday human life. And wasn't starting point of likes of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty exactly this, philosophizing for, not understanding the human, but for human to understand. A much controversial figure, Heidegger surely reached out to an insight that in his later life he called *thinking* and put forth, not a mere answer, and also not a philosophical perspective; but a comprehensive study of ontology of human.

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