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## The Truth – a Correspondence, Coherence or Unconcealment?

### Abstract

In the following paper I am trying to look at, from a systematic point of view, three influential and radically different, conceptions of truth with the aim to compare their pros and cons. I am referring to the classical (correspondence) theory of truth, to its chief rival – the coherence theory – and to the notorious, would-be pre-Socratic theory of truth as *aletheia* (Unconcealment), put forward by Heidegger. I do not regard the pragmatic theory of truth as an important counterproposal to the classical theory. Consensual theory can be ignored as a special (and obviously incorrect) case of the coherence theory. It shows some kinship to the pragmatic theory of truth as well if the last one is interpreted in an idealistic way.

There is no need to account for the utmost importance of the notion of truth. In spite of this, existing interpretations of this fundamental notion differ radically. In the following paper I am trying to look at, from a systematic point of view, three influential and radically different, conceptions of truth with the aim to compare their pros and cons. I am referring to the classical (correspondence) theory of truth, to its chief rival – the coherence theory – and to the notorious, would-be pre-Socratic theory of truth as *aletheia* (Unconcealment), put forward by Heidegger. I do not regard the pragmatic theory of truth as an important counterproposal to the classical theory.<sup>1</sup> Consensual theory can be ignored as a special (and obviously incorrect) case of the coherence theory. It shows some kinship to the pragmatic theory of truth as well if the last one is interpreted in an idealistic way.

A critic of the classical theory – for example, a proponent of the coherence theory – is not someone who just understands the word “truth” differently – he has some motivation for this. The controversy between different options about the nature of the truth is not purely verbal. Opponents of the coherence theory are

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<sup>1</sup> An extensive (based on recent literature) critique of the pragmatic theory: D. Leszczyński, *Antyrepresentacjonizm, pragmatyzm, korespondencja* [Anti-representationism, pragmatism and correspondence], [in:] D. Leszczyński (ed.), *Prawda*, “Studia Systematica I”, Wrocław 2011, pp. 235–278.

not satisfied either by its consequences or by its assumptions. The last objection is raised by idealists, who support the coherence theory. For them, there is no radical difference between thought or its linguistic expression on the one hand and reality on the other. Moreover, idealists point out that if thought were of a radically different nature than reality, their correspondence could not happen. Adherents of the pragmatic theory of truth require an effective (“empirical”) method of establishing the truth of a statement. Thus, in my opinion, the pragmatic theory is not an alternative to the correspondence theory but is rather its (not quite successful) supplement.

The coherence theory, denying the realist assumption, accepts the general idea of a concordance between a true statement and something else, albeit not so radically different as in the correspondence paradigm. This element of a concordance can be found even in an odd conception of truth as “aletheia” in an etymological sense, as proposed by Heidegger.

1.

The noun “truth” should not suggest that truth belongs to the category of independently existing objects. What category, then, does it belong to? In principle, truth could be a property or a relation. According to the correspondence theory it is a relative property of corresponding, depending upon the correspondence relation between its bearer and its correlate. If we are ready to accept a common opinion that there are (also) temporary truths, it could perhaps be also a process or an event. “Becoming” of truth is obviously a Hegelian idea.<sup>2</sup> In Hegel’s dialectic there is no sharp difference between language and reality. It is very symptomatic that Hegel entitled his chief metaphysical treatise: “*The Science of Logic*”. On one hand, the items which are basic components of language – concepts – manifest some inner dynamism – a tendency towards dialectical development. On the other hand, reality itself is composed of concepts – categories in Hegel are not only the conceptual skeleton of reality, but also its content. So the relation of a concept, or of a sentence – which is for Hegel just a synthesis of concepts – to reality is not a relation of a correspondence, but that of a dependent part to a superior whole which is “more real” than its parts. A sentence or judgment is true insofar it is a part of some bigger system, but this system is itself a part of a still bigger system and so on. Moreover, the aforementioned dynamism of concepts consists in their tendency to “grow” – every part tends to become a bigger whole. And because a whole is “more true” than a part (as Hegel puts it – “*das Wahre ist das Ganze*”) truth is a process of becoming more and more true, approaching the absolute truth which is identical with the totality of reality.

It seems that in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, the phenomenon of truth is described as if it were an event.<sup>3</sup> Heidegger underlines that truth happens to be discovered or – to put it differently – is a kind of an encounter. Truth is a revelation

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<sup>2</sup> See *Preface to The Phenomenology of Spirit*, section II and the *Introduction to The Science of Logic*, part I: *The General Concept of Logic*, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> A concise, essential description of Heidegger’s conception of truth can be found in: J. Dębowski, *Prawda w fenomenologii [Truth in phenomenology]*, [in:] *Prawda*, pp. 91–95

– something that appears momentarily. A typical example of such a revelation of truth can be found in the Bible, e.g. *Acta Apostolorum* 9, 3: the conversion of Saul on the way to Damascus. In that very moment Saul grasped the truth.<sup>4</sup> But, no matter how intense is such an epiphany of truth, no matter how important such an experience is for a conscious subject, it is not the only situation where the term “truth” is applicable. An epiphany of truth does not always have to precede a formulation of a true statement: the Copernican theory has not been revealed. Instead, it had to undergo a strenuous process of corroboration which proved that it was right from the very moment of its formulation. We can even say something true quite blindly, without any justification. Living in Poland I can say that it was a very hot summer in Norway this year and it can happen to be true notwithstanding my complete lack of knowledge in this field.

Both Hegel and Heidegger stress an existential aspect of truth – a dynamic character of its *modus existentiae*. For them, truth implies a change. This character cannot of course be ascribed to so-called eternal truths – they are explicitly denied by Heidegger.<sup>5</sup> According to the correspondence theory, not only eternal but temporal truths as well, have no dynamic character – they simply express something factual: truth is regarded here as a property of expressing something which there is. Nevertheless, if truth is a property of (certain) sentences, which are temporal beings, their truth is temporal as well. It could seem absurd to say that the truth of eternal truths is temporal, but this is an effect of a simple equivocation. The expression “eternal truth” refers usually to that which can be pronounced in a sentence, e.g. an axiom of geometry. In this objective sense, a truth can be eternal.<sup>6</sup> But the truth of a sentence expressing this axiom is temporal: without a sentence its truth cannot exist.

Categorial status of truth according to the theories taken into consideration can be characterised as follows:

Correspondence theory:	Truth as a property of a temporal object (property of expressing)
Coherence theory (Hegel):	Truth as a process (of development or growth)
Epiphanic theory (Heidegger):	Truth as an event (of an encounter or a disclosure)

## 2.

As we have seen, in all theories taken into account, truth is not an independent object – it must be referred to such an object as its qualification. Hence the next issue of our investigation: what kind of subject does truth belong to? In

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to what extent the theological background of Heidegger influenced his conception of truth. His “epiphanic” conception is akin to Descartes’ conception of evidence as a criterion of the veracity of an idea.

<sup>5</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, transl. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, London 1962, part I, Ch. VI, §44 c.

<sup>6</sup> I shall deal with this “objective” sense of truth in due time.

correspondence theory, truth qualifies a sentence or an act of judgment. In the coherence theory, the process of the dialectical development concerns concepts treated as components of the universe. The process of augmenting the truth is at the same time the development of reality itself. This is implied by Hegel's famous saying: "What is rational is real; and what is real is rational".<sup>7</sup> Thus, the proper subject of the development of the truth is reality itself. If "The truth is the whole", then the notion of truth is of no use: everything is partially true (as capable of further development – as a part of a bigger whole) and at the same time partially false (as not yet developed fully, as taken in isolation).

In the Heideggerian epiphanic theory "*das Dasein 'in der Wahrheit' ist*".<sup>8</sup> This means that truth is principally a human mode of being. Heidegger does not reject the interpretation of truth given by the correspondence theory, but he regards it as derivative, resulting from an encounter of *Dasein* with being. In a sense he is right, because it is we who produce true sentences. But being a source of linguistic phenomena does not necessarily imply being the ultimate subject of all qualifications concerning these phenomena. A description of an encounter of *Dasein* with being, which Heidegger gives us, reminds rather of the acquiring of knowledge. Of course, knowledge is *ex definitione* true, but knowledge, being a sufficient condition of truth, is not its necessary condition. The situation which Heidegger points to has too particular a character to account for all possible relevant instances.

### 3.

In the correspondence theory, truth is a relative property. What is then, the correlate of a true sentence? It is the reason of the sentence's truth, and as such it can be called a truth-maker (of a sentence). For example, what does the sentence "This pencil is yellow" say? It points out a particular object (my wooden pencil) and qualifies it as yellow. "Yellow" does not designate another particular object, somehow connected with the pencil. Such an understanding would be completely wrong, although Aristotle's mode of expression may suggest that: "who thinks the separated to be separated and the combined to be combined has the truth".<sup>9</sup> The "combination" here does not refer to a combination of parts making one whole. Such a connection is a symmetric relation, but the relation of subject and predicate is not: you cannot predicate a pencil of the color yellow. "Yellow", unlike "this pencil" is a general term, which can refer to different shades of yellow. If, after being exposed to a direct sunlight for a long time, the yellow color of my pencil has faded a little, the sentence "this pencil is yellow" will not become false. So a sentence like this does not refer directly to a particular in question, but *via* some of its general characteristics, for example, by being yellow.

<sup>7</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Preface*, [in:] *The Philosophy of Right*.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, II, 6, §44 b, p. 263. These words of course remind the biblical "I am the truth" (John 14, 6) or "Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (John 18, 37).

<sup>9</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1051b 2–4, transl. W.D. Ross.

If the meaning of general predicates such as yellow, had purely conventional character (the standpoint of nominalism), all sentences having the subject-predicate form could express only analytical truths. Aristotle claims: “It is not because we think truly that you are pale, that you are pale, but because you are pale we who say this have the truth.”<sup>10</sup> This implies the rejection of nominalism – and conceptualism as well – and thus, as far as any language contains some non-conventional general terms, it assumes a realistic option with regard to the status of universals.

In the coherence theory, it seems, there is only one general truth-maker – The Absolute. It contains all partial truths and even opinions which seem evidently false. If their falsity shows to be obvious, their negation has to be accepted and in this way a falsehood contributes to reach the truth. For Hegel the contradiction is the driving force of reality: there would be no progress towards truth without trying and testing wrong options. The ultimate truth-maker of the coherence theory has, however, a potential character only – it is a goal to which all reality strives in a process of self-improvement. Such a conception of the truth-maker allows for distinguishing different degrees of truth and falsity in terms of its relative proximity to the end of the process or something like a proportion of the part to the whole. A part is always less true than its superordinate whole. The less developed (less complete) a whole, the more false it is. Thus, to estimate the ratio of truth to falsity of a given item (statement) we must take into account the ultimate result, which has not yet been realised. It is doubtful if such a method of establishing the truth and falsity of a given statement is of any use.<sup>11</sup>

For Heidegger, the truth-maker of a given statement is an event of discovering such a truth by *Dasein*. But how can you discover (experience) negative states of affairs such as “There are no unicorns”, for example? At best you can check that no existing evidence can support the belief in the existence of unicorns. But the nonexistence of unicorns is hard to experience. However, surprisingly, Heidegger claims that *Dasein* can somehow experience non-being. Nothingness as if exerts some action on *Dasein* – nihilation (*Nichtung*). The reaction of *Dasein* consists in some primitive anxiety (*Angst*). “Anxiety reveals the nothing.”<sup>12</sup> The nothing is – in Heidegger’s opinion – a kind of a surrounding or a context for the totality of being: “in anxiety the nothing is encountered at one with beings as a whole.”<sup>13</sup> A result of the encounter with the nothing is *Dasein*’s understanding that beings are finite and destructible, as if they hover in nothingness: “The nothing itself does not attract; it is essentially repelling. But this repulsion is itself as such a parting gesture toward beings that are submerging as a whole. This wholly repelling ges-

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, 1051b 7–9.

<sup>11</sup> However, during discussions with adherents of Hegel’s dialectics, one often hears opinions like this: “Your standpoint is wrong, but it is understandable from a higher point of view.” Saying so, the advocate of Hegel’s views suggests that he can understand his opponent’s opinion in a wider context and that from this point of view, the opinion in question cannot be accepted without reservations, but there are some limited reasons to maintain it.

<sup>12</sup> M. Heidegger, *What is metaphysics*, Part II: *The Elaboration of the Question*, §23, [in:] D.F. Krell (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, London 1993, pp. 93–110.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, Part III: *The Response to the Question*, §28.

ture toward beings that are in retreat as a whole, which is the action of the nothing that oppresses *Dasein* in anxiety, is the essence of the nothing: annihilation. It is neither an annihilation of beings nor does it spring from a negation. Nihilation will not submit to a calculation in terms of nihilation and negation. The nothing itself nihilates.”<sup>14</sup>

In spite of the suggestiveness of this way of talking, there are serious doubts if we have here a description of any experience at all and not just an elaborate conceptual construction. Let us notice that *Dasein's* mode of being consists, *inter alia*, in *In-der-Welt-sein*. This means that *Dasein* exists among particular things and cannot reach – so to say – the border of the world (compare the memorable episode from the trailer of Monty Python's *The Meaning of Life*). In spite of this, Heidegger claims that there are special moods in which the totality of being is somehow given to us: “Even and precisely then when we are not actually busy with things or ourselves this ”as a whole“ overcomes us – for example in genuine boredom. Boredom is still distant when it is only this book or that play, that business or this idleness, which drags on. It irrupts when one is bored. Profound boredom, drifting here and there in the abysses of our existence like a muffling fog, removes all things and men and oneself along with it into a remarkable indifference. This boredom reveals beings as a whole.”<sup>15</sup>

It is true that sometimes we feel bored or tired with “everything”, but here this term only means “everything we have encountered so far”, or even less: “everything we remember at the moment”. By no means have we referred here to the experiences yet to come. Some people in this mood make extraordinary decisions, searching desperately for a radical change. Even if you feel so ultimately bored or tired that you do not even think of starting something new, this only means that you do not expect anything interesting in the future. This is a completely different perspective on things and the matters which surround us than a would-be “revelation of all beings as a whole”. Without reaching this overall perspective on the totality of being, one cannot experience “the other side” of it – the nothing. This is the opinion of Heidegger himself: “Nihilation is not some fortuitous incident. Rather, as the repelling gesture toward the retreating whole of beings, it discloses these beings in their full but heretofore concealed strangeness as what is radically other with respect to the nothing.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, the nothing is just the “opposite side” of the totality of being. I cannot grasp the totality without its border (if there is any) and the border refers to the “other side”.

But, even if it were somehow possible to realise the totality of being, a perspective on the nothing would not necessarily open. If the totality is the Absolute (Hegel's opinion) there is no borderline between being and nothing. Having no experience of the totality of being we do not know if it is finite or infinite.

It is surprising that Heidegger, who so confidently refers to a pre-Socratic Parmenides' conception of *aletheia*, so radically differs from ancient thinkers and Parmenides in particular, with regard to the views on non-being. If one thinks

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, §31.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, Part II, §18

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, Part III, §31

that pre-Socratic thinkers managed to grasp philosophical matters better than their successors, one should not ignore their authority without explanation.

One can see that Heidegger's conception of experience as the ultimate truth-maker, cannot withstand criticism both with respect to the general idea, which has too narrow a range of applications and with respect to certain particular applications as well.

4.

“To Dasein's state of being belongs *falling*. Proximally and for the most part, Dasein is lost in its ‘world’. [...] That which has been uncovered and disclosed stands in a mode in which it has been disguised and closed off by idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity. Being towards entities has not been extinguished, but it has been uprooted. Entities have not been completely hidden; they are precisely the sort of thing that has been uncovered, but at the same time they have been disguised. They show themselves, but in the mode of semblance. Likewise, what has formerly been uncovered sinks back again, hidden and disguised. *Because Dasein is essentially falling, its state of Being is such that it is in ‘untruth’.*”<sup>17</sup> Here we have a conception of falsity (untruth) as principally *Dasein's* giving up being in truth, i.e. instead of experiencing things personally, rather to form unjustified opinions or repeat someone's else statements about the matter. We have already observed that Heidegger's conception of truth is too narrow and now we see that as a consequence of this fault, his conception of falsity becomes too wide. For if I just guessed that it would rain the next day, according to Heidegger my statement was false, even if it actually rained.

When I am looking for information, I just need an adequate report how things really are and I do not care if my informer has experienced relevant facts personally or maybe got to know them from some reliable source. In this second case nobody (with the possible exception of Heidegger's believers) would complain that he was misinformed. Heidegger is completely wrong in claiming that his own conception of truth allows us to understand the correspondence theory better: “Our analysis takes its departure from the *traditional conception of truth*, and attempts to lay bare the ontological foundations of that concept. In terms of these foundations, the *primordial* phenomenon of truth becomes visible. We can then exhibit the way in which the traditional conception of truth has been *derived* from this *phenomenon*.”<sup>18</sup> These theories are incompatible, and moreover, there are strikingly counterintuitive consequences on the side of Heidegger's theory.

While unnecessary subjectivisation of falsehood is the principal flaw of Heidegger's theory, the correspondence theory has its own problems with falsehood and they have objective character in turn. In Plato's *Sophist*,<sup>19</sup> we have an interesting analysis on the problem of non-being. According to Plato it must exist somehow because otherwise there would be no false sentences.<sup>20</sup> Every declarative atomic

<sup>17</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, I, 6, §44 b, p. 264.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 257.

<sup>19</sup> Plato, *Sophist*, 236e–241e, transl. B. Jowett, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/sophist.1b.txt>.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, 237a.

sentence asserts something definitive. If it is true, it says something about being. If it is false however, then there is no being corresponding to what it says. We cannot claim that false sentences do not say anything – in that case they would have no sense, while being false implies having sense. On the other hand, if we agree that false sentence actually refers to non-being, there should be non-being as its correlate and, moreover, it should possess characteristics ascribed to it in the sentence in question.

But Plato did not intend to postulate a separate region of non-being, populated by subsisting objects like dragons and square circles. Unlike Heidegger, who frightens his readers with horror stories of the nothing which nihilates being, Plato (who is, by the way, a much better storyteller than Heidegger) decides to root non-being in being. He makes it by accepting negative states of affairs, like for example Socrates' not being handsome:

Stranger: Then, as would appear, the opposition of a part of the other, and of a part of being, to one another, is, if I may venture to say so, as truly essence as being itself, and implies not the opposite of being, but only what is other than being.

Theaetetus: Beyond question.

Str.: What then shall we call it?

Th.: Clearly, not-being.<sup>21</sup>

Then the false atomic sentence saying that Socrates is handsome refers in fact to an existing object – Socrates – and only wrongly ascribes to him the quality of being handsome which actually he isn't. This sentence is false in virtue of the objective negative state of affairs that Socrates is not handsome instead of being false because of the nonexistent state of affairs that Socrates is handsome.

This theory cannot help in the case of non-existent, but possible objects like the first man on Mars. Its further elaboration, overcoming this flaw, can be found in Wittgenstein's conception of negative facts formulated in *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. Even before studying this advanced version of Plato's conception of non-being, one can expect that this approach is more promising than stories of the nothing which nihilates.<sup>22</sup>

In the coherence theory, the falsehood of a sentence consists in its neglecting mutual relations of the situation reported by the sentence with the rest of reality. The coherence of the theory means here its completeness. The only unconditional, 'full truth', is a definite description of the total reality. The Absolute Idea is such a description and the total reality at once. We can see that the coherence theory has strong metaphysical monistic assumptions. The theory postulates not only what the essence of truth is, but also what the ultimate truth is. This does not happen with the correspondence theory which, nevertheless, has its own metaphysical assumptions too.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, 258b.

<sup>22</sup> A systematic and detailed account of ontological aspects of the correspondence theory of truth is: M. Piwowarczyk, *Prawda i ontologia [Truth and ontology]*, [in:] *Prawda*, pp. 99–126.



## 5.

The problem of the criterion of truth belongs to the essentials of the every theory of truth. Adherents of non-classical theories often think that this problem cannot be satisfactorily solved by the correspondence theory – and that this is its fundamental flaw. On the other hand, some adherents of the correspondence theory try just to ignore this problem, claiming that the definition of truth does not have to refer to it. In other words, they seem satisfied with a non-operational definition of truth.

However, it seems that the correspondence theory does not leave the problem of a criterion open. The truth of a sentence depends on its correspondence with the sphere to which the sentence refers. To check if the sentence is true one has to know what the sentence says and if the situation to which the sentence refers has happened. When I say that I feel cold and I actually feel cold, I have said the truth. But the critics of the correspondence theory want an effective application of the criterion to the extra-mental reality. We must remember that the correspondence theory itself does not assume the standpoint of metaphysical realism. Of course, Aristotle was a metaphysical and epistemological realist and the correspondence theory was basically his idea, but such a “personal union” does not necessarily imply the logical interdependence of the theories in question. When Aristotle says: “It is not because we think truly that you are pale, that you are pale, but because you are pale we who say this have the truth”<sup>23</sup> he obviously interprets his definition of truth in a manner of metaphysical realism, but this is only a possible particular interpretation of a general formula. Snow can be white not only for a realist, but for a subjective idealist as well. The formula: “The sentence ”Snow is white“ is true iff snow is white” does not assume any particular *modus existentiae* of snow. In particular, it does not assume an existential independence of the object of judgment from the act of judgment.

The second important thing is that non-applicability of the criterion in certain special cases does not have to be regarded as its flaw. Certain philosophical standpoints can disable a criterion and if somebody puts forward an alternative criterion, it should be checked carefully if the alternative really works in the same context where the former tool failed. The case of the coherence theory is a very good example of such an oversight. An adherent of this theory is right that the correspondence theory cannot help in case of metaphysical realism combined with epistemological idealism (a possible example of this standpoint can be Leibnizian monadology deprived of the pre-established harmony). But also the coherence theory does not help in the slightest way in that case. No coherent system of statements about the external world can guarantee its own relevance. The context in which this theory (and its criterion) works is metaphysical idealism, like this of Hegel, where there is no absolute difference between thought and reality. The combination of metaphysical realism and epistemological idealism disables all criteria of truth altogether. No criterion of truth can help to get access to things in themselves and this is not a fault on the side of the theories of truth.

<sup>23</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1051 b 7–9.

## 6.

As we have seen, theories of truth can presuppose some metaphysical or epistemological conditions. The idealistic option is obvious in case of the Hegelian coherence theory. But, if according to this theory, being true (to a certain extent) means just to be a certain part of reality, the term “truth” shows to be superfluous.

F.H. Bradley tried to make absolute idealism more intuitive and intelligible than in original Hegel’s version. In his essay *On Truth and Coherence*<sup>24</sup> he shapes the doctrine of absolute idealism in a manner similar to that of subjective idealism: a subject is given a stream of sense data which can be interpreted as representing external reality in different manners. No sense data determine their interpretation in a unique way, so the criterion of choice for the best interpretation of the data given is its comprehensiveness and coherence: “With regard to the two aspects of coherence and comprehensiveness [...] I have merely urged that it is necessary to use them in one, and that here, and here alone, we have the criterion of perceived and remembered truth. I have argued that, in principle, any judgment of perception or memory is liable to error.”<sup>25</sup> There can be no direct infallible knowledge of external reality for him, so truth can only be understood as a property of a totality of statements interpreting in a coherent way the sense data registered until a given moment. Then, as new sense data continually come, there can be no definite truth about the external world. A description of reality can always have only a tentative character.

This view, however, is not radically opposed to the standpoint of the correspondence theory. Truth, according to Bradley’s conception, is nothing more than just a hypothetical truth according to the correspondence theory. Moreover, we must remember, that for Bradley, comprehensiveness is as important as the coherence. This means that we cannot ignore sense data – they limit the range of possible interpretations. If I had an impression of a patch of red I cannot interpret it as a waving of Prophet Muhammad’s flag. In effect, although no statement within the framework of Bradley’s interpretation of the coherence doctrine can be definitely true, some statements can be definitely false. This is some kind of a (negative) correspondence between the sentence and some sphere different than the system of statements alone.

The consequence that the Bradleyan version of coherence theory truth can be only hypothetical stems from the assumption of subjective idealism. The correspondence theory as such makes neither realistic nor idealistic epistemological assumptions – this is not its task to engage into the realism-idealism controversy. However, it makes another assumption: that thought and language, because of their intentional character, are not direct parts of reality. The relation of intentionality creates a distance or difference between thought or linguistic expression and the object they refer to. The identity of thought and being, postulated by Parmenides is excluded. That his formula of identity cannot be reconciled with the existence of a language was observed already by Plato:

<sup>24</sup> F.H. Bradley, *On Truth and Coherence*, [in:] F.H. Bradley, *Essays on truth and reality*, Oxford 1914, pp. 202–218.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 218.

Stranger: To distinguish the name from the thing implies duality.

Theaetetus: Yes.

Str.: And yet he who identifies the name with the thing will be compelled to say that it is the name of nothing, or if he says that it is the name of something, even then the name will only be the name of a name, and of nothing else.

Th.: True.

Str.: And the one will turn out to be only one of one, and being absolute unity, will represent a mere name.

Th.: Certainly.<sup>26</sup>

Hegel tried to restore the unity of thought and reality, although within a dynamic paradigm. But his gain is of not much value: The coherence theory is in fact a kind of a deflationary theory *avant la lettre* – truth becomes, in principle, a redundant term.

The above comparison of the correspondence theory of truth, with its two much disputed counterproposals, shows that it can withstand criticism quite well. Instead of uncover its disadvantages, alternative theories showed their own unintuitive consequences and arbitrary presuppositions. Reports of the death of the correspondence theory have been greatly exaggerated.

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<sup>26</sup> Plato, *Sophist*, 244d. It's funny, that Heidegger tries to root his epiphanic theory of truth in Parmenides' theory while the radical monism of the latter in fact does not allow of any theory of truth (and, indeed, no theory at all).