

## *Da-sein and Truth in Heidegger's Being and Time*

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### Abstract

In his groundbreaking work *Being and Time*, Heidegger meticulously presents a variety of interpretations of truth to construct a satisfying epistemological framework suitable for *phenomenology as fundamental ontology*. He thus proposes the derivative (e.g. *truth-as-agreement/correctness*) and primordial (e.g. *truth-as-Aletheia/disclosure*, *truth-as-openness*, *truth-as-Dasein's disclosedness*) conceptions of truth so that he could account for how his theory of knowledge accommodates with his theory of beings. In this paper, I will provide a comprehensive analysis of how Heidegger construes the notion of truth with respect to his fundamental ontology in which he reconstructs the study of beings. In doing so, I will follow three strands (namely, linguistic, ontological, and epistemological) to analyze Heidegger's notion of truth considering the features of his fundamental ontology. All these strands of analysis, on the one hand, show what conceptions of truth Heidegger discusses and endorses; on the other hand, they characterize Heidegger's theory of knowledge in its connection with his fundamental ontology. Hence, I first visit the question of how Heidegger reconstructs his philosophical language to accommodate with his understanding of the question of being. This explanatory section purports to ground Heidegger's reasons behind his re-reading the traditional understanding of ontology. Then, I will elucidate how Heidegger re-reads the traditional ontology and how he reconstructs it in accordance with his central notion *Da-sein*. Finally, I will specify what conceptions or conception of truth Heidegger promotes with respect to *Da-sein*.

**Keywords:** *Aletheia*, *Da-sein*, Correspondence Theories of Truth, Logos as Discourse, Truth as *Da-sein's* Disclosedness, Truth-as-Disclosure, Truth-as-the Connectedness of *Da-sein* and the World, Truth-as-Openness

### Heidegger'in Varlık ve Zaman'ında Doğruluk ve *Da-sein*

#### Öz

Çığır açan eseri *Varlık ve Zaman*'da, Heidegger temel (fundamental) ontoloji olarak fenomenolojiye uygun epistemolojik bir çerçeveye oluşturmak için doğruluk kavramının çeşitli yorumlarını titizlikle sunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, türevsel (ör. mütekabiliyet olarak doğruluk) ve ilksel (ör. *Aletheia* / ifşa olarak doğruluk, açıklık olarak doğruluk, *Dasein*'in ifşaatı olarak doğruluk) doğruluk kavramlarını sunarken kendi bilgi teorisinin varlık teorisine nasıl denk düştüğünü açıklar. Bu makalede Heidegger'in, doğruluk kavramını nasıl yorumladığının kapsamlı bir tahlilini, onun varlık çalışmasını yeniden yapılandığı temel ontolojisi ile ilişkilendirerek sunacağım. Bunu yaparken, Heidegger'in doğruluk nosyonunu üç çizgiden (yani; dilsel, ontolojik ve epistemolojik olarak) takip edip Heidegger temel ontolojisinin özelliklerini de hesaba katarak tahlil edeceğim. Bu tahlil çizgilerinin tümü, bir yandan, Heidegger'in hangi doğruluk kavramlarını tartışıp onayladığını göstermekte iken öte yandan ise Heidegger'in bilgi teorisinin temel ontolojisi ile olan ilişkisini betimler. Bu yüzden; Heidegger'in felsefe dilini, varlık sorusu kavrayışına uygun olarak nasıl yeniden yapılandığı sorusu en başta yanıtlanacaktır. Bu açıklayıcı bölüm, Heidegger'in geleneksel ontoloji anlayışını yeniden okuma girişiminin arkasındaki nedenleri ortaya koymaktadır. Sonrasında ise Heidegger'in geleneksel ontolojiyi nasıl yeniden okuduğunu ve bunu esas kavramı *Da-sein*'e göre nasıl yeniden yapılandığına açıklamaya çalışacağım. Son bölümde ise, Heidegger'in yeniden yapılandırılmış ontolojisi için ne gibi bir doğruluk tasarımı ya da tasarımları öne sürdüğünü açıklayacağım. Bu bağlamda; Heidegger'in, *mütekabiliyet doğruluk teorilerinde* örneklendiği üzere türevsel doğruluk anlayışını neden ve nasıl reddettiğini gösterir iken Heidegger'in *ifşa-etme-olarak-doğruluk* kavramını bunun *Da-sein'in ifşaatı* ile ilişkisi içinde neden savunduğunu tartışacağım.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** *Aletheia*, *Da-sein*, *Da-sein'in* *Ifşaatı*, Söylev Olarak Logos, Mütekabiliyet Doğruluk Teorileri, Ulaşmak-Olarak-Doğruluk, Açıklık-Olarak-Doğruluk, *Ifşa-Etme-Olarak-Doğruluk*, Dünyanın-ve-*Da-sein'in* Bağlılığı-Olarak-Doğruluk

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## Introduction

As much of what Heidegger says, he enigmatically quotes “[Truth] the actual factual discoveredness is, so to speak, always a kind of robbery”.<sup>2</sup> Although the analogy between an act of robbery and an act of obtaining a truth might stand for a particular sense of the notion, there seems to be ambiguity as to in what respects these two acts are alike. In other words, it seems obscure how they are alike considering the questions such as “Who is robbing?”, “What is robbed away?”, “How does the robbery happen?” and “Where does the robbery take place?”. If the act of robbery is to be defined as an agent’s intentional act of taking away something-by force or threat-from a domain then Heidegger’s analogy might be construed as follows:

An epistemic/intentional agent *E* in the world *W* obtains a truth *T* from a domain of truths *D* which *W* simply includes or exclusively coincides with if and only if *E* in *W* takes *T* away from *D* in *W*.

The puzzle here mainly relies on what sorts of conceptions Heidegger sets out for epistemic agency, truth, the world and the “taking-away” relation which holds amongst them. For instance, if the world is nothing other than a domain of facts excluding epistemic agents’ particular cognitive and intentional relations with these facts (i.e. propositional attitudes/intensional contexts) then an agent’s obtaining a truth becomes nothing more than revealing extensional content in this domain irrespective of influencing the domain in one way or another such as taking a member away. In such a case, the epistemic agent has a very restricted role in the discovery of truth, which is simply to point out what is already there. Additionally, if we adopt a contemporary theory of propositional truth such as truth-making theory then the questions about this conception of truth, in the face of given analogy, arise in great number.<sup>3</sup> To illustrate, some questions go as follows: Does it mean that truth-makers are no longer stationary or external to the agent at least for a given truth/falsehood? Does it mean that agents internalize each truth-maker and/or truth-bearer from the point of their own agency?

Heidegger’s notion of truth in this analogy reaches farther and goes deeper than it initially looks. For one thing, Heidegger does not endorse the traditional representation of an epistemic act which holds between an epistemic agent and an object of knowledge. For another thing, Heidegger posits an intensional notion of truth where an agent’s intentional attitudes toward facts are also members of this domain which no way exhausts the world or the totality of truths. When an agent obtains a truth from the domain of facts, his very act of obtaining it ubiquitously attaches himself and the act itself onto the very fact which the agent discovers. In other words, epistemic agents cannot simply point out what is already there; nonetheless, they are, in the first place, required to relate themselves with the facts under intensional contexts in order to obtain a truth. In this regard, the analogy of robbery might also appear to be a direct opposition to the realist conviction that there are mind-independent facts irrespective of agents’ intensional relations with them. Thus, I think Heidegger’s analogy on one notion of truth in its primordial sense, i.e. truth as *Aletheia*, must implicate further that propositional truths characteristically involve agents’ perspectival internalizations of facts/states of affairs depending on their own agency.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh (State University of New York Press, 1996), 204.

<sup>3</sup> In his 2004 book *Truth and Truthmakers*, David Armstrong introduces this contemporary variant of the correspondence theory of truth. According to this, what makes a proposition true is nothing other than a state of affairs (a portion of reality) that the proposition in question represents. In this way, propositions are truth-bearers while facts are truth-makers. According to this theory, truth-making process or a relation is directly between the judgment and the judged regardless of thinking its circum-spective context or who makes this relation between a proposition and a fact. As we will see while discussing Heidegger’s view on propositional truth, he devalues these features which also occur in the traditional view on truth.

Still, it is worth noticing that this interpretation of truth does not exhaust the entire notions of truth in Heidegger's philosophy. In this respect, the primary objective of this paper is to elaborate and to discuss the aforementioned analogy by comprehensively surveying Heidegger's conception(s) of truth in his seminal work *Being and Time*. Nevertheless, approaching to Heidegger's philosophy with such an objective requires plenty of precautions about his language. After all, providing an analysis of his notions of truth cannot be plainly glossed over typical theories of truth such as the correspondence theories due to his inventive and contentious prose which allows him to reconstruct the language in the discipline of ontology. In what follows, I will firstly explain how Heidegger re-reads and reconstructs the language in terms of his criticisms against the ordinary understanding of ontology. That section will present a ground to grasp what Heidegger understands by the terms such as the world or a domain of facts in which truths reside. Next, I will turn my attention towards how he applies his linguistic reconstruct to the ordinary understanding of ontology. Hereby, I have an opportunity to lay out Heidegger's depiction of the world in terms of his key terms and distinctions. Subsequently, I will explore the notion of *Aletheia* to show how Heidegger theorizes it and why he becomes reluctant to endorse it as the genuine notion of truth. In this regard, I will later relate it with his notion of *Logos*, and I will finally question the primordial notion of truth which Heidegger holds to be the genuine conception of truth amongst the others.

### 1. Re-asking the Question of Being: The Roots of Heideggerian Language

Capturing the essential tenets of Heidegger's philosophy requires us to visit his profoundly constructed glossary which is abundantly laden with neologisms. In this respect, it is misleading to explicate Heidegger's philosophy by appealing to the pre-established terms in the Western Metaphysics. His attempt for reconstructing the antecedent philosophical jargon follows from his critical interpretations of the pre-established conceptions and categories- so to speak, *particulars and universals; matter and form; sameness and difference; truth and falsity*.<sup>4</sup> At this point, Heidegger acknowledges the worry that conducting such a critical re-reading might re-iterate the shortsightedness of the earlier philosophical attempts to make sense of the essential questions such as the question of being. Such attempts are to melt down into the same unfruitful controversies (such as the ones between realism and idealism on the existence of the external world) unless we abandon the received language of doing philosophy. It does not suggest that Heidegger concocts strange and non-sensical terms regardless of converging them with some rudimentary uses of common philosophical terms. Hence, he traces these terms back to their rudimentary forms and senses with respect to their lexical occurrences and transformations during their historical uses in human history, particularly in the history of philosophy.<sup>5</sup>

Ironically, Heidegger's philosophy is criticized for obfuscating the import of philosophical discussions by obscure and implausible uses of the terms within unwarrantedly non-conventional grammatical configurations. Such criticisms appeal to certain notions of meaning in a certain conception of natural language to the effect that Heideggerian language in use becomes an instance of pseudo-philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Regarding the early

<sup>4</sup> Herman Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: A Critical Interpretation* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998)

<sup>5</sup> H. L. Dreyfus & M.A. Wrathall (eds.), *A companion to Heidegger* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> This discussion roots back to Rudolf Carnap's critical analysis which first appears in his 1932 article "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis". Carnap there takes issue with the famous statement "The Nothing itself noths..." which Heidegger posits in his book "What is Metaphysics". Focusing on this statement, Carnap explains why and how metaphysical statements inherit non-sense.

period of analytical philosophy, it is quite common to meet with such criticisms. Holding the verificationist criterion of meaning, Heideggerian language does not seem to entail meaningful claims in any comprehensible object-language or meta-language. Thereby, the criterion simply puts forward:

Any statement/sentence *S* in a language *L* (natural/formal; object-level/meta-level) is meaningful iff either it is (nomologically/metaphysically/logically) possible for *S* in *L* to be empirically verifiable (in principle/in practice) or it is an analytic statement in *L*.

Even though the Heideggerian language does not seem to satisfy any interpretation of this criterion of meaning, it does not guarantee that the criterion itself has no problem at all. The criterion inherits one important flaw that it does not explain the nature of meaning itself even if it functions as the criterion of meaning. This flaw could also enable Heidegger to construct his own theory of meaning so that he constructs his own language corresponding to his understanding of beings and their states of affairs. In this respect, one can even further defend that Heidegger's language by which he describes his contemplation of the world-as-it-is coheres with the above criteria of meaning by virtue of the Heideggerian notions of the world and meaning. As Gadamer points out, philosophy always bears some degree of rhetoric since it cannot be fleshed out in a completely formal language.<sup>7</sup>

This point also illuminates the contrast between logical empiricism and Heidegger's notion of philosophy based on the fact that logical empiricists like Carnap attempt to approximate natural languages to formally constructed languages such as a system of standard deductive logic through modeling everyday language after such model-theoretic systems. Nonetheless, this model-theoretical understanding of natural languages eliminates all rhetoric force of natural language without providing any sensible ground to show that the formalization of language is the most feasible way to explain away certain metaphysical ambiguities and perennial questions in the world. Thus, such attempts to trivialize Heidegger's philosophy fail to appreciate Heidegger's very own reasons for adopting such perplexing ways of philosophizing in the face of pre-established notions in some commonsensical way of doing philosophy. In this vein, Heideggerian language in *Being and Time* becomes indispensable for what he seeks out to achieve with respect to his overall project. At this point, the critical questions could be delivered for the sake of internal coherence and cogency. In other words, it can be questioned if Heidegger's primary philosophical concerns and goals about the question of being are plausible or achievable in the first place. In that case, it can also be assessed whether Heideggerian language most cogently explains these philosophical concerns. Hence, it is not trivial at all that Heidegger re-asks the question of being by means of a unique language consistent with his philosophical end.

The construction of a new philosophical language not only makes Heidegger's critical philosophy possible; but also, it renders Heidegger's philosophy holistic in terms of his overall objections and goals. In this respect, he traces these terms back to their rudimentary forms and senses with respect to their lexical occurrences and transformations during their historical uses. However, it is worth noting that he does not derive these terms from purely etymological studies on the lexical forms and senses of the philosophical terms in question. He takes the rudimentary senses of the terms (i.e. *Aletheia*) and their changes in their historical context to uncover the senses (*disclosing/disclosure* or *unconcealment*) which are contextually relevant to the current state of philosophy. By doing so, he does not invent a new set of terms nor does he re-construct the metaphysical

<sup>7</sup> Richard Kearney, *Debates in Continental Philosophy: Conversations with Contemporary Thinkers* (Fordham University Press, 2004), 167-168.

conceptions of Western Metaphysics by ignoring historicity. His own terms (e.g. *Being*, *Da-sein*, *being-at-hand*, *being ready-to-hand*, *average everydayness* and so forth) represent Heidegger's attempts for *uncovering* the rudimentary senses of the relevant philosophical conceptions within contextual approximations. His notion of truth as *disclosure* or *unconcealment* indicates -in a reflexive and internally coherent manner- that Heidegger's entire philosophical project is the manifestation and demonstration of his theory of truth. However, it does not mean that Heidegger's philosophy entails a naïve definition of philosophy in which seeking out truths is identical to philosophizing. As we will see later, he does not consider the relation between *concealment* and *unconcealment* to be synonymous with the traditional dichotomy between truth and falsity. That is the reason why Heidegger's philosophy has nothing to do with finding or seeking true assertions (truth in their *ontical* sense) which universally and timelessly hold.

Still, his philosophy further concerns with discovering the truth in its fundamental ontological sense with respect to the distinct degrees of *concealment* and *unconcealment* about entities, and about ourselves. In this regard, the traditionally defended *correspondence theory of truth* and *the principle of bivalence* -by which assertions are deemed to have only one value of truth-theoretical significance, i.e. true or false- lose their canonical powers that totally spring from the misconceptions of the Western Metaphysics which undermine the ontological difference between *Being* and beings. For Heidegger holds that even *un-truth* has truth-theoretical significance depending on to what extent it is *unconcealed*. Thus, Heidegger's philosophy offers a holistic account in which his constructed terms function both as projections and essential tools of his entire philosophical enterprise.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to his inquiry-oriented language set-up, I can make a few remarks about how his overall strategy, in his inquiry of truth, solidifies his entire philosophical enterprise. Such a rough presentation might be useful to capture how Heidegger discusses the conception of truth. As a first step, Heidegger takes a philosophical concept (truth as *Aletheia*) and then he introduces how it has been traditionally perceived or discussed (*truth as agreement*). As a second step, he criticizes the traditional interpretations of this conception by analyzing the rudimentary/primordial senses of the term in question (*truth as disclosure/unconcealment*). As a last step, he re-interprets these senses following his philosophical project (*phenomenology as fundamental ontology* or *history of unconcealment of beings*), and he presents the most rudimentary/primordial sense of the conception (*Da-sein's disclosedness*). Hereby, Heidegger simply reduces distinct levels of truth from distinct levels of the study of beings.

## 2. Heidegger's Path onto 'Truth': The Status of beings and *Da-sein*

What is inseparably integral to Heidegger's early philosophy appears to be "the question of the meaning of being".<sup>9</sup> In this regard, his seminal work *Being and Time*, which constitutes the backbone of his philosophy, primarily concerns with the phenomenological interpretation of the above question with respect to its traditional treatments from Aristotle to Kant. So, Heidegger investigates the question of what being-ness of is being

<sup>8</sup> This claim on Heidegger's philosophy may be read as a consequence of the *hermeneutic circle* which contends the circularity behind the whole-part relation in interpreting a part of the whole by reference to the whole. Hereby, it can be discussed if it is a vicious circle disparaging Heidegger's philosophical project. I have no intention to engage my paper with this contention; nevertheless, I regard it as an indispensable token of theoretical coherency in his holistic philosophy.

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1.  
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by inquiring about the very conditions underpinning the possibility of beings<sup>10</sup>. Heidegger particularly centralizes his inquiry around the conditions behind the possibility of the relations between human beings (*Da-sein*) and other beings-as-such<sup>11</sup>. In this fashion, according to Heidegger, our existence relates to entities through activities and structures operative within ourselves. At this point, Heidegger makes a distinction between the experience of entities and the conditions of possibility of experience which are structured in us.

From this aspect, many interpreters take Heidegger's *Being and Time* is in the tradition of Kant's transcendental metaphysics in terms of his *Copernican revolution* in basic human categories which schematically constituting the conditions of experience such as perception, reflection, and so on.<sup>12</sup> However, it is important to notice that Heidegger differs from the transcendental tradition by virtue of the question of what activities and conditions shape our relationship with entities. In this vein, Heidegger holds on the correlative notion of categorical constitution behind the perception of the world where the very existence of perceivers which are equipped with relative constitutive categories of the perception ubiquitously and jointly interact with the being-ness of the rest of beings. Thus, he does not merely reframe the perceivable world in virtue of pre-established categories in our presence in ontical sense. He posits a further layer of meaning about such categories to the effect that our existence *in a primordial sense* becomes a prior category to the Kantian categories. In this respect, Heidegger's project, i.e. *phenomenology as fundamental ontology*, turns out to be existential instead.

For locking the key on how Heidegger's stance differs from the transcendental philosophy, it is worth mentioning what he means by *fundamental ontology*. In this sense, he posits,

All ontology, no matter how rich and tightly knit a system of categories it has at its disposal, remains fundamentally blind and perverts its innermost intent if it has not previously clarified the meaning of being sufficiently and grasped this clarification as its fundamental task.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, fundamental ontology, from which alone all other ontologies originate, must be sought in the existential analysis of *Da-sein*.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For the sake of brevity, we can understand "the essence of a being" by being-ness. However, Heidegger coins this 'Being' which can correspond to 'the essence' in a very loose sense once it is ignored 'Being' is primordial/ontological sense of 'being'. For Heidegger, "Being" is what makes beings intelligible as beings in our experiences. However, it is rather '-ness' or 'beingness' of a being. Thus, it is not an entity nor is it a metaphysical form above the all other beings. "Being is always the being of a being" (*Being and Time*,7) and thus it is a relational category which supplies the conditions underlying behind the very possibility of our experiencing beings-as-such.

<sup>11</sup> *Da-sein* is one of the most central though the most contentious term in Heidegger's works. *Da-sein* (there-being) has a few interpretations. In its most generic sense, *Da-sein* is a distinctive mode of 'Being' for human beings. In this context, some interpreters of Heidegger's philosophy think that *Da-sein* corresponds to an individual human existence in his own way of living and some of them think that it denotes to an individual domain in term of shared manner of living. In this regard, we can talk about two interpretations of *Da-sein* (there-being) in literature. Firstly, it can be held to be an individual and subjective way of being-in-the-world, to which the subject himself cannot be reducible. Secondly, it can be held to be an individual domain of modes of living which the members of some community shares. *Da-sein* might stand for the project of phenomenologically reductive individuation in Heidegger's fundamental ontology. According to some Post-modernist philosophers, *Da-sein* is a movement against the modernity's philosophy of universals. Here, I sometimes take *Da-sein* as being-ness of an individual human being and sometimes take as 'we'. Nevertheless, *Da-sein* as a term reveals itself in the context of Heidegger's debates and the reason why it is central to his philosophy relies on its being prior to experiences of being-ness of other beings since it is being-ness of what encounters with being-ness of beings-as-such. It has an explanatory and ontological priority over 'Being' of beings-as-such.

<sup>12</sup> Dreyfus & Wrathall, *A Companion to Heidegger*, 22-34

<sup>13</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 11.

In this vein, the fundamental task of an ontology is to clarify the most basic conditions relying upon behind the possibility of the experience of beings. The fundamental ontology starts out with the question of *Being* of beings with reference to the status of *Da-Sein* in its possibility. In this sense, ontological analysis in its fundamental sense is primordial to other questions about beings. Considering the status of fundamental ontology and the status of related questions, Heidegger isolates it from *regional ontologies* which indirectly involve with entities such as economical, biological or logical facts which are “average and vague understanding” of entities.<sup>15</sup> These ontologies, which inescapably rely on the fundamental ontology, take beings in their *ontical* sense while their ontological senses are indispensably vital for discovering *Being* of beings. Therefore, those which are ontical concern with the facts about beings while what is ontological concerns with the meaning of *Being*.

Furthermore, the notion of *Da-sein* is the key which enables Heidegger to make the distinction between regional ontologies exploiting beings in their ontical sense and the fundamental ontology focusing on beings in their ontological sense. For Heidegger, *Da-sein* in its primordial relation with things has a priority in accounting for *Being* of beings.

However, it can be asked why human beings (*Da-sein* in this sense) have a primary status in the task of “interpretation of the meaning of being”.<sup>16</sup> For one thing, the question of the meaning of being can be answered only if one primarily asks the question of who interprets the question of being. Nonetheless, the reason why *Da-sein* has such a status does not simply lie within the implication that *Da-sein* has a theoretical primacy in the project of *phenomenology as fundamental ontology*. Since *Da-sein* (the existence of human beings in this sense) is ontologically primordial to the conditions behind the possibility of other entities. On the one hand, only human beings (*Da-sein*), face the question of the meaning of being through their inward realization. On the other hand, only human beings have a pre-reflective openness to beings by their outward realizations. Consequently, the conditions behind the experiences of beings are grounded in the conditions of our being in the first place. In this respect, *Da-sein* is the most basic notion “to be interrogated” and it means that “... the question of being is nothing else than the radicalization of an essential tendency of being that belongs to *Da-sein* itself, namely, of the pre-ontological understanding of being”.<sup>17</sup> Since *ontology* corresponds to a theoretical inquiry on being, Heidegger holds *Da-sein* to be ‘pre-ontological’ in the sense that it has a pre-reflective understanding of being.

In this manner, understanding *Da-sein* (ourselves) might seem to be more accessible and occurrent to us in our average *everydayness*. It is traditionally agreed that one’s own existence (as in Descartes’ *cogito* argument) must be self-evident or transparent to herself. However, Heidegger believes that the transparency of *Da-sein* would be the case only if we took the question of being in its ontical sense. This means that *Da-sein* does not simply entail self-consciousness; however, it is fundamentally conscious of itself as *being-in-the-world*. As he puts it, “*Da-sein* is ontically not only what is near or even nearest—we ourselves are it, each of us...it is ontologically what is farthest removed”.<sup>18</sup> *Da-sein* fleets from us in our average everydayness, and thereby we fail to recognize how primordially it comes to be amongst other beings with respect to its relations with them.

<sup>15</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 13.

Considering the significant role which *Da-sein* plays in the interpretation of the question of being, there seems to leave no fundamental interpretation of other questions related with beings. Consequently, the question of truth also relies back on the existential analysis of *Da-sein* since every ontological interpretation primarily bears on it. Thus, it can be further claimed that there cannot be any interpretation of truth or falsehood without the interpretation of *Da-sein*. As we will see in the next section, the pre-ontological status of *Da-sein* implicates that there can be no truth or falsity irrespective of *Da-sein*. Therefore, the conception of *Da-sein* is inescapable for Heidegger's conception of truth. For this reason, he lays out his inquiry about the question of truth in accordance with *Being of Da-sein*. In what follows, I will try to elucidate what he means by "truth" and what roles it plays in his overall project.

### 3. Derivative and Primordial Conceptions of Truth

#### 3.1. Truth as disclosure/unconcealment

In section 44 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger constructs his conceptions of truth based on their locus in his fundamental ontology, and he thereby explains them in virtue of *Dasein* in its ontical, ontological and existential-ontological senses. Although he gives some preceding insights on the notion of truth while discussing *phenomenon* and *logos as discourse*, he later explicates the notion of truth along with its all primordial and derivative senses in section 44. Broadly speaking, Heidegger takes truth as *Aletheia* by underlining its Greek connotations *uncovering*, *unconcealment*, *disclosing* and *dis-covering*.<sup>19</sup> In this respect, he considers that the term *Aletheia* means "to unlock", "to take out off hiddenness" and "to disclose" whereas he thinks it has no connotation with "obtaining something indirectly by inference" unlike the traditional theories of truth often hold.<sup>20</sup> According to Heidegger, all these interpretations of *Aletheia* implicate an act of revealing or uncovering; nonetheless, they neither stand for syllogistic inferences nor an act of revealing which has a derivative relation to beings in their ontological senses. Nevertheless, what does Heidegger *disclose* by his conception of *truth as disclosure* and what does *truth as disclosure* exactly mean for beings, *Da-sein* and the world? Without appealing to Heideggerian terms, it can be asked what kind of theory of truth Heidegger wishes to postulate by the conception of *truth as disclosure*. Heidegger manifests it in his critique of the traditional theory of truth in which *truth as disclosure* is simply employed in its most derivative sense, namely truth as agreement/correspondence (between a proposition and its object).

After explaining *truth as a disclosure* in terms of propositional truths, he further mentions two consecutively primordial senses of truth, to wit, *truth as the disclosedness of Da-sein* and *truth as the connectedness of Da-sein and the world*. In doing so, Heidegger follows three main paths: (a) he seeks to figure out this traditional conception of truth and to interpret it in such a way that he can find the primordial sense of this conception; (ii) he seeks to reveal this primordial sense which is grounded in *Dasein's disclosedness* and he further attempts to show how the traditional conception is derived from this primordial sense; (iii) seeks to show how *Da-sein as beings-in-the-world* is connected with the world. In this vein, Heidegger firstly takes issue *with truth*

<sup>19</sup> Although Heidegger's coinages on "truth as *Aletheia*" can be used interchangeably, he mostly prefers to use "disclosing" or "disclosure" in *Being and Time*. However, he later prefers to use the coinage "unconcealment" in his equally seminal work *The Origin of the Work of Art*. Here, I use the term interchangeably. If primordial and derivative senses of *truth as Aletheia* are exhibited clearly, I think my relatively sloppy use of the term will not be problematic for the reader.

<sup>20</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 70.



*as agreement* which has been traditionally taken into consideration to be the only sense of truth. According to him, *truth as agreement* displays three significant tenets:

- (1) The locus of truth is assertion/ proposition/judgment;
- (2) The essence of truth lies in the “agreement” of the judgment with its object;
- (3) Aristotle attributed truth to judgment as its primordial locus, he also started the definition of truth as agreement.<sup>21</sup>

The last tenet has a relevance to the discussion considering the historical significance of how the traditional concept occurred; however, the first two tenets compose the argumentative structure of the traditional notion of truth which is often known as *the correspondence theory of truth*. Considering (1) and (2), assertions are subjected to be true or false depending on whether they correspond to what they are to represent in the external world. In other words, confirming/disconfirming an assertion requires a comparison holding between a representation and the world. Furthermore, such a notion of truth implicates further that assertions have an ideal content in two senses: (I) different assertions can ubiquitously express the very same content/representation (e.g. ‘Snow is white.’, ‘Snow has the same color as milk.’, ‘Kar beyazdır.’); (ii) they hold their content without assuming any circumspensive interpretation of it (e.g. the assertion ‘Snow is white’ is held to be true without regarding any particular context or circumspection in which it is not white).

Heidegger finds this notion of truth is insufficient to ground the question of being. In this vein, he firstly presents *truth as agreement* to the effect that he can reach back to its primordial ground. In this regard, Heidegger’s notion of *logos* could be a good start to understand how he lays out his existential analysis of propositional truth. *Logos*, for him, has a pivotal role to exhibit that assertions, along with other forms of discourse, are inadequate to provide an (existential) interpretation of beings and the primordial senses of truth.

### 3.2. *Logos as Discourse and The Critique of Truth as Agreement*

*Logos* is often taken to be a (conversational) discourse that corresponds to a communicational domain which consists of communicatively exchangeable linguistic components and context-laden functions. Appealing to *Logos*, Heidegger attempts to uncover the characteristics of *truth as disclosure*. In this respect, he contends that *logos as discourse* means making “manifest ‘what is being talked about’ in speech”.<sup>22</sup> With respect to his notion of *truth as disclosure*, *Logos* might first appear to be the primary locus of truth.

Intuitively speaking, that which making manifest what is talking about seems to have a role in disclosing what is talking about. Nevertheless, Heidegger thinks that it would be the case only if the interpretation of beings was taken in ontical sense. For one reason, *logos as discourse* constitutes a regional or particular mode of letting something be seen. To illustrate, a conversation enables interlocutors to receive what is said in the sense that a conversation could be conveyed as strings of phonemes, forms of symbols and all communicative beings-as-such (e.g. gestures, mumblings, and so on) in their ontical sense. Thus, a conversation in this ontical sense passes *beings-as-such* onto others by the very nature of discourse which makes *beings-as-such* salient. For another reason, *logos as discourse* cannot explain what the passed-on conversation actually says of by sheer

<sup>21</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 198.

<sup>22</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 28.

means of what is passed on its ontical sense. In other words, it does not manifest *Being of what is conveyed*. Nor it does not say of the pre-ontological nature of the relationship amongst human beings, linguistic structures, and their meanings. In one sense, we could relate it to Heidegger's ideas about *equipmentality* or *environmentality* which describes the relation between tools and *Da-sein* in an activity of using a tool. Thus, *logos as discourse* require a more primordial ground that provides conditions for a conversation to be intelligible.

In this respect, assertions, which are embedded in *logos as discourse*, also bears an ontical mode of *making manifest* even though they have a more specific mode of *making manifest* something. Firstly, assertions, according to Heidegger, are traditionally depicted as *connecting two things/taking a position* either by endorsing or refusing it; furthermore, the assertion is also deemed to have a truth-value in virtue of *appropriateness or correspondence* of the putative connection/position. In this regard, Heidegger thinks that assertion differs from other communicative means in discourse depending on the idea that assertions in their mode of making manifest are linear and direct whereas other modes (i.e. exclamations such as "Fire!") let things be seen in a circumspective manner. As Heidegger puts it, assertions in their mode of making manifest let something be seen "by indicating it" whereas "not every speech suits this mode of making manifest".<sup>23</sup> Putting an emphasis on the *indication*, it can be said that assertions point out what is said off by an assertion through stripping what is asserted from an environmental context of utterance. To illustrate, the sentence "The hanger looks grimy" perfunctorily points out a certain portion of reality as a mere signifier regardless of pointing out any circumspective condition behind its content such as why I make this claim in the first place or under what occasion I come to make it. Hence, assertions, in their mode of making beings manifest, isolate the circumspective conditions of their occurrences from the totality of their involvements with beings. Just as in the other forms of discourse, assertions in their ontical sense merely say of *connected beings* without disclosing what these connected beings are about and what they consist in. In other words, the assertions, which are linguistic tools in their ontical sense, require a primordial ground to manifest the conditions of intelligibility of truth. Thus, the assertion is at best a derivative mode of interpretation. Thereby, any theory of truth, which holds assertions to be ultimate truth-bearers, forms a derivative notion of epistemology.

### 3.3. Truth as *Dasein's Disclosedness*

As we see in the last section, Heidegger's analysis of assertion leads him to refuse the truth as agreement. As he argues, the truth cannot (primordially) be propositional since assertions, which compose a specific mode of making something manifest, depict beings in seclusion from its environmental and contextual involvements in virtue of *Being of beings-as-such, Da-sein, and their connectedness*. In *the Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger similarly says that truth is "a property neither of the facts, in the sense of beings, nor of statements".<sup>24</sup> Simply, assertions which are alleged locus of truth have nothing to do with how the state of being-asserted and the act of asserting stand in their ontological sense; nevertheless, they just have to do with the constituents of a relevant correspondence (*beings-as-such*) within the isolation from the context of practices in which they occur. Following this point, Heidegger criticizes the traditional notion of truth based on this first inquiry. Heidegger starts out by offering a phenomenological analysis of the confirmation of the truth. In this vein, he begins by

<sup>23</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 29.

<sup>24</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 30-31.

a vivid example and asks questions weighing the primacy of *truth as an agreement* for the sake of the question of *Being*:

... ‘The picture on the wall is hanging crookedly.’ This statement demonstrates itself when the speaker turns around and perceives the picture hanging crookedly on the wall. What is proved in this demonstration? What is the meaning of confirming this statement? Do we perhaps ascertain an agreement between ‘knowledge’ or ‘what is known’ with the thing on the wall? Yes and no, depending on whether our interpretation of the expression ‘what is known’ is phenomenally adequate. To what is the speaker-related when he judges without perceiving the picture, but ‘only representing’? Possibly to ‘representations’? Certainly not, if representation is supposed to mean here representing as a physical event. Nor is he related to representations in the sense of what is represented, if we mean by that a ‘picture’ of the real thing on the wall. Rather, the statement that is ‘only representing’ is in accordance with its own most meaning related to the real picture on the wall. What one has in mind is the real picture, and nothing else...<sup>25</sup>

Considering this critical summary of the traditional view, he counter-poses:

What is to be confirmed is that it discovers the being toward which it is. What is demonstrated is the discovering being of the assertion. Here knowing remains related solely to the being itself in the act of demonstration. It is in this being, so to speak, that the confirmation takes place. The being that one has in mind shows itself as it is in itself, that is, it shows that it, in its selfsameness, is just as it is discovered or pointed out in the assertion. Representations are never compared, neither among themselves nor in relation to the real thing.

....

What is to be demonstrated is not an agreement of knowing with its object, still less something physical with something physical, but neither is it an agreement between the “contents of consciousness” among themselves. What is to be demonstrated is solely the being discovered of the being itself, that being in the how of its being discovered. Confirmation means the being’s showing itself in its self-sameness.<sup>26</sup>

By using the example in the first passage, Heidegger starts out an analysis of how an assertion is confirmed in virtue of the appropriateness between its content and its representation. According to the process of truth-making/confirmation, the truth of an assertion is manifested in the moment of confirmation where we encounter the object as in the way this assertion claims it to be. Nonetheless, how is this manifestation to be interpreted? Regarding our earlier analysis of the assertion, a confirmation appears to be related to representations in the sense that if there are no such and such representations as in the way they are represented then there will be nothing to confirm. In this picture, our perceptual experience or recognition of the entity gets almost trivialized. It is a very static and passive way of making something manifest and thereby what we confirm is nothing other than what is already given by a proposition. At this point, the traditional view presupposes that confirmation concerns with the conformity between representations and entities without admitting subject’s active role in confirming.

As he critically discusses in the last quoted passage, Heidegger initially rejects that truth needs to be grounded in representations of the world in virtue of their appropriateness. He contends that we, by asserting a proposition, are related to the entity that is thereby represented. As we discuss in the earlier section, an assertion allows an entity to manifest itself to the effect that it also lets us encounter with an entity even though it is only at a propositional level. Hereby, Heidegger means that what is demonstrated in the confirmation of the assertion never goes beyond eliciting a direct or linear manifestation of the entity. Thus, even if the person in

<sup>25</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 200-201.

<sup>26</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 201.

the above example never turns around himself to have the perceptual experience which confirms the assertion, the assertion nonetheless relates him to the picture itself, not a 'representation' of the picture.

In the second passage, he underlines this point by holding that *representations are never compared, neither among themselves nor in relation to the real thing*. Thus, Heidegger objects to the presupposition of the correspondence theory of truth that there are beings, such as representations, which intervene between us and the world during the process of confirmation. According to Heidegger, we do not notice nor address these representations in the determination of the truth of an assertion. By contrast, Heidegger contends that confirmation can be steered to the being itself, which is allegedly confirmed by our perceptions or reasoning, in its mode of *un-coveredness*. In this context, Heidegger claims that "confirmation means this showing-itself of the being in the same way in which it is intended in the proposition".<sup>27</sup> Hereby, Heidegger does not completely reject the traditional view; however, he modifies it in a way that it occurs to be a derivative sense of some other primordial senses of truth in his fundamental ontology. In this regard, he explains why the *truth as an agreement* becomes an inadequate ground for interpreting the question of *Being*.

Firstly, Heidegger considers that one must see the truth as it is before one can make any judgment to be true. Hence, the truth of a judgment must already be grounded in *un-coveredness* in more primordial sense and thereby the truth of a judgment must be derivative. Heidegger also provides an alternative line of argument to make his claim about its being a derivative mode of truth. In this respect, he underlines that "to say that a statement is true means that it discovers the beings in themselves".<sup>28</sup> Hereby, it implicates that true assertions uncover things in those beings' ontical sense. Yet, assertions by no means make things manifest out of this isolated ontic domain. They only perfunctorily manifest entities in their own un-coveredness by indicating the presence of beings regardless of discovering what these beings in question definitively consist of. Appealing to Heidegger's notion of *environmentality*, it can further be claimed that assertions as tools do not reveal the totality of all kinds of involvements in epistemic acts in which these occurrent and available tools involve. By contrast, the very possibility of their beings-as-tools yet arises from a more primordial ground. Hence, Heidegger seeks out a more adequate conception of truth which does not attach to propositionality or assertability. Heidegger, in this vein, discusses the inadequacy of this conception as follows:

The statement is not the primary "locus" of truth, but the other way around, the statement as a mode of appropriation of discoveredness and as a way of being-in-the-world is based in discovering, or in the disclosedness of Da-sein. The most primordial 'truth' is the locus of the statement and the ontological condition of the possibility that statements can be true or false (discovering or covering over).<sup>29</sup>

In other words, truth is not exhausted by an assertion which an epistemic agent could make whenever he states an assertion like 'such-and-such is true'. Instead, truth is a state of *Being* in its primordial sense. Consequently, he posits that truth must occur prior to knowledge about the ontical circumstances of confirmation. In other words, "truth is the disclosure of the way in which" entities are entertained. Hereby, he takes truth *as discovering or disclosing* itself which is primordial to the interpretation of truth as correctness. By *truth as disclosing*, he means that the activity and capacity of disclosing preserve a space for the very conditions which make intelligible the truth of beings in their ontical sense. In this sense, *truth as disclosing* becomes a primordi-

<sup>27</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 201.

<sup>28</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 202.

<sup>29</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 207.

al ground for *truth as agreement*. Thus, Heidegger does not offer *truth as disclosing* to be the most basic conception of truth although he regards it as indispensable for the very possibility of truth as agreement. As he puts it,

Being true as discovering is a manner of being of Da-Sein. What makes this discovering itself possible must necessarily be called 'true' in a still more primordial sense.<sup>30</sup>

As these lines suggest, the existential conditions of truth (of every being), including truth itself, roots back to *Da-sein*. In other words, truth in its existential-ontological sense does not refer to entities or nor to *disclosing* itself, but it only signifies *Da-sein's disclosedness*. After all, the practices or activities of disclosing truths primordially require a category of existential agency, which finds its locus in *Da-sein*. In this sense, disclosing must obviously be a characteristic of *Da-sein* itself. On the one hand, only *Da-sein* uncovers and discloses. On the other hand, *Da-sein* itself provides the most fundamental conditions or existential structure for the totality of involvements of truth. For these reasons, *Da-sein's disclosedness* is the most primordial level of truth. In this regard, Heidegger states:

The existential and ontological interpretation of the phenomenon of truth has shown: (1) Truth in the most primordial sense is the disclosedness of Da-sein to which belongs the discoveredness of inner-worldly beings, (2) Da-sein is equiprimordially in truth and untruth.<sup>31</sup>

More definitively, there is “truth only in so far as *Da-sein* is and so long as *Da-sein* is” and hereby beings-as-such are un-concealed “only when Dasein is; and only as long as Dasein is, are they disclosed”.<sup>32</sup> In other words, that truth of entities in the sense their being uncovered is possible not only because *Da-sein* uncovers and conceals but also because *Da-sein* as being-in-the-world constitutes the very existential conditions of the possibility of truth. All truth becomes indispensably subordinate to the being of Dasein. Thus, there could be no “eternal truth” with respect to its constitutive and discovering nature.

Although *Da-sein* as *being-in-the-world* uncovers and discloses, it also conceals and covers. This should not be taken as the conflicting or contradictory activities once it is considered that truth primordially belongs to *Da-sein* in the sense that *Da-sein* constitutes the very conditions of the possibility of truths and truth-discovering activity itself. Regarding this pre-ontological status of *Da-sein*, it also demarcates the conditions of the possibility of concealment or hidden-ness. Hereby, Heidegger goes on to say:

Because it essentially falls prey to the world *Da-sein* is in untruth in accordance with its constitution of being.<sup>33</sup>

The existential and ontological condition for the fact that being-in-the-world is determined by “truth” and “untruth” lies in the constitution of being of *Da-sein* which we characterized as thrown project.<sup>34</sup>

In this regard, *Da-sein* also resides in “untruth” which corresponds to *Being of being hidden*. By no means, *untruth* is excluded by the notion of propositional falsity or *deceits* by themselves. Accordingly, *beings-as-such* can be true (un-concealed) or un-true (concealed) only because *Da-sein* in pre-ontological sense exists in the truth and in the untruth. Again, it does not implicate that human beings cannot make false claims, or their every claim is false. The claim that *Da-sein in untruth* does not indicate that *Da-sein* is prone to involve with any particular falsity. Instead, *Da-sein's* being a locus of un-truth brings out something about its existential

<sup>30</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 202.

<sup>31</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 204.

<sup>32</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 203.

<sup>33</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 204.

<sup>34</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 205.

structure. Hence, it makes possible an activity of concealment just as much as an activity of unconcealment. In this respect, it is feasible that human beings may fail to disclose entities including themselves and other primordial categories of being. When Heidegger claims that *Da-sein* is in untruth, he does not simply propose that it is possible for Dasein to err. On the other hand, he means that *Da-sein*, which is Being of human beings, constitutes the prior categories of the possibility of truth and untruth<sup>35</sup>. Following these primordial characteristics of *Da-sein*, Heidegger further defines *Da-sein's disclosedness* with reference to *untruth or hidden-ness*.

### Conclusion

Provided that there cannot be the act of disclosing and cognizably relevant facts without *Dasein*, the act of obtaining a truth becomes similar to an act of robbery in the sense that “truth (discoveredness) must always be wrested from beings [entities exclusively] and they are torn from concealment”.<sup>36</sup> After all, *Da-sein as disclosedness* enables primordial grounds for the conditions of discovering (an intentional act itself) and being discovered (an intended object of the act). Since the disclosed entities which are beings in themselves are always subjected to *Da-sein* in its existential-ontological sense. Still, it does not mean that the conditions of their existence necessarily rely on *Da-sein*, but the conditions of intelligibility of their existence grounds in *Da-sein*. In this respect, Heidegger's theory of knowledge seems to be Kantian in spirit considering the idea that the constitutive and pre-reflective conditions, which make epistemic acts possible in the first place, are embedded in epistemic agents by means of certain framework. Nonetheless, Heidegger interprets these constitutive conditions by providing an additional layer, namely the existential-ontological level of constitution. More importantly, Heideggerian epistemic framework conducts the existential import that becomes relevant to agents in terms of the connectedness between the world and *Da-sein*. Thus, the embedded framework in Heidegger's theory of knowledge which makes epistemic involvements possible seems to be existential rather than transcendental. Truth as disclosure is held to be the existential condition behind *Dasein's disclosedness*, and thus the most primordial understanding of truth becomes existential in character.

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<sup>35</sup> Similar remarks on the relation between truth and un-truth occur in his later work *The Origin of the Work of Art*. He defines the truth as follows:

Truth is un-truth in that there belongs to it the originating region of the not-yet- (the un) disclosed in the sense of concealment. In un-concealment as truth is present, too, the other “un-” of the twofold refusal. Truth as such is present in the opposition between clearing and the twofold concealment...The openness of this open, i.e. truth, can only be what it is, namely this open, when and as long as it establishes itself in its open. In this open, therefore, there must be a being in which the openness takes its stand and achieves constancy... Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, 36.

Although there are terminological shifts, he keeps the most primordial sense of truth to be *Da-sein's disclosedness*.

<sup>36</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 204.