Heidegger's Theory of Truth and its Importance for Quality of Qualitative Research

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When reliability and validity were introduced as validation criteria for empirical research in the human sciences, quantitative research methods prevailed, and theory of science relied on neopositivism (Vienna Circle) or postpositivism (scientific realism). Within this worldview, notions of reliability and validity as criteria of scientific goodness were introduced. Reliability and validity were associated with the correspondence theory of truth, which is mostly ill-suited to the needs of qualitative research. For that reason, qualitative research must look for other kinds of validation criteria. The article elaborates the problems arising when the correspondence theory of truth is used as an ultimate criterion in evaluating qualitative research and proposes Heidegger's hermeneutical or alethetical idea of truth as a more suitable approach.

INTRODUCTION

During this millennium, the interest of educational scientists and philosophers in Martin Heidegger's philosophy has increased dramatically (see, for example, Gur-Ze'ev, 2002; Huttunen and Kakkori, 2002; Kakkori and Huttunen, 2012; Lewin, 2015; Lewis, 2017; Long, 2017; Peters, 2002; Standish, 2012; Thompson, 2005; Williams, 2013, 2015). Above all *Journal of Philosophy of Education* and *Educational Philosophy and Theory* have published many articles on Heidegger and education that require some knowledge of Heidegger's philosophy. Nevertheless, Heidegger's philosophy has not been widely discussed in the context of educational research and methodology—with the notable exception of articles by Paul Standish and Michael Peters. In this article we focus on Heidegger's importance for validation of qualitative research. As Emma Williams (2015) has noticed—when criticising Harvey Siegel's realistic epistemology—Heidegger's theory of truth (truth as *aletheia*) radically exceeds the traditional epistemology, which is based on a Cartesian subject-object division and the correspondence theory of truth.

In the 1950s, reliability and validity were advanced as criteria for the scientific verification of empirical research in the human sciences. At the time, quantitative research methods prevailed, and the theory of science relied on neopositivism (Vienna Circle) or postpositivism (scientific realism). The common view was that, as science dealt only in hard facts, quantitative methods were most appropriate for the human sciences. This idea also prevailed in educational sciences. The origins of reliability and validity[1] can be traced back to the structural test invented by Leo Cronbach (1951; see Kvale, 1995), subsequently known as Cronbach's alpha. In 1963, Campbell and Stanley (1963) introduced the concepts of internal[2] and external[3] validity, and these have since been fundamental to educational research.

Notions of reliability and validity are associated with the correspondence theory of truth and realist epistemology (see Heikkinen *et al*., 2012) which relates to what we may call the 'Cartesian' worldview (Heikkinen, Kakkori and Huttunen 2001, pp. 12–13).[4] According to the Cartesian worldview, an isolated knowing subject (researcher, cogniser) makes statements about outer reality (what is cognisable). A statement is true if it corresponds with states of affairs in an outer reality (which is objective, that is, not affected by the subject). The correspondence theory of truth presumes that the subject can rise above the world and language to some kind of meta-level to determine whether theory and reality correspond (Pihlström, 2014). Also, behind the notions of external and internal validity is the realistic ontology that strives to capture objective reality 'as it is' as much as possible (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994a, p. 5). That is why Denzin and Lincoln label these quality criteria as 'Positivist' or 'Post-positivist' (1994a, p. 13).

When so-called 'qualitative' research emerged in the 1960s, attempts were made to apply traditional notions of validity and reliability. However, it soon became apparent that these concepts could not be applied to the qualitative research as such. Nowadays, according to Steinar Kvale (1994), there are three main approaches to validating qualitative research:

1) Applying traditional concepts of reliability and validity as far as is possible.
2) Tailoring new meanings for reliability and validity.
3) New forms of validation for qualitative research.

For example, in relation to option 2, Kirk and Miller (1986), Long and Johnsson (2000,) Seale (1999a) and Silverman (2005) have tried to modify the concepts of reliability and validity to render them suitable for qualitative research. Yet it is notable that this kind of modification nevertheless maintains the perspective of realist epistemology (i.e. the correspondence theory of truth) and Cartesian subject-object dualism. For example, David Silverman (2005, p. 224) and Kirk and Miller (1986, p. 11) explicitly say that their notion of credible qualitative research is based on Karl Popper's scientific realism (Popper, 1974). That, of course, implies a realistic epistemology and the correspondence theory of truth.

However, qualitative researchers rely mainly on non-dualistic constructivist epistemology (see Table 1), and Guba and Lincoln (1981) have

Table 1. Comparison of traditional validation criteria and Guba and Lincoln's new validation criteria (see Denzin and Lincoln, 1994a, p. 14; Krefting, 1991, p. 217).

Traditional criteria for judging empirical research in human sciences[6]	Guba and Lincoln's criteria for judging qualitative research
Internal validity	Credibility
External validity	Transferability
Reliability	Dependability
Objectivity	Confirmability

reflected thoughtfully on this discrepancy. That is why they introduced new validation criteria. Specifically, they identified *trustworthiness* as the main validation criterion and posited its four dimensions: 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3) dependability, and 4) confirmability (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). However, one could claim that even these criteria presuppose a realist epistemology and the correspondence theory of truth. For example, Seale (1999a) claimed that Guba and Lincoln's trustworthiness is based on internal validity. Noting here that internal validity, in the sense proposed by Campbell and Stanley (1963) refers to truth as correspondence, we can make the following comparison between Guba and Lincoln's new validation criteria and more traditional validation criteria:

Denzin and Lincoln pointed out that constructivist qualitative researchers have usually replaced positivist criteria of internal/external validity, reliability objectivity with the new terms of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994a, p. 14). Nevertheless, a realistic ontology is not moved beyond simply by renaming the old validation criteria. The validation criteria of 'credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability' can be understood as parallel criteria to internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. Therefore, these new criteria essentially retain realist ontology as a means of validation of qualitative research.

The notion of transferability preserves the realist aspect of external validity, because it facilitates the generalisation of research results. Nevertheless, generalisation is not a necessary element in qualitative research. The results of one qualitative research project can sometimes be generalised to other contexts but sometimes that is not possible. The lack of external validity or transferability does not diminish the quality of qualitative research. External validity, transferability and generalisation cannot be common validation criteria for every form of qualitative research. This is the case especially in ethnography, autoethnography, action research, narrative research, discourse analysis and frame analysis—we return to discuss some of these approaches at the end of this article.

We can also so say of dependability that it preserves the realistic aspect of the notion of reliability. In many cases the results of qualitative research depend on specific contexts (space, time, discourse, culture and so on). In that case results are not in accordance with the validation notion of dependability. Again, this does not diminish the quality of qualitative research.

Can autoethnographic or narrative research ever fulfill the criterion of dependability or conformability for that matter? Also, the validation criterion of conformability refers to realistic ontology. If research satisfies criterion of conformability, it is 'objective'.

Campbell and Stanley (1963, p. 5) understood internal validity as 'ruling out any random circumstances' and Denzin and Lincoln (1994b) defined it as 'the degree to which findings correctly map the phenomenon in question'. Denzin and Lincoln (1994c, p. 114) also claim their criterion of credibility is parallel to criterion of internal validity. Yet why should the criterion of credibility be parallel with internal validity, which clearly refers to realistic epistemology? In some cases, 'random circumstances' are precisely the subject matter of qualitative research (i.e. narrative research or ethnography). And if 'correct mapping' is also the basic idea behind the criterion of credibility, then it still relies on realistic epistemology; there is one correct way to see things and other ways are incorrect.

In 1994, Guba and Lincoln stated that, in qualitative research, only those researchers who rely on the Cartesian subject-object dualism (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, 2005) use reliability and validity. Lincoln and Guba (2000, p. 176) cite the following passage from Polkinghorne (1989, p. 23): 'The idea the objective realm is independent of the knower's subjective experience of it can be found in Descartes dual substance theory, with its distinction between the objective and subjective realms . . . In the splitting of reality into subject and object realms, what can be known "objectively" is only the objective realm . . . Human consciousness, which is subjective, is not accessible to science, and thus not truly knowable'. These subjective realms are the central issue in qualitative research, making reliability and validity problematic as validation criteria. Like Guba and Lincoln and Polkinghorne, we claim that the Cartesian worldview is a poor fit for qualitative research. The aim of qualitative research is not to produce photocopy-style pictures of objective reality; rather, qualitative research deals with worlds of meanings.

We claim that in qualitative research it is quite impossible to maintain the strict Cartesian subject-object dualism that is a prerequisite of the correspondence theory of truth. For that reason, qualitative research needs validation criteria that are not based on the correspondence theory of truth.

The next section briefly reviews the history of truth as correspondence and how some qualitative researchers interpret the importance of that theory. After introducing Martin Heidegger's *alethetical* (hermeneutical) notion of truth, we defend the claim that the *alethetical* notion of truth aligns well with most of the forms of qualitative research. We claim in Heideggerian manner that truth as correspondence requires more 'primordial' (*ursprünglich*) notion of truth and that is truth as *aletheia* (Heidegger, 1992, p. 213).

TRUTH AS CORRESPONDENCE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

According to some interpretations we can find the basic idea of correspondence theory of truth in Plato's (see for example *Critias* 385b2; *Sophist* 263b) and Aristotle's (see for example *Metaphysics* 1011b25) texts. Thomas

Aquinas draws attention to this and provides an explicit formulation of correspondence theory in *his De Veritate* [1624]: '*et sic dicit quod veritas est adequatio rei et intellectus*' ['and he (Aristotle) said that truth is the correspondence between a thing/an object and thought'] (Aquinas, 1952, p. 5). However, Aquinas thought that this was an incorrect interpretation of Aristotle and an unsatisfactory notion of truth because, ultimately, God is Truth (see Aquinas, 1988). The interpretation of Aristotle as defending a correspondence theory of truth is controversial. For example, Heidegger strongly opposes this kind of interpretation (Heidegger, 1992, pp. 212–226). In Plato's case, meanwhile, Heidegger agrees that Plato somehow encouraged this kind of theory of truth and the history of philosophy went in the wrong direction (see Heidegger, 1999b; Wrathall, 2004, p. 444).

While there is controversy around attributing such a model of truth to the classical age, the correspondence theory of truth became the dominant theory of truth in the Modern Age. For Rene Descartes, for example, the correspondence theory was self-evidently the only way to understand the notion of truth: ' . . . for my part, I have never had any doubts about truth, because it seems a notion so transcendentally clear that nobody can be ignorant of it . . . that the word truth, in the strict sense, denotes the conformity of thoughts with its objects' (Descartes, 1991, p. 138).

Immanuel Kant, on the other hand, was very dissatisfied with the correspondence theory of truth (Kant, 2007, A58-A59/B82-B83). Also, Karl Marx considered the correspondence to be merely scholastic chit-chat or 'idle talk' (1845). Regardless of Kant's and Marx's critiques, however, the correspondence theory of truth became the prevailing theory in the 20th century.

Although it is the most widely known theory of truth, only a few researchers defend the correspondence theory in the context of qualitative research, including Feldman (2007), Moilanen (2002), Puolimatka (2002) and Seale (1999a, 1999b). Defending the importance of correspondence theory in the context of narrative research against the opposing view of Huttunen and Kakkori (2002), Moilanen (2002) for example asserted that although narrative research deals with the informant's subjective world, this is not a counter argument against the correspondence theory, as truth can be defined here as a correspondence between that subjective world and the researcher's interpretation. In this way, the narrative researcher can pursue 'objective knowledge' of the informant's 'subjective world'. In other words, the informant's subjective world forms part of the objective world for the narrative researcher, enabling the realistically oriented researcher to gather 'objective facts' about the informant's subjective states of mind. This is an interesting and subtle proposal. However, we might counter this by asking: why should we consider the storyteller's (informant's) mind as a collection of objective facts? If the correspondence theory requires the narrative researcher to unearth objective truths about the storyteller's subjective world, is that not the same as applying the natural scientific attitude in the field of human sciences? Subjective world involves meanings and we cannot study meanings with natural scientific attitude.

In an aggressive defence, Puolimatka claimed that, without correspondence theory, qualitative research would be conceptually confused and would lack any criteria for validation (Puolimatka, 2002). Puolimatka further contended that truth can only be ascertained by the correspondence theory, and that so-called epistemic theories (truth as coherence, truth as consensus, truth as successful practice etc.) do not properly define truth (Puolimatka, 2002). Epistemic theories seek to define truth by means of such notions as knowledge, belief, acceptance, verification, justification or perspective (see Alston, 2001, pp. 57–64). Puolimatka is, in this way, in agreement with Harvey Siegel who considers that truth is 'independent of the epistemic beliefs of the agent' (see Williams, 2015, p. 145; Siegel, 1998, p. 22).

Puolimatka favours Tarski's 'semantic' theory of truth, in which 'X is true if, and only if, p' (Tarski, 1944, pp 344). Example sentence 'the cat is on the carpet' (X) is true if there is a fact that 'the cat is on the carpet' (p). Many consider Tarski's theory as the optimal formulation of the correspondence theory of truth. This is a matter of dispute within analytic philosophy, however, as the 'redundant' interpretation of Tarski's truth theory (see for example Davidson, 1990, 1996; Horowich, 1982) suggests there is good reason to deny that Tarski's theory is a form of correspondence theory at all. Roy Bhaskar, the founder of critical realism, goes even further by claiming that Tarski's semantic theory of truth is actually 'a counterargument to the correspondence theory' (Bhaskar, 1993, p. 215). However, while remaining a matter of intense debate, most analytic philosophers (e.g. Hintikka, 2001; Popper, 1974) consider Tarski's theory to be a formulation of the correspondence theory. In short, there can be no unequivocal claim that the semantic theory exclusively defines the word truth (see Davidson, 1990, p. 297), or that Tarski's theory is a formulation of the correspondence theory of truth (Bhaskar, 1993, p. 215).[7]

Feldman's strategy for defending the correspondence theory sits between naive realism and radical constructivism (Feldman, 2007). Criticising the constructivist validation criteria of qualitative research advanced by Heikkinen *et al*. (2012), Feldman claimed that 'even though qualitative researchers may not want to accept a realist view of human interactions, I believe that there are good reasons to seek some level of correspondence with an agreed upon reality' (Feldman, 2007, p. 24).

Seale defended a subtle realism in qualitative research in the following way:

> Knowledge is always mediated by preexisting ideas and values, whether this is acknowledged by researchers or not. Yet, some accounts are more plausible than others, and human communities in practice have created reasonably firm grounds on which plausibility can be judged ... This is a long way from a simple correspondence theory of truth, but it contains elements of this. Neither does it claim that truth solely lies in the consistency of claims with some other set of claims, though this can legitimately be an element in judging truth claims. It involves opposition to the pure constructivist view that states

there is no possibility of knowing a real world that exists separately
from language (Seale, 1999b, p. 470).

For Seale, it is possible to know a real world that exists separately from
language. Despite such claims, however, we can observe that, for the qual-
itative researcher, the following question still arises: Is it the purpose of
qualitative research to find a 'real world' that exists separately from lan-
guage, culture, discourse, ideology or narrative? Indeed, in many cases, the
qualitative researcher is exploring the contents of language, discourse and
ideology; in what sense, then, are they pursuing an objectively existing real
world? As Cho and Trent put it, in qualitative research 'a one-to-one cor-
respondence between reality and observation is never achievable and *may
not even be a major aim*' (2006, p. 328, our emphasis).

In this article we argue that a better explanation and account of qualitative
research is yielded via a theory of truth which has been lesser attended to in
this literature. This is Heidegger's *alethetical* notion of truth. As we shall
see, this has the potential to make a more radical contribution to the way we
conceive qualitative research and empirical research more generally. This
is in light of Heidegger's claim that he is proposing not only an alternative
conception of truth, but one that is more primordial.

HEIDEGGER'S TRUTH AS UNCOVEREDNESS AND UNCONCEALMENT

Truth is for Heidegger *aletheia* as unconcealment. *Aletheia* is Heidegger's
hermeneutical interpretation from Aristotle's notion of truth as *aletheia*
in which being (*Seiende*) discovers itself in its 'Being' (*Sein*) (Heideg-
ger, 1992, p. 215). In *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1992) all three words
(truth, *aletheia*, unconcealment) convey the same meaning. This sometimes
causes misunderstandings.[8] The correspondence theory of truth understands
knowledge as true judgement of things. According to Heidegger, the prob-
lem with the correspondence theory of truth is the relationship between an
ideal entity and something real. When judgements are made, the judgement
is itself '*real* physical content', and that which is judged is '*ideal* content'
(Heidegger, 1992, p. 261). According to the correspondence theory of truth,
this ideal content stands in direct relation to the '*real* thing'.[9] Heidegger
does not deny this relation but asks, is this relation itself ideal or is it real,
and how is the relationship between these two ontologically possible? The
correspondence theory of truth is neither false nor untrue. The problem is,
rather, that the correspondence theory of truth has become almost the one
and only notion of truth. From the point of view of the correspondence
theory of truth, all things and entities are looked at only as objects, and this
forecloses other and more adequate ways of understanding our relation to
the world.

Heidegger's *alethetical* truth must be understood from the perspective
of *Dasein's* ('human'; a being who understands its own Being) being-
in-the-world.[10] In this world beings can be ready-to-hand (*Zuhanden*) or
present-at-hand (*Vorhanden*). One cannot understand Heidegger's truth as
aletheia (a.k.a. unconcealment) without the notions of ready-to-hand and

present-at-hand. Emma Williams explicates Heidegger's ways of being as follows:

> Heidegger objects to the idea that our primary way of relating to the world can be understood in terms of a cognitive or theoretical approach … We grasp things practically and meaningfully, rather than as objects for our detached consideration. To use Heidegger's terminology, we relate to things in the world primarily as 'tools' that are 'ready-to-hand',[11] rather than as 'objects' that are 'present-at-hand. This is, of course, not to say that our primary way of relating to things involves us in an unintelligent form of behaviour (Williams, 2013, p. 62).

When beings are ready-to-hand it is possible to speak of truth in terms of *aletheia*. When they are present-at-hand we have an objective relationship to them. The present-at-hand is always based on the ready-to-hand in the same way as when we are asking about our being in the world we already are in the world. When we are talking about truth as *aletheia*, beings (entities; *Seiende*) belong to a totality of equipment, in which entities do not show up as abstract objects separated from any context. In this totality, beings are always related to each other and our comportment of them involves what Heidegger calls 'circumspection'(*Umsicht*). When things are looked at objectively, such as they are when we understand them within the correspondence theory of truth, it is impossible to access their readiness-to-hand, for beings remain only present-at-hand. Thus, the correspondence theory of truth is unable to allow us to understand beings as they are in their totality and contexts. This helps us to see that what is being proposed here by Heidegger is not merely an additional conception of truth to truth as correspondence. In fact, Heidegger argues that truth as *aletheia* is a primordial notion of truth—for before it is possible to talk about separate things, 'a totality of equipment has already been discovered' (Heidegger, 1992. p. 98).

Heidegger's well-known hammer example illustrates this difference between ready-to-hand (*Zuhanden*) and present-at-hand (*Vorhanden*). When hammering, we do not look at the hammer as an object (present-at-hand) with which we are hammering; instead, it is for us ready-to-hand as belonging to the totality of equipment. This totality, which includes hammer, nails and what we are hammering, belongs to the work-world (Dahlstrom, 2009, pp. 255–257). When we are hammering, the hammer is ready-to-hand. Also, it is literally in our hand. If the hammer gets broken, it becomes present-at-hand, and we look (*hinsehen*) at it as something more like an object that no longer belongs to the totality of equipment and no longer opens the world of hammering to us. On the contrary, when we are engaged in the mode of hammering, the world is laid open for us. Truth as *aletheia* is this opening of the world (Heidegger, 1992, pp. 61, 68–69; see also Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000).

Heidegger does not deny that judgements like 'the picture on the wall is yellow' can be true or untrue. Yet the point here is that before we can make any judgement about the yellow picture on the wall, both the yellow picture

and the wall must first be present-at-hand to us. Rather than being a question of correspondence between the judgement and the world, this judgement discovers some being in its Being[12] in the world. To say that assertion 'is true' signifies that it uncovers the entity as it is. Such an assertion asserts, 'lets' the entity 'be seen' in its uncoveredness. The Being-true (truth) of the assertion must be understood as Being-uncovered. Thus, truth by no means has the structure of correspondence between the cogniser and the object in the sense of a likening of one entity (subject) to another (object) (Heidegger, 1992, p. 261).

According to Heidegger, judgements can be true or untrue, where the truth and Being-true of a statement are different cases. Being-true in the case of a statement can be termed a 'true sentence'. What comes to be shown to be true cannot be the correspondence between the cogniser and the object, as this would mean a correspondence between physical and intellect. Instead, what comes to be shown as true is the uncoveredness of the Being (*Sein*) of beings (*Seiende*). Before we can make true or untrue judgements, primordial alethetical truth as uncoveredness and unconcealment must have happened. This means that we have encountered some entities (beings; *Seiende*) in their way of Being (*Sein*). Prior to this encountering and uncovering, we cannot make any true or untrue judgements. We can illustrate this with an example in physics. Before we can make any judgement about 'strong interaction' between sub-atomic particles, nuclear physics (by Albert Einstein, Arthur Eddington, Wolfgang Pauli etc.) must have uncovered some entities (beings; *Seiende*) in their Being (*Sein*).

In Heidegger's thinking, the most significant truth is unconcealment, aletheia, which is not actually truth at all in the sense that we commonly understand truth (Sheehan, 2015; Wrathall, 2005). *Aletheia* as unconcealment is possible through *Dasein's* Being-in-the-world and *Dasein's* disclosedness: 'Disclosedness, constituted by state-of-mind, understanding, and disclosure, pertains equiprimordiality to the world, to Being-in, and to the Self' (Heidegger, 1992, p. 263). Heidegger expresses this by saying that '*Dasein* is "in the truth"' (Heidegger, 1992, p. 263). This does not mean that *Dasein* has true knowledge of empirical events or that *Dasein* has some extraordinary ability to make true judgements about beings. In *Dasein's* Being (*Sein*) 'in the truth' belongs to discovering and the covering of entities. The primordial truth is the condition that sentences can be true or false, or that they can cover or discover beings, entities or happenings (Dahlstrom, 2009).

The unconcealment makes it possible for entities to be discovered. When being is discovered, there is the possibility of truth as correspondence (see Dahlstrom, 2009; Wrathall, 2005). In this way, we can agree with Wrathall (2005, pp. 338–339) that it is possible to identify three forms of truth in Heidegger's account:

1. Propositional truth (correctness, *Richtigkeit*). An assertion is true when it corresponds to a state of affairs.
2. The truth (uncoveredness, *Entdecktheit*) of entities. An entity is 'true' when it is uncovered i.e. made available for comportment.

3. The truth of Being (*Sein*). There is an unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*) of Being of beings.

These three kinds of 'truths' are not to be understood to be in some kind of causal or chronological order. Heidegger claims that the correspondence theory of truth exists because there is a primordial phenomenon of truth (Heidegger, 1992). The primordial truth is the truth of Being as the unconcealment of Being (*Sein*) of beings (*Seiende*) making possible the truth of entities to be uncovered. The uncoveredness of entities is attained only through and with the unconcealment.

A further upshot of Heidegger's account of truth is that there is truth only as long as there is *Dasein*. Before *Dasein*, there is no such thing as truth, and the same happens when there is no more *Dasein*. Without *Dasein* (without a being who understands its own Being) there is neither truth nor Being (Heidegger, 1992). The truth as uncovering and unconcealing will always belong to a history, to a time and a place. Its essence can be described only as dynamic happening, not as a stable correspondence between sentences and things. When the truth is happening, it is always in the world, and we never call the being of the world into question.

From the perspective of scientific research, then, truth is the occurrence or happening of research. This happening includes all three forms of truth. Questions have answers because the research has uncovered something that it is possible to ask. This can be referred to a hermeneutic circle, in which truth is discovered with the occurrence of research. As an example, Heidegger refers to the laws of Newton, which were neither true nor false before Newton discovered them. Through the laws of Newton, the world is uncovered in terms of Newton's laws. In other words, truth happened as uncoveredness. If Newton's laws are some day refuted or forgotten, for example because humankind has vanished, the laws of Newton will no longer be true in the sense that the world would no longer be uncovered in this way (Heidegger, 1992).

When truth is understood as *aletheia* (unconcealment), there are at least three consequences (Inwood, 2010, pp. 13–14). The first is that truth is not defined as concerning only propositions and theoretical mental acts like judgements, beliefs and relations. Rather, truth discovers the world through different modes of Being-in-the world and different forms of understanding. Secondly, truth is not only a matter of expression and thinking; it is the uncovering of beings in the world. Finally, Inwood stresses that truth as *aletheia* is always simultaneously uncovering and covering, ongoing happening. Truth and untruth belong together, and truth presupposes unconcealment and covering. Untruth can mean a mistake, covered-ness or disguising. For example, untruth as mistake means that we confuse a big cat with a dog. Untruth as covered-ness means that being—in this example, a cat—is not showing itself at all. Finally, untruth as disguising means that being shows itself as something else—for example, a cat disguised as a dog. Disguising differs from the other two in that it is active in that we interpret being wrongly, we interpret being not at all, or being disguises itself as something else (Inwood, 2010; Heidegger, 1992).

In his later writings Heidegger emphasised that *alethetical* truth refers to the way in which statements always point back to language and to the place in which the statement is made (Kakkori, 2009). Language discovers itself and is not directed to anything outside of language. In this circle, truth occurs as *aletheia* (Heidegger, 1992). According to Heidegger, *alethetical* truth is always simultaneously an untruth, and unconcealing is always simultaneously concealing. Truth is a dynamic happening, not static way of affairs. One kind of place where truth is happening like this is in the work of art. Heidegger cites van Gogh's painting of peasants' shoes as a good example of the happening of truth and unconcealment:

> What is happening here? What is at work in the work? Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, in truth is. This being (*Seiende*) steps forward into the unconcealment of its being (*Seins*). The unconcealment of beings is what the Greeks called *aletheia*. We say 'truth' and think little enough in using the word. In the work, when there is a disclosure of the being as what and how it is, there is a happening of truth at work (Heidegger, 2002, p. 16).

In Heidegger's later works (2002, 1999a, 1999b, 1971), truth becomes more and more like happening, which he calls *Ereignis*. Poetry and language are among the most important places for the happening of truth. The truth in poetry or works of art does not mean that they are good copies of something original. Truth happens in their discovering of something new in the world. To discover something new is to submit to an experience of language that breaks the subject-object relation, and also with representational accounts of language where the word is taken to have meaning by virtue of its reference to an object or entity in the world. The *alethetical* truth Heidegger is proposing is not a less accurate, weaker or relativistic form of truth. Heidegger's later account is still based on what he writes about primordial truth in *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 2002).

For qualitative research, Heidegger's *alethetical*[13] truth is more suitable than the correspondence theory because it does not require Cartesian subject-object dualism. Cartesian dualism and the correspondence theory of truth are ill-suited branches of qualitative research like ethnography, autoethnography, ethnomethodology, discourse analysis, frame analysis, conversation analysis, narrative research, biographical research, phenomenography, empirical phenomenology, grounded theory etc. In fact, at present in ethnomethodology and in ethnography the use of the Heideggerian perspective in research is more like the rule than an exception. That is why it is essential for qualitative researchers to recognise the discrepancy between Heidegger's non-Cartesian perspective and the perspective of realistic validation criteria (internal validity, external validity, reliability, objectivity etc.).

CONCLUSION

Heidegger's notion of truth is appropriate for qualitative research. First, the task of qualitative research is generally close to what Heidegger considers

the essence of poetry, in that the poem's task is not to make an exact copy out of something original but to uncover a new world or open up a new horizon— to bring about a new way of seeing and thinking. This is what Heidegger refers to as the happening of truth in artwork. The value of qualitative research does not lie in its ability merely to reproduce the outside world. It comes from the capacity of research to evoke new kinds of thinking and seeing. This capacity of qualitative research could be described as its 'evocativeness' (see Heikkinen *et al*., 2012, p. 8). The notion of evocativeness is very close to the notion of Heidegger's theory of truth (see Heikkinen *et al*., 2012, p. 10). For Heidegger, Hölderlin's poem *Der Rhein* is evocative because truth happens in the artwork, revealing being in its Being between the earth and the world, between Being and nothingness 'as something'. Heidegger (1971, p. 12) writes: 'But poetry that thinks is in truth the topology of Being. This topology tells Being the whereabouts of its actual presence'.[14]

At its best, qualitative research works like a great poem, causing the reader to experience 'evocation' and to see the world through different eyes. Then a new horizon opens, and this process Heidegger describes as the 'happening' (*Ereignis*) of the truth. According to Stiles, when qualitative research evokes this kind of uncovering, '[it] produces change or growth in the perspective of the reader' (Heidegger, 1993, p. 610). In this sense, qualitative research at its best indeed works like great poetry.

Second, the notion of historicity (see the validation principle of historical continuity in Heikkinen *et al*., 2012, p. 8) is just as fundamental in qualitative research as it is in Heidegger's thinking. For Heidegger, truth is always a dynamic happening in history. *Aletheia* is always unclosing and uncovering the world, and this happening occurs in place and time. The notion of historicity also relates to Heidegger's notion of circumspection (*Umsicht*). Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) contended that if qualitative research focused on the phenomenon itself in isolation from other phenomena, the research would erase both history and spatial context. What is needed, then, is Heideggerian circumspection (*Umsicht*), which sees things in their context and as belonging to a totality of things. For example, one can understand the meaning of a hammer (e.g. its practical role, its meaning as a symbol on a flag, its history as a murder weapon etc.) only in its context. We need to look at the hammer both as present-at-hand (*Vorhanden*; *Hinsehen*) and ready-to-hand (*Zuhanden*; *Umsicht*).

Third, the demand of reflexivity (see Heikkinen *et al*., 2012, p. 8; Winter, 2002) in qualitative research relates to Heidegger's critique of the correspondence theory of truth as the primary notion of truth. Like most empirical research in the human sciences, unreflective qualitative research might take the correspondence theory for granted without considering all the epistemological and ontological commitments entailed by this theory of truth. Whether or not the qualitative researcher relies on the correspondence theory and the criteria of validity and reliability or similar, they must be aware of the underlying philosophical assumptions with regard to methodology, validation criteria, theoretical background and so on. Writing about

the reflexive validity of qualitative research in the Heideggerian mode, William Stiles linked this principle to Heidegger's notion of 'fallenness':

> The converse of reflexivity is what Heidegger called 'fallenness'—the tendency for an interpretation to lose its power and immediacy and become a slogan. For a theory to stay alive in a dialectical way, it must continually renew its context—that is, it must continue to be changed by new observations and observers . . . Any theory that becomes rigid and no longer supports this kind of dialectical interaction and change is scientifically dead (Stiles, 1993, p. 613).

In conclusion, we contend that Heidegger's notion of *alethetical* (truth as unconcealment) truth is an appropriate and useful theoretical framework for validating qualitative research, because qualitative research in most cases does not strive for a photocopy-style image of objective reality. In some cases (e.g. autoethnography), qualitative research cannot draw a distinction between subject and object at all, rendering reliability and validity totally inadequate as validation criteria. While validity and reliability (along with some other criteria) rely on subject-object dualism and the correspondence theory of truth, qualitative research does not pursue objective knowledge in that sense.[5]

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NOTES

1. Quantitative research has good reliability if it produces similar results under constant conditions. It has a good validity if its result corresponds accurately with the objective quantitative facts based on probability.
2. Internal validity refers to a determination of how well quantitative research can point out objective causal relationship and rule out any random circumstances (Campbell and Stanley, 1963, p. 5).
3. Campbell and Stanley introduce the concept of external validity as: '"External validity" asks the question of generalizability: to what populations, settings, treatment variables, and measurement variables can this effect be generalized?' (1963, p. 5).
4. We acknowledge that not all forms of realistic epistemology are based on Cartesian dualism. Roy Bhaskar's critical realism is a good example of non-Cartesian realism, which prefers Hegel's identity theory of truth over correspondence theory of truth (Bhaskar, 1993, p. 26).
5. Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b, define these traditional validation criteria as following: 'Conventional positivist social science applies four criteria to disciplined inquiry: *internal validity*, the degree to which findings correctly map the phenomenon in question; *external validity*, the degree to which findings can be generalized to other settings similar to the one in which the study occurred; reliability, the extent to which findings can be replicated, or reproduced, by another inquirer; and *objectivity*, the extent to which findings are free from bias'.
6. According to Donald Davidson, Tarski's truth predicates fail to capture the content of the concept of truth (Davidson, 1990, p. 297). In this point Mike Wrathall connects Heidegger's and Davidson's critique of correspondence theory of truth (Wrathall, 1999, p. 311): 'For both Heidegger and

Davidson, the problem with correspondence theories is that they presuppose, but cannot explain, the structure of our knowledge of the world. Of course, Heidegger is not motivated by a desire to employ a definition of the truth predicate in a theory of meaning. Instead, his interest in truth stems from the fact that, as Heidegger explains, "the phenomenon of truth is so thoroughly coupled with the problem of Being". By this, Heidegger means that there is a necessary connection between our understanding of truth and the way beings are to the understanding'.

7. Hubert Dreyfus, 2002, had a quite fanciful notion that Heidegger would support the correspondence theory of truth and so-called robust realism. Robust realism is Dreyfus's own theory which claims that 'science can in principle give us access to the functional components of the universe as they are themselves' (Dreyfus, 2002, p. 291). Mark Wrathall, 1999, connected Heidegger's notion of truth with Donald Davidson's deflationary realism (mild constructivism/realism). Nevertheless, nobody else other than Dreyfus has tried to connect Heidegger with extreme realism and that kind of version of correspondence theory of truth. We think that Heidegger would have condemned all forms of realism and relativism as 'history of metaphysics'(see Heidegger, 1992, pp. 41–48).

8. Gottlob Frege (1967, pp. 18–19) also made a similar critique and it is possible that Heidegger took this form of critique directly from Frege. Pascal Engel (2001, p. 443) interprets Frege's critique of correspondence theory of truth as follows: ' . . . Frege seems to say that if truth consisted in a correspondence between a thought and reality, the correspondence would have to be perfect—it would have to be an identity—which is absurd, since the relation of correspondence implies that two different things have to correspond to each other'.

9. An essential feature of *Dasein's* being-in-the-world is 'existential', which Heidegger calls as understanding. *Dasein* is in-the-world in 'understanding way' (Heidegger, 1992, pp. 183–184).

10. In Emma Williams' text original German concepts are in brackets. We removed those German words because they were in incorrect form (*Vorhanden* not *vorhandenheit*; *Zuhanden* not *zuhandenheit*), but otherwise Williams defines these Heidegger terms very nicely.

11. Being with capital B means *Sein* and with small b means *Seiende*. This is the usual way to translate *Sein* (Being in general) and *Seiende* (entity; particular being) into English. Heidegger calls difference between *Seiende* and *Sein* the ontological difference.

12. We have made here an empathic interpretation of Heidegger's *aletheia*. Of course, there are some notable critical interpretations of Heidegger's *aletheia*. Habermas claims that Heidegger's notion of truth does not break free from idealism (Habermas, 1998, p. 337). Tugendhat (1996) asks, how that which cannot be false cannot be verifiably true either.

13. Michael Crotty refers to this same poem by Heidegger's when defending Heidegger's significance to the qualitative research. Crotty in his book *The Foundation of Social Research* emphasises Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics and the idea of the circle of understanding in *Being and Time* (Crotty, 1998, p. 98). We emphasise Heidegger's notion of *aletheia* but we acknowledge that *aletheia* is tightly related to understanding as a *Dasein's* major 'existentials' in *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1992, pp. 183–184).

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