

The Correspondence Theory of Truth within the Analytic Tradition

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The correspondence theory of truth serves an important place in evangelical theology. It serves as the foundation for all sound theology because the correspondence theory suggests that truth corresponds to reality. It also serves as a foundation for epistemology (the theory of knowledge). This is because Christian theology is supposed to correspond to reality. Neo-orthodoxy and liberal types of theology requires something more akin to a coherence theory of truth or some kind of post-modern theory of truth. Evangelicals normally (and rightly) reject these theories of truth as being inadequate. These other theories of truth suggest that truth is not tied to reality. Continental philosophy has rejected the correspondence theory of truth in favor of theories of truth based upon justification.

Only with the correspondence theory of truth can Christian theology be united with reality. Unfortunately, the correspondence theory of truth has not always been accepted within analytic philosophy. It is my intent in this paper to explain when and why the correspondence theory of truth has fallen out of favor. I also intend to explain why the linguistic essentialist movement has restored the correspondence theory of truth back to its rightful place.

The History of Analytic Philosophy

Analytic philosophy resulted from the excesses of Romanticism and Continental philosophy. The famous division between Analytic Philosophy and Continental Philosophy is real one and important one. Romanticism, existentialism and phenomenology have a way of obscuring meaning to the degree that these systems of thought have more in common with poetry rather than philosophy. For these and other reasons Analytic philosophy strived for clarity of meaning. While it may legitimately be argued that Analytic philosophy has failed in its attempt to be clear, it has succeeded in providing the kind of analysis that is essential to philosophy.

According to Scott Soames, “With a few notable exceptions, the leading work done in this tradition was done by philosophers in Great Britain and the United States; even that which wasn’t written in English was, for the most part, quickly translated, and had its greatest impact in the world of English speaking philosophers.”¹ So what is analytic philosophy? Once again, Soames provides some key insight into the issue. “If analytic philosophy is not a unified set of doctrines adhered to by the broad range of philosophers, what is it? The short answer is that it is a certain historical tradition in which the early work of G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein set the agenda for later philosophers, whose work formed the starting point for the philosophers who followed them.”² Jan Dejnozka defines the analytic movement “by the very vague

¹ Scott Soames, *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), xi.

² *Ibid.*, xiii.

thesis that analyzing language is basic to understanding the world.”³ As such, analytic philosophers make philosophy of language first philosophy rather than metaphysics. Dejnozka adds, “The linguistic revolt consisted of the claim that only metaphysics which is cognitively meaningful is worthwhile, together with empirical criteria of meaningfulness on which metaphysics on the whole is meaningless.”⁴

Within Analytic philosophy there have been five distinct groups. These include, the logical realists, the logical positivists, the Ordinary Language Analysis, Post-positivism or Physicalists and finally the linguistic essentialist movement.⁵ Each group has different metaphysical commitments which result in a different position regarding the correspondent theory of truth. In what follows comes an explanation of each of these movements, as well as an explanation of the theories of truth that they employ.

Logical Realism

Analytic Philosophy began with the **Logical Realists**. Logical Realism, according to Quentin Smith, “is characterized by a platonic theory of universals, direct realism in perceptual theory, and intuitionism in ethics.”⁶ This movement began when GE Moore rejected idealism and Romanticism that had made its way to British shores late in the 19th century. Scott Soames explains “At the time Russell and Moore first became interested in philosophy, the dominant school of thought at Cambridge was Absolute Idealism, a leading proponent of which was one of their teachers at Cambridge, J.M. E. McTaggart.⁷ Moore was also a student of Henry Sidgwick, a Common Sense Realist. After convincing his close friend, Bertrand Russell that he should reject idealism and Romanticism, the Analytic Philosophy movement was born. They held to a correspondence theory of truth. Kirkham explains that Russell held to a theory of correspondence as congruence, which suggests that “there is a structural isomorphism between truth bearers and the facts to which they correspond when the truth bearer is true.”⁸ Early on, Russell’s student, Ludwig Wittgenstein was a part of this movement. In his *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein supports a correspondence theory of truth,⁹ but as time moves on, He changes his position

³ Jan Dejnozka, *The Ontology of the Analytic Tradition and Its Origins* (Lanham, Maryland: Littlefield Adams Books, 1996), 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵ As reported by Quentin Smith, *Ethical and Religious Thought in Analytic Philosophy of Language* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1997),

⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷ Scott Soames, *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 94.

⁸ Richard Kirkham, *Theories of Truth* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 120.

⁹ Soames, 228-30. Soames argues that Russellian logical truths are compatible with tractarian logical truths.

and departs from the Logical Realists to form the Ordinary Language Analysis movement.

Logical Positivism/ Logical Empiricism

The **logical positivists** wanted to make a scientific approach to philosophy. They also desired to remove metaphysics from Philosophy. According to A.J. Ayer

We may begin by criticizing the metaphysical thesis that philosophy affords us knowledge of a reality transcending the world of science and common sense. Later on, when we come to define metaphysics and account for its existence, we shall find that it is possible to be a metaphysician without believing in a transcendent reality; for we shall find that it is possible to be a metaphysician without believing in a transcendent reality; for we shall see that many metaphysical utterances are due to the commission of logical errors, rather than to a conscious desire on the part of their authors to go beyond the limits of experience.¹⁰

Philosophy of language is first philosophy for the Logical Positivists. They embraced an idea known as the verification principle, which suggests that if something is not empirically verifiable then it does not even make sense to discuss it.¹¹ This verification principle left no room for Christian theology since God cannot be empirically verified. As such, they were metaphysical materialists. Consequently they rejected the correspondence theory of truth. They assumed that “the object of a ‘theory of truth’ can only be to show how propositions are validated.”¹² In its place, they employed Tarski’s semantic theory of truth. According to Richard Kirkham, Tarski viewed himself as a correspondence theorist.¹³ “We should like our definition (of truth) to do justice to the intuitions which adhere to the *classical Aristotelian conception of truth*- intuitions which find their expression in the well-known words of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.”¹⁴ He referred to his idea as a “semantic conception of truth.”¹⁵ Kirkham and others like J.L. Mackie, Susan Haack, Herbert Keuth and Gerald Vision believe that it does not qualify as a

¹⁰ A.J Ayer, *Language , Truth and Logic* (New York: Dover Publishing, 1952), 33.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹² *Ibid.*, 87.

¹³ Richard Kirkham, *Theories of Truth* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 141.

¹⁴ Alfred Tarski, “The Semantic Theory of Truth” in *The Nature of Truth*, Micheal P. Lynch ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 333.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 353.

correspondence theory.¹⁶ Still, there are others like Karl Popper, Wilfred Sellars Mark Platts, Hartry Field and A.J. Ayer believe that it does qualify as a correspondence theory of truth. However, Scott Soames argues that Tarski's theory of truth cannot be compared to an ordinary notion of truth because "according to Tarski and many others, our ordinary notion of truth is defective precisely because its unrestrictedness gives rise to paradox."¹⁷ In any case, Tarski's theory of truth is problematic because it does not deal with the metaphysical aspects of a correspondence theory of truth.

Ordinary Language Analysis

The Ordinary Language Analysts believed that there are no metaphysical problems. Instead, there are only language problems. They argued that the meaning of a word is dependent upon how it is used. They rejected the verification principle of the Logical Positivists in the 1940s and reached their zenith in the 1950s.¹⁸ This movement had leaders at Oxford and Cambridge. One leader at Cambridge was Ludwig Wittgenstein, who has been described as an anti-metaphysician. He asserted that "Essence is expressed by grammar."¹⁹ To this he adds, "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is."²⁰

J.L. Austin and the Correspondence Theory of Truth

In spite of the anti-metaphysical nature of the Ordinary Language Analysis J.L. Austin employed a correspondence theory of truth. It should be noted however, that Austin's version of the correspondence theory of truth employs correlation rather than congruence. He wrote: "There is no need whatsoever for the words used in making a true statement to 'mirror' in any way, however indirect, any feature whatsoever of the situation or event." According to Kirkham;

Austin is taking it that a statement, by definition, is correlated by demonstrative conventions to some particular state of affairs: anything that is not so correlated just does not count as a statement. Similarly, an utterance does not count as a (declarative) sentence unless it is correlated by descriptive conventions to a type

¹⁶ Kirkham., 170.

¹⁷ Scott Soames, *Understanding Truth* (New York: Oxford university Press, 1999), 99.

¹⁸Smith, 64.

¹⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: MacMillan, 1958), 371.

²⁰ Ibid., 373.

of state of affairs. And statements, by definition, are made with declarative sentences.²¹

Austin's student, John Searle, holds to a correspondence theory of truth.²² He rejects idealism and endorses what he calls, external realism. External realism is the claim

that there exists a real world that is totally and absolutely independent of all of our representations, all of our thoughts, feelings, opinions, language, discourse, texts, and so on- as so obvious, and indeed as such an essential condition of rationality, and even of intelligibility, that I am somewhat embarrassed to have to raise the question and to discuss the various challenges to this view.²³

Searle is one of the last holdouts of the Ordinary Language movement. Like Austin, he still subscribes to speech act theory.

F.P Ramsey and The Redundancy Theory of Truth

Frank P. Ramsey developed the redundancy theory of truth. This is the first type of deflationary theory. Deflationary theories of truth have a metaphysical component and a semantic component. Concerning this metaphysical component, is the thesis that truth has no nature. The semantic component suggests that "Since 'true' does not pick out a property that all true statements share, the deflationist must explain the meaning of the word true and or the purpose of having such a word in our language."²⁴ Some deflationists assert that truth is not even an important concept. Anil Gupta believes that Tarski's work provided the basis for the skepticism that deflationism embodies.²⁵ According to Gupta, "Deflationists think that truth is a simple concept, one that has a simple analysis. The analysis the deflationists offer is simple, but, unfortunately, it makes truth far too complicated- it attributes to truth a vast ideology."²⁶

The redundancy theory of truth is part of what Kirkham refers to as "the assertion project." The goal of the assertion project, according to Kirkham, "is to elucidate what we are saying when we ascribe truth to something."²⁷ Michael Lynch explains the redundancy theory by saying that "we only appear to ascribe a property to a sentence or proposition when we say that it is true; we are in reality ascribing nothing, saying nothing

²¹ Kirkham, 127.

²² John Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 13.

²³ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁴ Lynch, 422.

²⁵ Anil Gupta, "A Critique of Deflationism" in *The Nature of Truth* Micheal Lynch, ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 528.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 552.

²⁷ Kirkham, 30.

more than if we had simply stated the proposition itself.”²⁸ Ramsey believed that our attempts to explain truth gets one involved in “a maze of confusion.”²⁹ He thinks that his version of truth might be viewed as a correspondence theory.³⁰ He explains that “Truth, it will be said, consists in a relation between ideas and reality, and the use without analysis of the term propositional reference simply conceals and shirks all the real problems that this relation involves.”³¹

P.F. Strawson and the Performative Theory of Truth

Unlike Austin, P.F. Strawson thought that “the correspondence theory requires, not purification but elimination.”³² Strawson instead opts for a deflationary approach to a theory of truth. The type of deflationary theory that Strawson employs is known as the performative theory of truth, which argues that to say that something is true is merely to endorse a proposition. Kirkham asserts that Strawson approach is part of what he calls “the speech act project.”³³ This speech act project “attempts to describe the locutionary or illocutionary purpose served by utterances that by their surface grammar appear to ascribe the property of truth to some statement.”³⁴ The performative theory of truth is concerned with the locutionary purpose of an utterance.

The performative theory of truth died with the Ordinary Language Philosophy movement in 1967, when H.P. Grice gave his presentation at Harvard University, “Logic and Conversation.”³⁵ Grice explained that there is more to philosophy than just language problems. He also suggested that the Ordinary Language movement was in need of a more systematic theory of meaning rather than the idea that meaning is use. Finally, Grice tried to resolve these problems by reducing linguistic meaning to psychology.

²⁸ Micheal Lynch “Deflationary Views and Their Critics” in *The Nature of Truth* Micheal Lynch, ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 422.

²⁹ Frank Plumpton Ramsey, “The Nature of Truth, in *The Nature of Truth* Micheal Lynch, ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 433.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 440.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 442.

³² P.F. Strawson, “Truth” in *The Nature of Truth*, Micheal Lynch ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 447.

³³ Kirkham, 28.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁵ Scott Soames, *Philosophical Analysis in the 20th Century*,

Post Positivists/ Physicalists

The **Post positivists** were another response to the **Logical Positivists**. Like the Logical Positivists the Post-positivists, at least in the beginning, attempted to reduce philosophy to science, which is one reason that these philosophers were known as the physicalists. This movement got its start with W.V. O. Quine who had a great deal of contact with the Logical Positivists including Rudolf Carnap and Otto Neurath. In His famous article, “The Two Dogmas of Empiricism” ‘Quine rejects the analytic-synthetic distinction and a verificationist theory of meaning’.³⁶ Quine was followed by many others including Wilfrid Sellars, D.M. Armstrong, Micheal Deavitt, Paul Churchland and many others.

WVO Quine and the Disquotational Theory of Truth

Quine rejected a correspondence theory of truth in favor of a deflationary approach. This is because Quine was a metaphysical nominalist. Unlike some deflationists, Quine believed that truth serves a crucial function within our language. His deflationary approach is known as the disquotational theory of truth. For Quine, truth is disquotation, meaning that sentences rather than propositions are the primary truth bearers. Concerning sentences, he wrote,

Such being what admit of truth, then, wherein does their truth consist? They qualify as true, one is told, by corresponding to reality. But correspondence word by word will not do; it invites the idle cluttering of reality with a bizarre host of fancied objects, just for the sake of correspondence. A neater plan is to posit facts, as correspondents of true sentences as wholes, but this is still a put up job. Objects in abundance, concrete and abstract, are indeed needed for an account of the world; but facts contribute nothing beyond their specious support of a correspondence theory.³⁷

It could be said that the disquotational theory of truth rests upon Tarski’s semantic theory of truth. Hartry Field notes that “Tarski’s first contribution was to show how purely disquotational truth (or what is almost the same thing, substitutional quantification with formulas as the substitutional class) is definable in purely first order logic provided that sufficient ontology is available.”³⁸ He also adds, “Tarski’s second contribution was to define a relativized notion, namely ‘true in a model.’ Like disquotational truth, this is a mathematical notion, and is of course available to the deflationist.”³⁹

³⁶ Daniel Isaacson, “Quine and Logical Positivism” in *The Cambridge Companion to Quine* Roger F. Gibson, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 214.

³⁷ W.V.O. Quine, “Truth” in *The Nature of Truth* Micheal Lynch, ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 475.

³⁸ Hartry Field, “Correspondence Truth, Disquotational Truth and Deflationism” in *The Nature of Truth* Micheal Lynch, ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 495.

³⁹ *Ibid.*,

Paul Horwich and the Minimalist Theory of Truth

Another Deflationary theory of truth was offered by Paul Horwich. His approach is called the minimalist theory of truth. Unlike Quine, He argued that propositions, which are the contents of our beliefs, are the primary bearers of truth. In other words, “the meaning of the truth predicate is fixed by the schema, ‘The proposition that *p* is true if and only if *p*.’”⁴⁰ Truth, according to Horwich, “involves besides the present claim about how the meaning of “true” is constituted, an affiliated view about the function of the truth predicate, an affiliated view about the underlying nature of truth (namely, that there is no such thing), and an affiliated view about the general shape of the basic theory that will best explain all the facts about truth.”⁴¹ Kirkham finds a number of problems for Horwich’s minimalist theory of truth. The most significant of these is “that a more substantial theory of truth can explain the rules and axioms of classical logic, while MT (minimalist theory), as Horwich acknowledges cannot.”⁴²

D.M. Armstrong and the Correspondence Theory of Truth

D.M Armstrong is a physicalist who was influenced by the ideas of Saul Kripke and linguistic essentialism. Armstrong takes a rather unique approach to the use of possible worlds and truth. His approach is in part a reaction against David Lewis’s modal realism. As a Combinatorial Realist, Armstrong believes that a Combinatorial theory of possibility holds that “all mere possibilities are (non- existent) recombinations of actual elements.”⁴³ He is an anti-realist about possible worlds who views them as a kind of construct. As an Aristotelian, Armstrong emphasizes that universals or forms, like states of affairs, must be instantiated. It should be noted that Armstrong rejects essentialism, even though he affirms a type of haecceitism.⁴⁴ As a result, Armstrong emphasizes the importance of the actual world for truth.

As stated earlier, Armstrong is an Aristotelian or moderate realist. According to D. M. Armstrong, universals are states of affairs types.⁴⁵ He is an advocate of the correspondence theory of truth. He writes “Truth is a matter of the intentional object of an actual or possible belief, actual or possible statement, and so on, corresponding with

⁴⁰ Paul Horwich, “A Defense of Minimalism” in *The Nature of Truth* Micheal Lynch, ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 559.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 572.

⁴² Kirkham, 350.

⁴³ D.M. Armstrong, *A Combinatorial Theory of Possibility* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 54

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 51, 61.

⁴⁵ Armstrong, *A World of States of Affairs*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 28.

some real object.”⁴⁶ He takes an approach to truth that is between Horwich’s minimal theory and the more traditional view of the correspondence theory. Armstrong employs truthmakers. Truthmakers are concerned with the ontological aspects of a correspondence theory of truth. In many cases, facts are the truth bearers employed by truthmakers. According to Armstrong, “The correspondents in the world in virtue of which true propositions are true are our truthmakers” He further argues that truth supervenes on being and that being supervenes on truth.⁴⁷ His approach to the correspondence theory is a realist theory for truth.⁴⁸

Linguistic Essentialism

The linguistic essentialist movement resulted from the work of Ruth Barcan Marcus and Saul Kripke, among others. “Saul Kripke,” writes Christopher Hughes, “is one of the most influential analytic philosophers of the twentieth century, his best known work (*Naming and Necessity*) is arguably the single most important contribution to metaphysics and the philosophy of language in the last fifty years.”⁴⁹ Kripke’s work in quantified modal logic, as well as his work in semantics results in the use of possible worlds and trans-world individuals to determine meaning.⁵⁰ According to Quentin Smith, “A precise formulation of the distinction between logically necessary attributes, nontrivial essences, and trivial essences is crucial to linguistic essentialism, for many of the conclusions reached in metaphysics, the philosophy of religion, ethics, and other disciplines are theses about the nontrivial essences of things.”⁵¹

Essentialism is “The claim that objects have some of their properties essentially or necessarily.”⁵² W.V.O. Quine argued that the use of quantified modal logic presupposes an Aristotelian essentialism.⁵³ Dagfinn Føllesdal explains that Aristotelian essentialism is “the doctrine that some attributes of a thing are essential to it, necessary of the thing regardless of the way in which we refer to it, while other attributes are accidental to it.”⁵⁴

⁴⁶ D.M. Armstrong, *Truth and Truthmakers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 16.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁹ Christopher Hughes, *Kripke* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), vii.

⁵⁰ See Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 1-164.

⁵¹ Quentin Smith, *Ethical and Religious Thought in Analytic Philosophy of Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 102.

⁵² Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, 14.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 251.

Kripke is what might be called a moderate essentialist, in contrast to a hypoessentialist or a hyperessentialist. A hypoessentialist, according to Christopher Hughes, asserts that “all the essential properties of an individual are trivially essential to it.”⁵⁵ A hyperessentialist, on the other hand, suggests that “all of an individual’s properties are essential to it.”⁵⁶ Both Leibniz and David Lewis are representatives of this kind of essentialism.

Charlotte Witt, however, notes that Aristotelian essentialism is not the same thing as Kripkean essentialism. For example, necessity, possibility, and identity are fundamental to Kripke’s essentialism and they are not for Aristotelean essentialism.⁵⁷ She also notes some important similarities:

“Aristotelians will have noticed something familiar about Kripke’s intuitive reflection on the identity of individual objects- persons, artifacts, organisms. These reflections yield necessary or essential properties of (i) origin, (ii) kind, and (iii) matter. These three sorts of essential properties roughly correspond to three of Aristotle’s four causes: (i) efficient, (ii) formal, and (iii) material.”⁵⁸

Because of its dissimilarities with Kripkean essentialism, most reject Aristotelian essentialism. In its place, Alvin Plantinga, and David Lewis employ Leibnizian essences. This is because Leibniz’s use of possible worlds makes his essences appear somewhat more compatible with what Kripke was trying to do.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, while Kripke defends the concept of trans- world identity, Leibniz would reject such a view.⁶⁰

Central to Kripke’s ideas is the concept of states of affairs. According to Andrew Newman

“There are two obvious ways of understanding the linguistic view of states of affairs in terms of more traditional ontological categories. A linguistic state of affairs either could be a fact in a possible world, as David Lewis understands possible worlds, or could be a Platonic entity, following Plantinga who

⁵⁴ Dagfinn Føllesdal, “Quine on Modality,” *The Cambridge Companion to Quine* ed. Roger F. Gibson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 207.

⁵⁵ Hughes, 108.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Charlotte Witt, *Substance and Essence in Aristotle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 180-1.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 188-9.

⁵⁹ Nicholas Jolley, “Introduction” in the *Cambridge Companion to Leibniz*, Nicholas Jolley ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 10.

⁶⁰ G.H.R. Parkinson, “Philosophy and Logic” in the *Cambridge Companion to Leibniz*, Nicholas Jolley ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 216.

understands states of affairs as Platonic entities and then explains possible world as a type of state of affairs.”⁶¹

In what follows comes an explanation of how Lewis, and Plantinga employ linguistic essentialism and what they think about truth.

Modal Realism/ David Lewis

David Lewis is a metaphysical nominalist who employs some of Kripke’s ideas in a unique way. His position is known as modal realist. Modal realism suggests that every possible world is actual.⁶² Because he is a metaphysical nominalist, Lewis rejects the concept of transworld individuals, and in its place offers counterparts.⁶³ He also rejects haecceitism.⁶⁴

His view of possible worlds results in some interesting ideas about truth. “A theory is close to the truth to the extent that our world resembles some world where that theory is exactly true. A true theory is closest to the truth, because our world is a world where the theory is true.”⁶⁵ As a metaphysical nominalist, Lewis has no place for states of affairs. He relies upon sentences. “A sentence is true for a speaker iff its semantic value assigns truth to the pair of that speaker and his own world.”⁶⁶ In some respects, it appears that Lewis holds to a minimalist theory of truth in each possible world.

Plantingan Realism and the Correspondence Theory of Truth

Alvin Plantinga argues that “none of these merely possible worlds is actual, But of course each is actual at or in itself.”⁶⁷ Later he explains that “Every possible world, therefore, contains every other possible world.”⁶⁸ He subscribes to the concept of transworld individuals, like Kripke. He is also a Platonic realist. As such, he believes that

⁶¹ Andrew Newman, *The Correspondence Theory of Truth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 157.

⁶² David Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 1986), 2.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶⁷ Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.), 48.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

there are more forms (or universals) than are instantiated in this world. Plantinga asserts that possible worlds are states of affairs that are both possible and maximal.⁶⁹ The actual world is a maximal state of affairs that obtains. The use of states of affairs requires some kind of realism, whether Platonic or Aristotelian.⁷⁰ Michael Loux⁷¹ and Andrew Newman both refer to Plantinga as a Platonic realist.⁷² He writes that Plantinga “understands states of affairs as Platonic entities and then explains a possible world as a type of state of affairs.”⁷³ If one holds to the existence of universals then, he will also subscribe to metaphysical realism and a correspondence theory of truth.

Because Plantinga employs possible worlds in his metaphysical system he has to carefully explain what is meant by truth. Truth is tied to the actual world.

To say that p is true in a world W is to say that if W had been actual, p would have been true. More exactly, if p is true in W , then W entails p ; it is impossible that W be actual and p be false. The locution ‘truth in W ’ (for specific W) denotes a property that a proposition has if it is not possible that W obtain and p fail to be true. Truth in W is to be explained in terms of truth simpliciter; not vice versa. A proposition is true in the actual world if it is true; it is true in W if it would have been true had W been actual.⁷⁴

Conclusion

Throughout the history of Analytic Philosophy the correspondence theory of truth has been an important issue. In each group of analytic philosophers there have been those who subscribe to a correspondence theory. The other position has been some kind of deflationary theory of truth. The big factor to decide which theory people subscribe to is their metaphysics. Metaphysical realists will subscribe to a correspondence theory of truth, while metaphysical nominalists will subscribe to a deflationary theory. What this suggests is that Evangelicals should reject any philosophical system that involves metaphysical nominalism, or idealism.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 44.

⁷⁰ D.M Armstrong, *A World of States of Affairs* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997),

⁷¹ Michael Loux, *Metaphysics* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 205.

⁷² Andrew Newman, *The Correspondence Theory of Truth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 20.

⁷³ Ibid., 157

⁷⁴ Plantinga, 46.